

# HOME INSPECTING CHECKLIST

**Finding faults** in a home doesn't necessarily mean you shouldn't buy it. But it will help you to know the type of repair costs that should be anticipated, and sellers often will make adjustments in their asking price on the basis of problems discovered in an inspection. Inspectors look for the following:

**Exterior** Is the house well maintained? Does the roof sag? Are the exterior walls out of line? What is the condition of the paint, especially on the south and west sides, where sun exposure is greatest? Is there adequate drainage away from the house?

- **Roof** Are shingles curling and lifting? Find out how old the roof is, and you will have a pretty good idea of when you will have to replace it.

- **Windows and Doors** Has the glazing putty dried and shrunk, allowing water and air seepage? Is the wood decayed? Are the window and door frames caulked and weather-stripped?

- **Brick and Concrete** Check pavement, driveways and horizontal brick surfaces for cracks. Is there damage from freezing? What is the condition of the mortar between the bricks? Is any pavement buckling from spreading underground tree roots?

- **Insulation Check** the attic and crawl space. Is the insulation adequate and complete? Has it been properly installed? Does the insulation obstruct the air vents, preventing the house from "breathing" and possibly causing wood rot? Does the home have storm windows?

**Interior** The kitchen and baths are the most expensive rooms to renovate, so check their condition carefully. A newly painted interior may look nice, but it could be hiding something.

- **Plumbing** Turn on the bathroom sink faucet and shower and then flush the toilet. When the toilet starts to refill, does the water pressure diminish? Fill sinks and tub with three inches of water. Do they drain properly? Do faucets leak? Lift up the carpeting. Are there any signs of flooding or decay?

- **Electrical** Open the door on the fuse box or circuit-breaker panel. Is the electrical service adequate? The average house should have 100-amp service. Is it wired for 220 volts, which is necessary for electric dryers and ranges?

**Heating** How old is the heating system? Has it been maintained? Ask to see the owner's heating bills for the previous year. This will give you an idea of its energy efficiency.

**Termites and Carpenter Ants** Termites and Carpenter Ants Look for evidence of termites and carpenter ants on basement wood framing. Is there saw dust like wood or paper debris? Can you find evidence of termite tubes or tunnels? Termites live in earth, so make sure that there are no places where earth is closer than six inches to wood. Like termites, carpenter ants like wood and wood products.

**Water Damage** Water Damage Look in the basement for signs of leakage. This could be a result of poor drainage around the house. Water damage also is caused by seepage through porous basement walls and condensation, which frequently is caused by inadequate ventilation. Basement walls painted a dark color may be an effort to disguise a past problem.

**Beware Of** Chalky white water stains on foundation walls or partitions; stains on wood and drywall; delamination of paneling and lifting or buckling floor tiles; or a damp, mildew odor.

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