

Home Inspection - Get it right the first time!

The home looks perfect. You are all set to sell it for a high price. Don't let this dream turn into a nightmare because you did not get a home inspection. The checklist in this report may save you a lot of hassle during the sale.

An inspector who is a member of the ASHI (American Society of Home Inspectors) is a good choice. These inspectors are considered highly qualified and reliable.

Your Role in a Home Inspection:

1. Choose a home inspector who understands your situation as a home seller and is willing to guide you through the process.
2. Be prepared with questions on all the systems in the house and also the environmental issues the buyer may be concerned about. Some of the environmental issues may include lead paint notification, radon, UFFI and certification of the septic system.
 - **Lead Paint:** Homes built before 1978 are likely to have lead-based paint, which may lead to the risk of lead poisoning. Find out if your home falls in this category.
 - **Radon:** This is a colorless, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas that comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in rock deposits. High levels of radon can increase the risk of lung cancer. Check your home records for any references to radon.
 - **UFFI:** This is a type of insulation that was sprayed in the 70's and emits a toxic gas, due to which the state banned UFFI in 1979. Get more information on this if your home was built around the 70's.
3. Get organized and compile good records of each of the components and structural elements of the house. You can create a folder with files on each of the areas and make notes. Here are some of the components you may want to begin with:
 - Foundation
 - Roof
 - Heating System
 - Air-conditioning
 - Electrical Service
 - Water Heater, Pool & Jacuzzi
 - Septic System
 - Deck
 - Garden
 - Fireplaces
4. Try to think of all the questions you may be asked. Be prepared with suitable responses to the questions below:
 - How would you describe the condition of the roof? What type of maintenance would be required going forward?
 - Based on the geographical location of the home, is any special equipment needed? Is this home equipped to handle natural occurrences like a tornado, hurricane, flood or earthquake?
 - Did you observe any safety issues? Considering that we will have children and pets in the home, do you recommend any enhancements or special proofing to avoid accidents?
 - Are there any other hazards that may cause long-term health issues? Are there any environmental concerns regarding the location and the zoning that I need to know about?
 - What is your estimate of the cost for fixing the major problem areas?

- Can you explain the structure of your report? Will you be able to provide me with a summary of the vital issues in the report?
- What section of the report will include information on energy efficiency and maintenance?
- If I forget to ask something, or if my bank or insurance company has a question after the inspection, may we call you?

Look out for:

1. Mold stains and odors, particularly since black mold is toxic. Treat the area to get rid of any mold. Air the home to ensure that it does not buildup again.
2. Lighting: Test fixtures, both interior and exterior, and check the electrical systems.
3. Heating system: Test the thermostats to make sure the heating system is working. Don't forget to purchase CARBON MONOXIDE detectors to provide alerts. Check for fire hazards and test the smoke detectors.
4. Basements and crawlspaces should be inspected in daylight. Any exposed earth or moisture in basements should be covered and leaks plugged.
5. Make sure the septic system is checked. This can cause a great deal of frustration and unpleasantness in the event of a breakdown. Some inspectors flush a color dye into the toilet and then see if the dye appears on the drain field. If it does, it signals a problem.
6. Check the gutters and clear channels to ensure uninterrupted flow. Downspouts will allow the water to be directed away from the house.
7. Get a termite inspection done by a licensed structural pest control operator. Yes, there is such a person! Find out how serious the problem really is.
8. If there is a well on the premises, ensure a complete potability and mineralization test.

Here is an alphabetical checklist of the areas you may want to cover:

- A** Air-conditioning, Appliances, Attics
- B** Basements, Bathrooms, Blinds, Shades & Drapes, Brickwork
- C** Carpet Spots, Ceilings, Closets
- D** Decks & Patios, Dehumidifiers, Dishwashers
- E** Electrical, Exterior Walls, Energy Efficiency
- F** Fences, Fireplaces, Floor Scratches
- G** Garages, Gutters & Downspouts
- H** Heat Pumps, Humidifiers
- I** Insulation, Interior Walls, Insects
- L** Laundry Rooms, Lawn & Garden, Lawn Sprinklers, Lighting
- M** Mirrors
- O** Odors
- P** Plumbing, Pools, Ponds
- S** Stairs & Steps, Skylights, Stains, Security, Septic System
- T** Tiles, Termites
- W** Woodwork, Wood Rot, Water Heaters, Wallpapering

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