

Sometimes folks ask about past articles and one of the most requested concerns boiling a frog. This industry is not very normal. It is however full of interesting people with strange senses of humor, so here it is again.

A Breath of Fresh Air

By George Porter

You will remember just a few months ago this column had an article about venting under HUD code homes. Wherever I go people still seem to be confused about it so I thought I would try to cover it in a different way. One of the reasons that the subject does not get the attention it deserves is because it damages a home in a slow and hidden way, by the time you notice it's too late.

One of the examples that I use to explain the problem is to ask people if they ever tried to boil a live frog? Most people think this is a little crazy but if you really wanted to do it there are two ways to try it.

The first way is to boil a pot of water and throw the frog in. This does not work too well because the frog will jump out like he was shot from a cannon. It doesn't take him long to figure out the problem and he takes corrective action immediately, he jumps out of the pot.

The second way is to put the frog in the pot when the water is still cold and then turn up the heat till it boils. The frog never notices any change until he is cooked and then it's too late.

A home is effected by a lack of ventilation in the much the same way, if the home could rot away in a few days or a week then everybody would see the problem and understand why they had to ventilate. Unfortunately the process could take years and years and in a situation like this the solution loses some of it's urgency. When the rot does occur it will take some very major efforts to correct it. The first sign is usually just a soft spot in the floor. Although that may be what you first notice, it is usually the whole floor and walls and roof. When you tear up the floor to fix the spot you find other similar spots that are not far behind the one you are fixing, the more you look the more you find that you had not seen before. You will soon come to the conclusion that this thing is not the home you started with by a large margin and there is not much you can do about it short of a total rebuild. You have just been cooked, much like the frog!

The formula is one square foot of free vented area for every one hundred fifty square feet of area under the home. A 1500 sq. ft. home gets 10 sq. ft. of free vented area in the skirting. All vented skirting specifications give the free vented area per 12 foot panel, use this to determine how much you need and space it around the home. Even homes need a breath of fresh air to stay healthy.