The Word A look at home in

A look at terms used in home inspection reports

Safety Glazing, Part 2

By BRUCE BARKER, ACI

ONCE AGAIN, The Word invites you to travel into the dark realm of terms that often are misused or misunderstood in home inspection reports. The Word hopes you will find this trip informative and maybe a little entertaining.

The Word's term again this month is safety glazing. Last month, we started our discussion by describing different types of glazing and with topics such as labeling, skylights and glazing near water. We'll conclude this month with topics such as glazing in and near doors, glazing in large windows and glazing near stairs.

A summary of last month's discussion

Safety glazing inspection is required by ASHI Home Inspection Standards clause 2.2.C.1 if, in your professional judgment, lack of safety glazing is unsafe. For something to be considered unsafe it must present a significant risk of bodily injury during normal day-to-day use. There is no grandfathering of safety conditions. You should report a condition you believe is unsafe even if the condition was considered safe in the past.

Most safety glazing you'll see should have a label that contains either 16 CFR 1201 or ANSI Z97.1. If there's no label or if the label doesn't contain one of these standards, the glazing probably doesn't qualify as safety glazing. Laminated glass doesn't require a label, but this glass isn't common in homes. The IRC requires safety glazing in glazing near bathtubs and showers when the bottom glazing edge is less than 60 inches above a walking or standing surface. The 60 inches above a walking or standing surface requirement also applies to pools, spas and hot tubs when the inside edge of the water is less than 60 inches from the glazing.

Glazing in doors

Glazing in doors should be safety glazing in most cases. This includes interior and exterior doors. It's easier to remember the exceptions to this general rule. One exception is for decorative glazing such as cut glass and stained glass in framed swinging doors. Doors made entirely from glazing and sliding doors are not framed swinging doors, so the decorative glazing exception does not apply. Another exception is for bars that protect the glazing and won't pass a 3-inch diameter sphere. This exception is most common with small windows in doors. Glazing in jalousie doors is the final exception. For those who don't do old homes in the Deep South, jalousie doors have glass panes that are usually about 4 inches wide and 2 feet or so long. The glass panes open together with a crank to allow air flow on those hot, sticky summer days and close to keep out wind and rain. They're not common anymore with the widespread use of air conditioning.

Glazing near doors

Measure an arc 24 inches from both the hinge and latch side of an operable door (not from the fixed panel of a door). Then, measure up 60 inches from the walking surface. Remember to do this on both the inside and outside of the door. Glazing in this area, near both interior and exterior doors, should be safety glazing in most cases. This measurement is from the door in the closed position to the glazing.

Again, it's easier to remember the exceptions to the general rule. Decorative glazing near doors is an exception, just as it is for glazing in doors. Another exception is glazing in a wall that is perpendicular to the latch side of the door. Maybe they figure that you're not likely to hit this glazing with the door or to walk or be pushed into the glazing.

Another exception is the permanent barrier exception. If there's a wall or other permanent barrier between the door and the glazing, then the glazing doesn't need to be safety glazing. This is where it's important to check both sides of the door. There might be a barrier on the inside of the door, but no barrier on the outside.

If you have glazing next to a closet door where the closet is less than 3 feet deep, that glazing need not be safety glazing. Also, glazing near the fixed panel of a patio door need not be safety glazing. A patio door is usually a





sliding door. This exception might also apply to a swinging door that includes a permanently fixed door panel.

Glazing in large windows

A large window that satisfies all four of these requirements should contain safety glazing in most cases: (1) one individual pane is larger than 9 square feet, and (2) the bottom edge of the glazing is less than 18 inches above the finished floor, and (3) the top edge of the glazing is more than 36 inches above the finished floor, and (4) there is a walking surface within 36 inches horizontally from the glazing.

As always, there are exceptions to the general rule. The decorative glazing industry scores again with an exception for cut and stained glass.

The permanent bar exception is a way to get one past the local inspector. A permanent bar at least 1-1/2 inches high, installed between 34 and 38 inches above the walking surface, negates the need for safety glazing if the bar won't touch the glazing under a horizontal load of 50 pounds per linear foot. A common trick is to install the bar for final inspection and remove it afterwards.

There's also an exception for the exterior pane of insulated dual- and triple-pane windows if the bottom of the window is at least 25 feet above grade or a walking surface. This exception is obscure, but The Word has built homes where this exception applies.

Glazing near stairways and ramps

The general rule for safety glazing near stairways and ramps is relatively easy. The glazing should be safety glazing if it's within 36 inches horizontally and 60 inches vertically from the stairway, landing or ramp. The glazing also should be safety glazing if it's within 60 inches horizontally and 60 inches vertically from the bottom tread nosing. This includes glazing in guards along the stairway or ramp.

The exceptions, however, get really complicated and this column is getting a little long, so The Word isn't going to try to explain them in detail. The basic exceptions are the permanent bar exception that's the same as for the large window and an exception if a guardrail or handrail separates the stairs or ramp from the window by more than 18 inches.

Refer to the IRC and get totally confused or to a code reference if you want to understand the exceptions. In most cases, for most of us, the exceptions don't really matter because we're not doing code inspections. If, however, you're going to call safety glazing near stairs and ramps, you may wish to know about the exceptions to avoid making an inaccurate call.

The bottom line

How you report safety glazing issues is important. In some cases, you may want to report lack of safety glazing as a deficiency. In other cases, you may want to report the issue as information or as a safety upgrade. Of course, if you don't believe that the lack of safety glazing rises to the level of unsafe, then you may not report the situation at all.

The purpose of a home inspection is to provide our clients with information. Personal responsibility, something that The Word believes is sadly lacking in our society, means that what they do with the information is up to them. Many homes have existed for many years without safety glazing where it's now required, so some people will choose to ignore the information you provide about safety glazing. That's OK. You did your job by providing information about the potential safety hazard. Your clients are responsible for how they act on that information.

Memo to the glazing gods: The Word does not reside on Mt. Olympus (just at its base) and welcomes other viewpoints. Send your lightning bolts or emails to inspectorbruce@ cox.net. The thoughts contained herein are those of The Word. They are not ASHI standards or policies.



Bruce Barker, Dream Home Consultants, Peoria, Ariz., has been building and inspecting homes since 1987. He is the author of

"Everybody's Building Code" and currently serves as chair of the ASHI Standards Committee. To read more of Barker's articles or if you need a presenter at your next chapter event, go to www. dreamhomeconsultants.com.

Quick Tip #3 - Plugged Drain? Here's	a Quick Fix
Trap Plugged - Clean with Wire or Tool Tools to clean trap: Fladile pleasic strip with "hooks" Wire coust hanger with hook on end Insert plastic cleanor or wire hanger with hook and smag debrie	Yookyour tub or taithnoom ank is draining slowly AGAIN. Itsp or use a plumbing analytic trap or use a plumbing analytic with a major pensionyour and but your life do fatanding in water when taking a chower. Well, next time you're al the grocery or hardware store, pick up a drain cleaner: a flexible placies strip with small hoots along its length. It look like a very thin Chistinas tere Without dismantling anything, you push this thin plastic tool down the drain and pull out at that hair and pull out. For some drains, it helps if you remove the stopper for befer access?
Just be ready for a mess when you pull it out. Have a rag or pap You should also wear rubber gloves. After the junk is removed, run very hot water down the drain for If you don't have time to go to the grocery store, you could also bent to form a hock on one end. This too is not as effective, and	er towel ready to catch the junk, several minutes, try this with a length of thin wire if will take more effort to catch
the hair and the junk - but it can work. By Tom Feiza, Mr. Fix-It Backleite	

Need content for your website or e-mail?

Do you want to keep in touch with your customers but lack the time to write material? Let Quick Tips do the talking for you. With Quick Tips, you can market your services while providing useful information to your customers. Use the tip for an e-mail newsletter, a Constant Contact® message, a website, newsletter or even a printed handout.

Price: \$275 for 13 Tips Special when you mention this ad: \$225 for 13 Tips

Visit htoyh.com for two free samples you can use right now.



Tom Feiza – Mr. Fix-It, Inc. – Books, Quick Tips, and Illustrations www.htoyh.com | email: tom@misterfix-it.com phone: (262) 303-4884 | toll-free: (800) 201-3829 | fax: (262) 303-4883