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HOME BUYING 101

Buying a home is supposed to be a happy positive experience.

Your home inspector can make sure you have only pleasant surprises when you're finally done with the closing and are living in your new home,

By doing a thorough inspection, and letting you know all the things that might be problems, and what should be done about them

BEFORE you own it.

That way, you can have the seller take care of some of the problems, get a price break from the seller on some of them, and get any serious issues dealt with before you move in.

A thorough inspection can take 2-3 hours or more.

Here are the things your home inspector should check during an inspection:

EXTERIOR

- 6 Overall appearance of the house, which will tell you if the seller has “taken pride” in it, and maintained it. This is very important.
- 7 Condition of sidewalk(s), driveway, path(s), patio’s, decks. These can be expensive and disruptive things to have to repair.
- 8 Condition of siding, doors, and windows. This includes trim, hinges, latches, and window frames and sills. These are also expensive and disruptive things to have to repair.
- 9 Condition of the roof, which includes rain gutters, and downspouts.
- 10 Condition and location of electric power wires (overhead service), where and how they attach to the house, electrical conduit for service wires, electric meter box, and how the wires go through the wall of the house into the house.
- 11 Condition of trees, bushes, grass, and other landscaping.
- 12 Basement windows, window wells (if any).
- 13 Termite and carpenter ant inspection.
- 14 Garage and shed(s) if any.

INTERIOR

BASEMENT

- 15 Basement (if any) floor – any cracks or uneven surface, general condition.
- 16 Foundation walls – check for leaks, and structural sound-ness, look for mold.
- 17 Check for presence of Dry-Lock paint – indicates a previous or current water leakage problem.
- 18 Utilities pass through foundation walls should be sealed or otherwise caulked, condition of pipes (water and sewer and gas). Look for shut-off valves, determine condition and how to operate them.
- 19 Condition of pipes (water, sewer, and gas) in the basement, location of these pipes (are they in the way of anything, will they be damaged during normal use of the basement?). Are they rusted, or leaking, or do they look weak or damaged.
- 20 Electric circuit breaker box, and service wires coming in from the meter.
- 21 Circuit breakers – condition, age, adequacy, how many amps power. Look for Federal Pacific breaker panel, and Stab-Lok circuit breakers. If circuit breakers are too old, should have an electrician do a load test.
- 22 Furnace (or boiler) for heat, and A/C – check age and condition. Check color of flame. Should be red for oil, and blue for gas. Look for rust. Test and measure the temperature of the air at the vents or the temperature of radiators or baseboard units. Check for shut-off switches and valves for the gas or oil line. Check flue pipe condition.
- 23 Hot Water Heater – check age and condition. Look for any leaks. Check the pressure relief valve and overflow pipe. Check color of flame if gas. Should be blue. Check flue pipe condition (if gas). Check condition of pipes – check for corrosion or rust. Check shut-off valves for gas and water. Check temperature of water (measure at the nearest sink).
- 24 Check washer and dryer if in basement. Run both to see that they work and don't leak.
- 25 Check any “back door”s or “Bilco door”s for condition and leakage.
- 26 Check windows for leakage and condition and signs of termites.
- 27 Check sill plate and framing around the foundation for signs of termites.
- 28 If there is a boiler or steam heat, check to see that there is no asbestos on the pipes or boiler.

29 Set up radon test canisters.

MAIN FLOOR

- 30 If the home is older than 1979, check for old woodwork that may contain lead paint.
- 31 Check entrance door, and entrance hallway for airleaks, fit of door, condition of walls and floor and windows.
- 32 Check all rooms for condition of floor, walls, ceiling, windows, and doors.
- 33 Energy efficiency of these parts of the house – double sheet thermal or single sheet glass windows, storm windows, etc? Use of Infrared Camera for this.

KITCHEN

- 34 Check all plumbing (kitchen sink, dishwasher) for leaks, and adequate water pressure. Check temperature of hot water.
- 35 Check stove for functioning, check range hood – vent-outside is preferable.
- 36 Check dishwasher for functioning, and that it does not leak
- 37 Check refrigerator / freezer for age, general condition, and temperature of freezer and refrigerator. Check ice-maker, water dispenser and ice dispenser
- 38 Check cabinets for loose hinges and doors that fit, etc.
- 39 Check electric outlets for GFCI – if they are GFCI, test the GFCI to see that it works.

OTHER ROOMS

- 40 Check windows for operation (can they be opened, do they stay open?)
- 41 Check windows for air leaks, proper functioning (can they be opened?, do they stay up when they are opened)
- 42 Check temperature of heat and A/C air at vents in room closes to the furnace.
- 43 Use Infrared Camera to test walls and ceiling (in ranch homes) for adequate insulation.
- 44 Inspect walls and ceilings for condition.
- 45 Inspect electric outlets for 2-prong / 3-prong and if 3-prong, check for proper grounding, and proper wiring.

46 Check that lights work.

47 Check interior doors that they close and stay shut, including closet doors

BATHROOMS

48 Check that the toilet is fastened securely to the floor, and that it flushes completely and without having to hold the handle down.

49 Check that the sink does not leak, that the stopper works, and that it drains properly.

50 Check that the tub/shower or stall shower works properly, and drains properly without leaks.

51 Check condition of floor and walls.

52 Check that there is an exhaust vent fan and that it works.

53 Check electric outlet(s) for GFCI and that the GFCI works correctly.

54 Check lights.

55 Check that water from the shower does not get into any window frames (window in the shower).

ATTIC

56 Check access to the attic (hatch in ceiling / pull-down-stairs).

57 If a dormer, check behind kneewalls for insulation and possible damage.

58 Check attic for insulation, and adequate ventilation.

59 Check the underside of the roof for stains indicating leakage, or mold indicating leakage or too much humidity.

60 Check that bathroom vents and clothes dryer(s) are NOT simply vented into the attic but go through the roof to proper vents outside.

61 Check chimney and/or chimney flue pipe and roof penetrations to chimney for leaks and combustible clearance.

62 Check plumbing vent pipes through the roof (similar concerns to bathroom vents and chimney pipes).

63 Check for unsafe wiring or knob-and-tube wiring that may be "live".

GARAGE

- 64 Check that there are GFCI outlets and that they work
- 65 Check that the safety features of the motorized garage doors work
- 66 Check that the motorized doors open and close properly and that the parts are secure.
- 67 Check that firewall requirements are met
- 68 Check that the door to the house is raised above the height of the floor, and that the door closes automatically and latches
- 69 Check that there are no flame producing devices (furnace, boiler, or hot water heater) within 18 inches of the floor.