



Cornerstone Newsletter

December 2025

Education you can count on!

Cornerstone Classroom

Upcoming Webinar: Radon in Air and Water Dec. 2nd, 2025, 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

This one-hour webinar explores Radon in Air and Water and its issues.

INDUSTRY HEADLINES

Home-purchase cancellations at record high

Headline: About **56,000 U.S. home-purchase agreements** canceled in August 2025 — ~15.1% of homes under contract that month — the highest August figure in data going back to 2017. [Redfin](#)

Why it matters for inspectors:

- A higher cancellation rate often corresponds with uncertainty in real-estate transactions — the inspection can be a pivot point: flawed inspection results can trigger renegotiation/cancellation.
- For inspectors: reports become even more critical — clarity, communication, and readiness to answer questions may reduce breakdowns in deals.

HOME INSPECTORS

Inspector Story of the Month

A few months ago, an inspector in central Connecticut (we'll call him Mike) was performing a routine inspection on a mid-century Cape. Everything looked normal — freshly painted basement walls, new LED lighting, clean furnace area. But something about the main support beam didn't sit right. A section of the beam had been boxed in with brand-new 2x8 lumber and painted to match.

Most buyers (and even many contractors) would've seen that as a cosmetic improvement. Mike, however, decided to probe further. Using a moisture meter and a simple awl, he discovered the new lumber was actually concealing a rotted original beam — decayed from years of a slow plumbing leak overhead. The seller had tried to "sister" new boards to reinforce it, but the repair didn't extend far enough.

The discovery changed everything. The buyer renegotiated the sale price, and the structural issue was professionally corrected before anyone moved in.

After the inspection, Mike reflected:

"That inspection reminded me that the best tool we carry isn't in our bag — it's our curiosity. Paint, caulk, and drywall can hide a lot, but experience and a questioning mindset reveal the truth."

Takeaway for Inspectors

- **Trust your instincts.** If something looks "too new" in an old house, there's often a story behind it.
- **Document and explain.** Clear notes and photos help your clients understand what you saw — and why it matters.
- **Keep learning.** Every odd finding is a chance to expand your knowledge for the next inspection.

As home inspectors, we don't just check boxes — we protect people, one observation at a time.

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Law Webinar

Connecticut Law Webinar

We are proud to offer the **Connecticut Law and Regulations Webinar**, a state-approved continuing education course designed specifically for licensed home inspectors. This live, interactive online class provides the required **three continuing education credits** that every Connecticut home inspector must earn to maintain their license. [Purchase Now](#)

Narrative of the Month

Observation:

The dishwasher was observed to be loosely installed and not secured to the underside of the countertop or adjacent cabinetry. The appliance could be tipped or shifted when the door is opened or when loaded racks are pulled out.

Implication:

An unsecured dishwasher may move during operation, which can strain the plumbing and electrical connections, cause leaks, or result in damage to surrounding cabinetry and flooring. It may also pose a safety concern if the unit tips forward.

Recommendation:

Recommend that the dishwasher be properly secured to the underside of the countertop or adjacent cabinetry in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions. This repair should be performed by a qualified appliance or kitchen contractor.

Limitation:

Inspection of appliance anchoring was limited to visible components only; concealed mounting brackets or fasteners behind the cabinetry were not accessible for evaluation.

FROM THE DESK OF STAN BAJERSKI

The State of Home Inspection in New England

Across New England, the home inspection industry continues to show strong demand and professional growth. In Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York, inspectors are seeing steady business as more buyers reinstate inspection contingencies after several years of waived inspections. States are also tightening education and renewal requirements, emphasizing ethics, report quality, and consumer protection. Inspectors are responding by expanding their expertise into environmental testing, septic and well evaluations, and building science. Despite a cooler housing market, New England inspectors remain busy—proving that in a region with older housing stock and harsh seasonal conditions, a thorough inspection is always in demand.

 by Cornerstone Home Inspector Education Center

NEW ENGLAND SPOTLIGHT

Hot Market Zones in New England — Where Buyers Get the Most Value

New England's charm comes with a price — and for home inspectors, that price often shows up as *moisture*. Whether it's salt air on the Connecticut shoreline, coastal fog in Rhode Island, or driving Nor'easter rains in Massachusetts, inspectors across the region face one recurring challenge: **hidden water intrusion**.

What Inspectors Are Seeing

This fall, inspectors from Cape Cod to New Haven have been reporting an uptick in moisture-related damage — even in homes with recently replaced siding and windows. The culprit?

- **Improper flashing** behind trim boards and windows.
- **Clogged or undersized weep holes** in modern vinyl or composite siding.
- **Unsealed penetration points** from cable, HVAC, and electrical lines.

In coastal areas, inspectors note that moisture intrusion often starts small but leads to **soft sheathing, mold growth, and corrosion** of fasteners — especially where salt spray accelerates deterioration.

Recall Center

Recall #1: Navien Tankless Water Heaters and Boilers

Date: Recalled December 2023 (active and ongoing)
System Affected: *Plumbing / heating system – tankless water heaters and combi-boilers*
Reason: The heat exchangers can overheat and pose a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning or fire due to a malfunctioning fan or improper venting components.
Models Affected:

- Navien models NPE-A, NPE-S, and NCB-E manufactured between 2011 and 2018.

Inspector Concern:

Many of these units are still in service and can emit **elevated CO levels** if the heat exchanger or vent system fails.

Recommendation to clients: Inspectors should note the model and serial number of any Navien appliance and direct homeowners to check their unit at www.navieninc.com/recall.

Recall #2: U.S. Boiler Company Gas-Fired Residential Boilers (CO hazard)

Date: March 14, 2024 [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#)
System Affected: Heating — gas-fired hot-water boilers (major system)
Reason for Recall: On certain models, a blocked vent switch (BVS) can fail to shut off the burner if the vent system becomes blocked (at altitudes above 5,400 ft in the recall). If that happens, the boiler may emit excessive carbon monoxide (CO) into the home, posing a CO poisoning risk. [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#)
Models Affected: Boilers sold under brands such as U.S. Boiler, New Yorker Boiler, Advantage, FORCE and Archer (models ES2, Series 3, X-2, CG-E/CG-F, etc) installed at altitude > 5,400 ft. [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#)

Why It Matters for Inspectors:

- Boilers are a core part of the major systems in a home, and a CO-hazard recall elevates the risk profile of the property.
- As an inspector you may not be required to test CO levels from every boiler, but you should flag if you identify a model/serial number matching the recall.
- You can educate your clients (buyers/sellers) about advising the homeowner to verify whether the unit is part of the recall and schedule the manufacturer remedy if so.