

## HOW TO AVOID A HOME INSPECTION

**Or, more to the point, How to Avoid a BAD Home Inspection.** Over the years professional home inspectors have identified a list of problems that typically appear on purchasers' home inspection reports. Early correction of these problems can increase a home's appeal, and it's selling price. Correction also sets the stage for a favorable home inspection report should the purchaser request one, and thereby helps to streamline your sale. The following checklist can help you achieve your marketing goals.

Using the checklist as a guide to examine your house will enable you to see your house the way a prospective purchaser or a professional home inspector might. Is your home physically fit? To give your home a competitive edge when it's time to sell, make sure it is in good physical condition. This not only makes your house more attractive and desirable, it also simplifies or eliminates the negotiation process when the time comes for the buyer's pre-purchase inspection.

According to home inspection experts everywhere, approximately half of the resale homes on the market today have at least one significant defect. Routine maintenance is the best way to prevent major costly problems from developing in the first place. So, if you've been putting off repairs, now is the time to catch up, as quick as you can!

**To identify which components are most in need of repair, many sellers now enlist professional home inspectors before putting up the 'For Sale' sign.**

A professional home inspection is an objective, in-depth visual examination of a home's structure and operating systems, and should result in a detailed report describing the condition of the home. The main intent of a home inspection is to educate the client as to the physical condition of the home.

No house is perfect, and a home inspection is not intended to identify every little blemish or minute surface imperfection. The conscientious home inspector tries to discover if there are major defects in a home that the client, and perhaps no one else, is aware of - and should also point out the positive aspects of a house. A good or better than average report can be a good marketing tool for vendors and their agents.

### **Check the major systems.**

After size, style and location, a home buyer's primary concern is the condition of the basic structure and major electro-mechanical systems. Most buyers do not want to invest a great deal of money correcting problems in such critical areas. A thorough investigation of the following major items should be made in order to determine if they are serviceable:

- Roof structure and covering
- Foundation, basement, and/or crawl space
- Central heating and air conditioning systems
- Electrical system
- Plumbing system

### **Make maintenance improvements.**

The maintenance improvements listed below are relatively easy and inexpensive to make, yet they can substantially improve a home's appearance, efficiency and comfort.

- Trim trees and shrubs which touch or overhang the house.
- Apply new caulking and weather-stripping as needed around windows and doors.
- Clean gutters of debris and leaves, repair or replace cracked or broken gutters, downspouts and extensions to ensure proper drainage
- Replace bathroom caulk or grout where necessary to prevent seepage and improve appearance.
- Re-grade soil around the house to prevent ponding of water next to the foundation
- Replace dirty filters in the heating and ventilating systems
- Have the heating, ventilating and air-conditioning systems professionally serviced

### **Pay attention to details.**

Fixing even minor items can go a long way toward improving that important first impression of your home. Here are some improvements which you might consider:

- Repair leaky faucets
- Tighten loose door knobs
- Replace damaged screens
- Replace broken panes of glass - cloudy sealed-pane units can often be replaced inexpensively, and will drastically improve the appearance of a window or patio door.
- Replace burned-out light bulbs, and wherever possible, replace broken light fixtures
- Secure loose railings

### **Take safety precautions.**

Pay attention to items relating to protecting the home and its occupants from danger. The following are important safety precaution which home buyers will appreciate, are relatively easy to implement and shouldn't cost a lot. And they'll create a great impression!

- Installing good quality smoke detectors
- Ensure adequate outdoor lighting, especially in suburban and rural locales
- 'GFCI' outlets outdoors and in wet locations such a bath & laundry areas.
- Check the 'down' tension on garage door openers, and ensure that the door reverses without an excessive amount of pressure.

### **Prepare for the buyer's inspection.**

More and more purchasers are requesting pre-purchase inspections. It's a good idea to assemble in advance, the various house records that can be used to answer questions from the purchaser and their inspector.

### **You should try to have on hand:**

- Appliance receipts, service records and warranties
- Information on the age of major components such as the roof coverings, furnace, air-conditioner, etc.
- Major component warranties (e.g. roofing, siding, windows, A/C)
- Heating, water and electric bills from at least the past 12 months

### **How did your house make out?**

Hopefully, this home seller's checklist has helped you gain a clearer knowledge of your home's overall condition - from a buyer's perspective. Now you can make repairs or improvements which will increase your home's marketability. And remember, you ARE marketing your house- you probably wouldn't try to sell your car without making it clean and ready. It just makes good sense! Of course, even if your house is already in optimum condition, a professional home inspection can also be a good marketing tool. Just leave a copy of the report on the kitchen table for agents and purchasers to read.



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