



# TAKE A CHANCE ON IT

Homeowners roll dice when they postpone routine inspections

**By David Sharos**  
FOR THE SUN

For some, getting that yearly home inspection might seem optional — especially the way the economy is going these days.

But as the saying goes, penny wise and dollar foolish. In the long run homeowners might regret that decision.

Some Naperville homes are particularly in need of regular inspections, according to one local businessman. He moved to Naperville almost a decade ago because his services were in such demand.

Cliff Kapson, 51, a Naperville resident since June 2000, operates EnviroSpec Inc. The inspection company performs investigations into moisture intrusion and damage in residential and commercial structures. His company performs inspections for the city of Naperville as required for new construction and also as an independent third-party exterior insulation and finish systems inspector.

Kapson's specialty lies in inspecting homes made with Dryvit — a particular exterior finish, which he said once had been riddled with many problems. Lawsuits were even filed over it.

## AT A GLANCE

### EnviroSpec Inc.

Call: Cliff Kapson at 630-922-9686

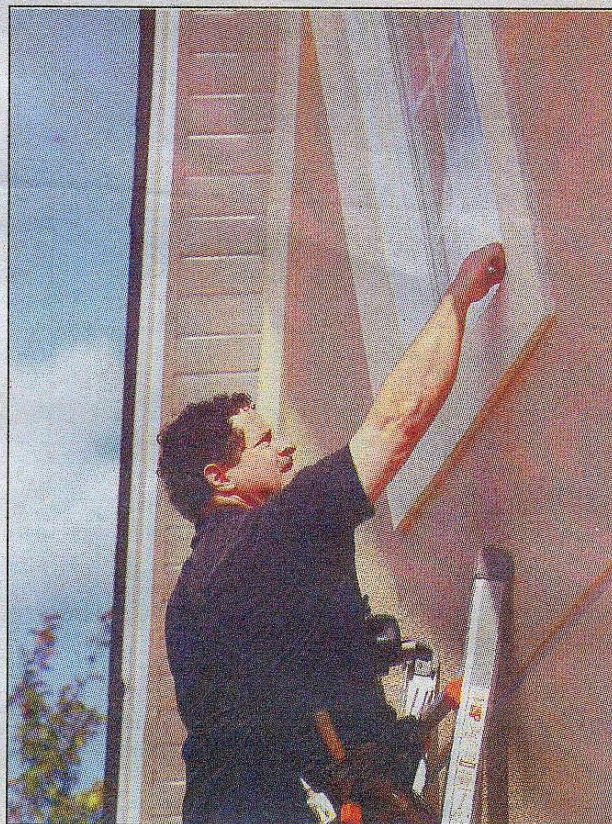
On the Web: [www.eifsinspector.com](http://www.eifsinspector.com) or [www.envirospec.net](http://www.envirospec.net)

“Dryvit uses a foam insulation, covered by a reinforced fiberglass mesh, which then is covered in a base coat and a finish coat, once the base dries,” Kapson said. “It gives the home a stucco appearance.”

But he says when moisture gets trapped in the foam, there’s “no way for it to escape.” Kapson said corrections have been made in the product and installation design, and that drainage areas have been added to alleviate earlier problems.

A number of Naperville and Aurora subdivisions, including Stonebridge, High Meadow, River Run and White Eagle have homes featuring the Dryvit material, which Kapson said should receive annual inspections.

“In a place like White Eagle, I’d estimate that if you drove through there you’d see that one or two out of every five homes uses the Dryvit material,” he said. “Throughout Naperville,



**Naperville resident Cliff Kapson from EnviroSpec Inc. performs an exterior home inspection Monday on a residence in Naperville.**

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you’re talking thousands of homes.”

## Not worth the chance

Naperville resident Greg Shugar moved to the city in 1999 and bought a Dryvit home in 2006. He said he knew “there were potential issues with the house” when he bought it and has had Kapson inspect it the past four years.

“Cliff comes out and does these moisture readings every year, and so long as they are below a certain level, he says that the home is OK,” Shugar said. “I know there are other homes with Dryvit in our area, and I’m sure that inspections are something that other people try to scrimp on.”

But he says they’d rather pay the \$350 to \$400 fee for the inspection rather than invest in \$70,000 to \$80,000 in repairs if the wood gets damaged.

“(That) would ruin us,” he said.

Kapson recognizes that home inspections have taken a major hit in recent months as the economy

has suffered and homeowners are looking to cut costs. But neglecting inspections, he argues, will likely cost homeowners more in the long run.

“When you sell your home, you want to be proactive and have the inspection before you sell, so you can address any issues,” he said. “If things are found afterwards, they will likely slow up the sale process or cancel it altogether.”

## Choose right inspector

Kapson also recommends finding an expert for your particular issue. He said he was once asked to do mold inspections — an area he has since declined to do.

“You need to spend your money in the right place,” Kapson said. “I used to do mold testing, but when people asked me what to do about it, I couldn’t answer because of not being an industrial hygienist. If you need a mold specialist, you need to find one. If you have a Dryvit system, then you need someone like me.”