

Hello from Howard Lamcke! Fall is upon us. The hot days of summer are over, which is good news for the firefighters all over the state. Next comes the rain; at least we hope it’s coming. Being prepared for a wet winter is the subject of this letter. One thing that I am sure a wet winter will not do is to dampen the enthusiasm for remodeling that our entire industry is experiencing. Most of the cities we work in have a 5 day delay for a building inspection. I recently waited for 9 days for an electrical inspection on a simple bathroom remodel. It takes a great deal of experience, planning and patience to remodel in this environment. We are all hoping it levels off a bit after the holiday season. Meanwhile, we will continue working as hard as we can to provide you with the best service and products possible. Thanks again for all your business and referrals.

**AFTER THE DROUGHT…THEN WHAT?**

Four years of severe drought have had a major impact on all our lives. The truth is, it has been somewhat of a blessing for the construction industry. We have been able to build literally “year round” without the delays and inconvenience of wet weather and muddy ground. We have had a few calls for flooded subfloors, leaking roofs and balconies and so forth. However, it never rained hard enough to diagnose and repair the problem. Now that we are having a possible El Nino year, the industry may be overwhelmed with requests for help. Here are a few things you should do to prepare for after the drought.

First and foremost, if you suspect you have a leaky roof, if it’s more than 15 years old, have it inspected now by a licensed professional. Roofers more than anyone else are swamped in wet weather so do it now!

Sweep and clean delivers out of valley flashing and especially around skylights and fireplaces. Check fireplace flues for rain caps, and pipe vent flashings for proper sealing. Inspect and clean gutters and downspouts. Place diverter blocks or drain hoses under the spouts to direct water away from the foundations.

Those of you with chronic underfloor flooding problems (hello my golf course customers) will surely experience this again in a wet water. Now would be a good time to verify your sump pumps are still working. Or it might be time to add one. There is nothing more fun than digging a sump pump in a flooded subfloor; I know! Also, inspect the perimeter of the house to be sure all soil is graded away from the foundation. Check for cracks and other possible points of entry to the subfloor water problems are from water seeping up from below, and not coming from the outside, but every little bit helps. And remember, once the water table starts rising again; all those cracks. I have been seeing in the sheetrock will go in the opposite direction. So will all the interior doors that have been moving for four years.

Almost everyone is looking forward to the rain coming. With a little preparation and maintenance, we can all be thankful and not resentful for the end of the drought!