

# Chimneys... by Inspector Weeks

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A recent Inspection brought to light the issue of chimneys. In this case it was a chimney that was in need of repairs. Masonry chimneys, those built with bricks and mortar, if left unmaintained are vulnerable to cracking and premature deterioration. Starting at the top let's first examine the cap. The purpose of the cap is to allow for proper drainage of water off the chimney. If the cap is missing or in poor condition it should be repaired. Either condition could lead to moisture penetration which in turn will cause problems. Next let's look at the brickwork itself. If the damaged cap allows moisture into the bricks and mortar, when this trapped water freezes, cracks in the bricks and cement will result. This is also referred to as spalling. Spalling is the result of water infiltration into the brick which then freezes, bursting the bricks apart. The repeated freeze, thaw cycle will only get worse. Every time this occurs, moisture can penetrate further and further into the body of the chimney. Without a proper repair the damage will only get worse. Hire a qualified mason to make the appropriate repairs. This may involve removing or rebuilding the cap and as many rows of brick as needed to re-solidify the chimney's structure. Last but not least, check the metal flashings where the chimney meets the roof. Make certain there is a good seal with good quality caulking to keep the water out. With the inevitable colder and wet weather just around the corner, I would recommend a closer look at your own masonry chimney. Always keep safety in mind when examining your chimney.



I welcome your questions please forward them to , Inspector Weeks ,c/o Peter Weeks Home Inspections [PWHI@sympatico.ca](mailto:PWHI@sympatico.ca) or by phone at 613.290.3697.

**Peter Weeks** has been a Chelsea resident for 18 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing **Residential Home Inspections** for

about three years. He is an Associate Member of OAHI (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB and BNI. **He is a Qualified and Fully Insured Inspector.** You may Visit his Website at [www.PWHOMEINSPECTIONS.COM](http://www.PWHOMEINSPECTIONS.COM).