

Florida War Stories

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War stories share field experiences. These anecdotes are not reviewed by ASHI for Standards compliance/technical accuracy.

Leave Things as You Found Them!

Heating and Cooling Controls

After a trying day, a difficult session between buyers and sellers, I received a call from an irate seller who said that I had ruined his 23 year old Lennox™ AC/Heating System.

He said it worked perfectly before I got there. He intended to sue me for a new unit. He wanted *heat* and the house was down to 64°F. I tried to calm him (and myself) down. "Did you turn the thermostat on first to the heating cycle and then turn the thermostat up?" I asked. "I'll call you back." he answered.

Five minutes later he called, apologetic, saying that they had turned the heating cycle off when they went "up North" for the summer, and that they had forgotten to turn it back on on their return.

Destructive Testing vs. Observe and Report

Speaking on Report Writing at the 1991 ASHI Conference in Phoenix, I mentioned that all ASHI Reports should be written as though you had to defend them in court.

Meanwhile my office got a call from a client for whom I had done a home inspection the previous November. He told my associate that he had a roof leak along the edge at the fascia. My associate said that I'd be back from Phoenix in a few days and that I would be out to look at his problem.

The home was six years old, in excellent condition, and had formerly been occupied by an elderly widow who wanted to go back "up north" to be with her family.

We had a severe rain storm while I was away. The client found water dripping under the metal-covered fascia board. He called in roofers for repair prices.

The client was with me during the inspection and, before I started, he had signed my Pre-Inspection Agreement. That agreement states "Client guarantees [my company] the right

to examine any claim prior to Client's performance of remedial measures. This is a condition precedent to Client's claim."

The client called the builder who was in a model home across the street. The builder denied any responsibility to a second owner of a house over six years old. The builder said that there was approximately \$400. damage on the fascia and rafter ends along a 40-foot area of roof edge.

On the day after he called our office about this problem, the client had these repairs made, had new roof shingles and base felt completely removed, and proceeded to have a new roof installed, upgrading shingle design and weight at the same time.

On my return I went to the client's home. He told me that he wanted the cost of a new roof or at least the \$400. for fascia repairs. I declined and sent him copies of our Agreement and the ASHI Standards of Practice: we do not do destructive testing.

The client wants \$4800. for a new roof. Cause of problem? When the home was built the roofing contractor put on the base felt ("dry-in sheet") and left. Then the "metal men" installed corrugated soffit, metal fascia covering (all aluminum) and roof drip edging. Thus the drip edge was against the weather on top of the felt but under the starter course and starter shingles. All of the shingles were seal-tab types.

In nearly 3000 inspections I have not lifted up the roof at the edge to check this. Many roofs are done this way in our area, even though it is incorrect. With cement tile the same defect is hidden - one cannot lift the cemented starter course. How do we protect ourselves - another disclaimer?

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