

Home Inspections

Do you want a home inspection? A question commonly asked by real estate agents. Yes, I do! This is typically the response and it's a no brainer. For most people, the purchase of a home is the largest investment and biggest purchase they will ever make. Therefore, a professional home inspection is a must. At the expense of a few hundred dollars, a purchaser can be confident that the decision to purchase a particular home is a sound one.

A comprehensive inspection includes a visual examination of the structure from top to bottom; including the heating and air conditioning systems, the interior plumbing and electrical systems, the roof and visible insulation, walls, ceilings, floors, windows and doors, the foundation, basement and the visible structure.

Following the examination, the home inspector will provide a detailed, written description of any possible defects or areas of concern. This report is usually accompanied by photographs pertaining to any issues. You are now prepared to analyze and estimate the cost of any repairs that may be forthcoming. At a minimum, this inspection will help a buyer or seller avoid any unpleasant surprises.

A professional home inspection is so widely accepted that the standard residential contract provided by the National Association of Realtors contains an extensive explanation of the procedure that buyers, sellers and their agents agree to follow as they deal with home inspections. It is spelled out that the purchaser has ten business days to complete a professional home inspection and provide the seller with a copy of the report and the purchaser's response. If this procedure is not completed within the ten business day period, the home inspection section of the contract is null and void. The contract goes on to explain time frames that sellers and buyers are obligated to respond to each other and also who and when a contract can be voided.

The whole process makes good sense and can be an advantage to both the buyer and the seller. The thing that aggravates me about home inspections is that many buyers and some real estate agents feel that the results of a home inspection become an opportunity to renegotiate the contract. Well, technically it is, but you hate to start over again with buyers and sellers that could be under a great deal of stress. Should the home inspection reveal issues that need immediate attention, the problem of affordability may surface. Sometimes a seller can't afford to make corrections or is unwilling to make the corrections.

Most home inspectors don't leave a stone unturned. Some will write-up that a light bulb is burned out, or there is a crack in the driveway or on a switch plate cover. Of course, you've got to expect some normal wear and tear on a thirty-five year old home. When representing the seller of an older home, I will put the following language in the contract. "A home inspection is expected, both the buyer and the seller want to be certain that there are no structural or mechanical problems. It is not an opportunity for the purchaser to create a punch list of imperfections. The home is not new construction."

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