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Average life expectancy of all components in a house

This document provides the average life expectancy of the various components of a structure, including its mechanical operation. Numerous factors affect the normal life expectancy, including the weather, the location of the building in regards to the compass (cardinal) points, predominant wind direction, hills, lot slope, surrounding structures, quality of the workmanship, the quality and frequency of the maintenance.

These figures are just averages and should be taken as a simple guideline as to what to expect. If a hot water tank has an average life span of 10 years, and yours is 10 years old - it could rupture or stop working this year, or it could last another several years. During your pre-purchase inspection process you may discover some elements, material or items, which are past their normal life expectancy. Make a note of these and discuss with your real estate representative to see what further action you can take, if any at all. Ask your building inspector to provide you with some direction, timeline and budget amount for the possible replacement and maintenance of the house components.

Items	**Life expectation**
Roof	
Can be affected by many factors, including weather, sun exposure, overhanging trees, underlay material, roofing material, ice and water shields, proper ventilation, proper insulation, slope, and quality of workmanship.	
Conventional asphalt shingles (rated 15 years)	15 to 20 years
(rated 25 years)	25 to 30 years
Low slope shingles (no longer manufactured)	15 to 20 years
Slate	200 years
Cedar shingles	50 years
Cedar shakes	40 years
Tar & Gravel roof (build-up method)	25 to 35 years
Single ply-membrane	20 to 25 years
Double ply rubber membrane	30 to 35 years
Roll roofing (i.e. typical application on sheds and garages)	5 to 10 years
Steel roof covering	50 to 200 years
Aluminium shakes (newer product)	n/a
Most Manufacturers will offer a lifetime warranty on this product but the cost can be as high as 6 times the cost of the asphalt shingles.	
Exterior	
Aluminium eavesthrough (professionally installed)	25 to 30 years
Vinyl, plastic eavesthrough (self-installed)	10 to 15 years
Copper eavesthrough	75 to 150 years
Aluminium siding	40 years +
Vinyl siding	40 years +
Exterior paint (premium quality)	2 to 3 years
(standard quality)	4 to 10 years
Exterior stain (premium quality)	4 to 10 years
(standard quality)	3 to 5 years
Caulking around various window or door openings	4 to 10 years
Brick Veneer	50 to 150 years
Solid Brick (double and triple)	100 years+

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Items	Life expectation
Foundation	
Rubble or stone foundations (with regular maintenance)	150 to 250 years
Poured concrete (8" thick)	175 years
Hollow concrete block	150 years
Cinder Blocks (no longer made and recognised by its darker colour)	75 to 100 years
Pressure treated wood foundation (guaranteed for a minimum of 50 years by the manufacturer but they have yet to be fully tested	50 years +
Windows	
Wood windows (not maintained)	8 to 10 years
(maintained and painted)	50 years +
Extruded Aluminium windows (more expensive than bent aluminium)	35 to 50 years
Bent aluminium windows	15 to 20 years
PVC (plastic) on wood	35 years +
PVC	35 years +

Patio doors may have a similar life expectancy except for the extra wear caused by frequent opening and closing.

Wood decks and fences	
Pine, spruce, and other standard woods, which are not painted stained or otherwise treated	5 to 7 years
Pressure treated (PT) lumber	20 years
Cedar	15 to 20 years
Man made decking material with polymers or other resins	50 years
Driveways	
Asphalt surfaces with 4" of crushed stone underlay (improperly packed, which is what is normally seen with the new homes)	10 years
Asphalt surface with 8" of crushed stone, properly packed and properly draining	20 years
Interlocking clay bricks	20 to 35 years
Concrete driveways	25 years
Pools	
In-ground pool, concrete perimeter, no liner	35 years +
Vinyl liner (liner itself)	10 to 15 years
Above ground pools	20 years
Above ground pool liners	10 to 15 years
Pool pumps and filter systems	10 to 15 years

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Chimneys

The type of use for the chimney will affect its life span. A chimney used for heating will deteriorate faster than one used infrequently for a fireplace. This also applies to chimneys which have clay liner or metal inserts. Most of the serious deterioration occurs above the roofline. The chimney cap is usually the first component that needs replacing. As with roof coverings, the angle of the predominant wind, sun, trees, vines and water infiltration will greatly affect the life span.

Brick with clay liner	35 years
Stone with clay liner	35 years
Block with clay liner	20 years
Metal Insulated	50 years
Concrete cap	5 to 10 years
Metal cap	10 to 20 years

Interiors

Heating systems

Electric baseboard heaters	35 years +
Electric furnace with air blower	15 to 25 years
Forced air oil – conventional efficiency	25 years
- mid to high efficiencies	25 years
Forced air gas and propane- conventional efficiency	15 years
- mid to high efficiencies	15 to 20 years

Note that if these above units have air conditioning combined with them, the overall life span can be reduced by 10 years or more.

Boilers oil or gas, Cast Iron steel	35 to 100 years
Boilers oil or gas, Steel on steel	35 to 50 years

Air conditioners electric	10 to 15 years
Air to air thermo-pumps	10 to 15 years
Ground source thermo heat pumps	20 years

Since the interior evaporator coil of the a/c produces moisture and water that drips on the heat exchanger, it substantially reduces the normal life expectancy of any furnaces.

Oil tanks (steel)

Interior	20 years
Exterior (unprotected from the elements)	10 years
(protected from the elements)	20 years
Propane tanks	10 years
Gas metres	10 to 15 years

Interior Plumbing system

The hardness of the water, base temperature, hot water temperature will affect the life expectancy.

<u>Drain lines</u>

Cast Iron	50 to 200 years
Galvanized plumbing (see Insurance issues)	5 to 40 years
Copper	50 to 75 years

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Interior Plumbing system (continued)

ABS, PVC and other plastic/polymer composites	50 to 100 years

Supply lines

Lead	50 to 200 years
Galvanized plumbing (see insurance issues section)	10 to 50 years
Copper rigid or flex pipes	50 to 75 years
Plastic (Pex, Plex, Plexiglas)	50 to 75 years
ABS	50 to 75 years
PVC	20 years
Septic system with leaching bed (If well maintained and pumped regularly)	20 years +

Electrical wiring

Knob & tube wiring (see insurance issues)	50 to 75 years
Copper (Romex, NMD)	75 years +
Non metallic sheathing, wet underground wires	50 years +
Exterior above head wires	35 years
BX sheathed wires	75 years +
Aluminium wires (some maintenance and insurance issues)	75 years +
Rigid conduit wiring	75 years +

Interior wall finishes

Paint (premium quality)	4 to 10 years
(standard quality)	2 to 4 years

Floor Covering

Hardwood floors	50 to 150 years
Manufactured wood laminates	25 to 50 years+
Vinyl cushion, tiles	15 to 20 years
Ceramic tiles floors	15 to 25 years
Marble tiles	25 to 75 years
Slate tiles	200 years
Carpets	10 to 25 years

We would like to stress the importance of properly preparing the floor surface to be covered, and the importance of a solid base. The quality of the under-pad can make a substantial difference to the lifespan of a carpet.

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