# **Inspection Times**

November 2010

#### ASK THE INSPECTOR...

#### **Question**

We'd like to put in hardwood floors in our house while it's too cold for outdoor projects, but there are so many. Which type should we choose?

#### **Answer**

It's becoming the flooring of choice for kitchens, living rooms, and throughout the house. But the huge variety of materials and finishes available can make it hard to pick the right material for your application. Some things to consider:

- \* Solid hardwood flooring is manufactured in varying thickness milled directly from the source hardwood. It can be bought unfinished or with a factory finish.
- \* Oak is harder and more durable than most other types, making it less prone to show dents and wear over time. Exotic and other domestic hardwoods have their own style and grain pattern.
- \* Factory finished hardwood floors are often UV-cured, which creates a stronger, more durable finish. They are less messy and faster to install.
- \* Engineered hardwood floors consist of cross-ply layers of wood glued together under heat and pressure. Some engineered floors are injected with liquid acrylics to make them three times as hard as the nontreated types. Used for both commercial and residential applications, they are more durable and stable than solid hardwood. Engineered floors can also be treated with a distressing process for a more antique look.
- \* Solid hardwood floors must be nailed or stapled to a wood subfloor and can't be installed in basements. Engineered floors can be installed above or below ground. They can be installed over a multitude of subflooring materials including floor covering products.

#### **ARMOIRES FOR STORAGE?**

Historians say armoires were first used in Europe during the Middle Ages. They were more like a locker where the crusader could hang his suit of armor, spear, and sword. Later, they were used to store clothes. Virtually every bedroom in a castle, palace, or villa had one.

Through the centuries, armoires found their way into other households and cottages. When closets and basements appeared, however, they were relegated to antique museums.

In the '70s, armoires started to reappear. Young people found them in antique shops and chose many uses for them. Over time, their popularity has increased and they are again being used in many American homes.

They may be tall and trimmed with detail, a focal point for a room that gives it an heirloom flavor, or they may be more modern and simple in design but featuring beautiful woods.

While they serve well for storing clothes, they are becoming increasingly popular for housing a home office, and they are perfect for storing clutter.

If you have questions about home inspections or home maintenance, Ask the Inspector!

Call Pete Jung at 301-351-1113

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- ❖ FREE 128 page Home Maintenance Manual
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Pete Jung

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