

Why Have a Home Inspection?

There are several reasons to have a home inspection. The first is to make sure you don't have any major surprises after taking occupancy of the home. Surprises would be issues like a failing roof, leaky basement, faulty foundation, inoperative HVAC system or a host of other items that may involve significant expense. An expert home inspector will inform you of the condition of the home and items requiring immediate repair as well as items to monitor over time or items that may require further evaluation by a specialist. Some home inspectors also provide the estimated life expectancy of components and/or repair instructions but this is not required. If, for example, the roofing is likely to need replacement in the next 1-3 years, this should be a budget item. A list of estimated house component life expectancies is available at the National Association of Home builders website:

www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=72539

The inspection should make the buyer an informed consumer, but keep in mind that there is no such thing as a perfect home, not even a new one.

The inspection will also highlight important safety concerns such as defective ground fault interrupters, gas leaks, unsafe decks, missing guardrails and Carbon Monoxide hazards. The inspector's number one concern is the safety of his buyers, their families and guests. Safety concerns may also include suggestions for safety upgrades including GFCIs (not required when older homes were built), photo eyes on the garage doors and carbon monoxide detectors.

The home inspection should also be educational, especially for the first time buyers. The location of the main electrical, water and gas (if available) disconnects should be pointed out. Suggestions for routine maintenance, including the importance of cleaning gutters, location of heating and air conditioning filters and keeping trees trimmed off the roof may also be discussed.

The home inspection is a vital part of the home buying process. Don't skip this step as buying a home is likely to be the largest expenditure of your life. Why take a chance on not being informed?

About the Author

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