

Why Are Chimney Inspections Important?

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There are many reasons why it is important to have periodic chimney inspections. There are many hazards that can interrupt the safe operation of a chimney system.

One chimney often services multiple heating systems in the home such as furnaces, fireplaces and fossil fuel stoves. Any system, that comprises the use of fossil fuels, requires adequate exhaust to remove emissions.

This is possible due to the fact that most chimneys contain multiple flues. If a chimney has only one flue, it should only service one system. There are cases where two or more systems use a single flue. This is considered hazardous and a serious code violation.

If you believe your chimney has only one flue, yet you have more than one system exhausting to that chimney, there exists a hazard that needs correction.

A chimney is designed to remove noxious exhaust from household heating systems. It is akin to the exhaust pipe on a tractor trailer truck. The stack is elevated beyond the cab enclosure of a tractor trailer, in an effort to exhaust the emissions into the atmosphere above the occupants. Without a properly operating chimney, the occupants of the structure are exposed to dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is undetectable by the natural senses. Any home that contains a system that is powered by fossil fuel combustion should also contain carbon monoxide detectors. If your carbon monoxide detector detects carbon monoxide, the structure should be vacated at once.

Due to the harsh weather in Maine and the high concentrations of salt in the atmosphere near the coast, chimneys take a lot of abuse. Chimney enemy number one is a damp salty atmosphere. Salt in the air is corrosive to the brick and mortar of a chimney. Though a chimney may appear stable from the ground, at higher levels the mortar is generally softer. The crown and final courses will take the brunt of the abuse and are the most likely to show failures. When the mortar joints take on water they eventually reach a point of saturation. When the joints have failed and are saturated, water begins to infiltrate the structure. This leads to interior damage to the building as well as accelerated decay of adjacent mortar joints.

The best preventative measure is to periodically apply masonry sealant to exposed masonry as well as scheduling of periodic chimney inspection. For Cumberland County Maine, There is [RL Sanborn Masonry, a Chimney Inspection Contractor.](#)