

Five Considerations for Home Projects and Maintenance

A home is comparable to an automobile in that each requires ongoing maintenance.

A home is a large investment that you hope to resell eventually at a profit.

All decisions should be proactive and long-term with the following five considerations in mind:

- 1. Accessibility:** The accessibility of an area should always be a top priority when scheduling the sequence of project(s) and/or product installation(s). For example, attics often need insulation. Adding insulation first, and then deciding to upgrade or install a bath fan, a solar tube, or reduce infiltration losses (see pictures and newsletter "Reducing Infiltration Losses Summer 2011") will require physical entry into the attic which will damage or compress the insulation which will reduce its effectiveness. Moving the insulation to gain accessibility may also increase project time and cost.
- 2. Professionalism:** Humans naturally gravitate away from more difficult work locations. Attics, crawlspaces and roofs are often more difficult. Work in these areas is often difficult or impossible to observe or maintain after the fact. Choosing the less expensive route may result in premature failure of systems and/or parts, which could require repeat repairs. Ensure that the individual you hire has long-term considerations and functionality in mind. Be sure to check references and insurance coverage before allowing anyone to work on your home. We recommend any work performed to include pictures and written documentation detailing installation methods and materials. All documentation (work scope, pictures, invoices etc.) should be maintained in a "house resale file".
- 3. Skill level & cost of material:** Product type, cost, installation method and location all require particular skill sets and training. Metal siding, for example, is less forgiving than vinyl siding. Metal siding requires special cutting and bending tools. Vinyl is very flexible. It can be cut with a saw or scissors. The more expensive a product, the greater the need to hire an individual with an adequate work history with that product, current training, references and insurance. A poorly trained "jack of all trades" with limited experience who offers the lowest bid can be a recipe for disaster. As the saying goes, "you get what you pay for".
- 4. Product user friendliness:** Products that are heavy such as retaining wall blocks, or that require personal protective gear (respirators, eye protection, etc.) may have less oversight from management during the actual installation, and less visual accessibility to confirm the contracted work was actually performed. We recommend a written job summary with before, during and after pictures to ensure that work was actually performed as contracted. Remember to keep these in your "house resale file".
- 5. Location (interior verses exterior):** Interior projects such as remodeling, painting and finishing rooms are often prioritized over exterior work. Interior surfaces will often highlight exterior maintenance issues. Exterior materials are subject to unknown and unpredictable variables. Weather can quickly make a functional component non-functional. Areas needing attention may be harder to see and more easily overlooked. Separated gutter extensions, subsurface erosion, decay, looseness of materials, plants rubbing siding, etc. can easily fast-track to more extensive and/or expensive repairs if not addressed.

Need More Information?

For more insight and considerations review Money Magazine's "*How to Maintain Your Home*" May 17, 2004 article on our "Reference Material" page.. This article recommends that you have your home inspected every five years.

Please visit www.phiinspect.com click our "Post Inspection Support" page and request additional documents.