

Your Do-it-yourself Home Inspection Checklist

This checklist is not meant to substitute for getting a professional home inspection job done; however, if you are a buyer or seller, this list may help you with the “inspection” that you do when looking at houses or getting your house ready for sale. There are many areas of the home that may be dangerous for either the homeowner or a home buyer to do more than just make a visual inspection, so those areas are treated in a rather cursory way and a thorough inspection is best left to the professionals.

Outside Inspection Checklist

___ Propane Tank (If any) . See if it is securely mounted, and the line isn't where people will trip on it. If it is near the driveway, it should have posts or other safety barrier.

___ Grading and Drainage. Does the lot slope towards the house, potentially causing water to enter? Are there any spots where water collects and causes problems?

___ Landscaping. Are trees too close to lines or roofs? Are there any dead trees that will have to be removed for safety? What other work will the landscaping need? Are flower beds trapping water against the house?

___ Building Exterior. Is the paint in good condition? Any cracked or crumbly stucco? Any flaking of bricks? Are there any obvious signs of rotting trim? Are siding boards warped or cracked? Are gutters clogged or coming loose? Are there gutter extensions to take water away from the house?

___ Roof. How long before the shingles will need replacing? Are shingles curling or splitting? Are there more than two layers of shingles? Any obvious sagging in the roof? Any gaps around chimneys and pipes? Is the trim rotting? Are the soffits sagging? Does there appear to be a drip molding at the roofs edge?

___ Doors. Are the doors in good shape? Are they mis-aligned (this may indicate settling of the walls or foundation)? Do the locks work? How is the caulking around the doors?

___ Windows. Are windows in good condition? Any broken glass or broken seals (do you see condensation between the panes)? Any rot around the edges? Do they all have screens? How is the caulking around the windows?

___Foundation. Are there any visible cracks in the foundation (over 1/8" or cracks that are mis-aligned are a potential warning sign)? Is the top high enough off the ground so insects can't easily reach the wood?

___Driveway. Will it need any resurfacing or repairs? Are there any cracks larger than 1 inch wide?

___Porches. Are the porch boards solid? Does it need paint or stain? Are the supports sufficient? Is there a railing around the porch and, if so, is it solid?

___Sheds. Are the shed doors working? Can you see light coming in anywhere when you are inside? IS the roof on the shed in good condition? Is the shed floor solid?

___Electrical. (See the electrical checklist below.)

___Fences. Are the fences in good condition? Are the bases of the fence posts rotting?

___Other.

Garage Inspection Checklist

___Firewall. Is there a firewall (usually 5/8" taped-joint drywall) between the garage and the house?

___Floor. Is the floor level? Is it cracking badly? Is there a drain, and does it work?

___Walls. Are the walls in good condition?

___Doors. Does the garage door work? Are the other doors in good working condition?

___Other.

Living Room, Dining Room And Bedrooms Inspection Checklist

___Walls. Are there any cracks, bulges, peeling paint or wallpaper? Are there any water stains?

___Ceiling. Is there any peeling paint? Is the ceiling sagging?

___Floor. Does the floor feel level? Is the carpeting pulling lose anywhere? Are there any large stains or damaged areas?

___ Lights. Test all light switches.

___ Electrical outlets. Test all outlets (Get a little tester at a hardware store). Are all outlets working and anchored firmly to the walls? Are there covers on all outlets?

___ Windows. Can the windows be opened and closed easily? Are the blinds and curtains functioning?

___ Other.

Kitchen Home Inspection Checklist

___ Walls. Are there any cracks, bulges, peeling paint or wallpaper?

___ Ceiling. Is there any peeling paint? Is the ceiling sagging?

___ Floor. Does the floor feel level? Is there any loose or bulging linoleum? Loose flooring tiles? Are there any large stains or damaged areas?

___ Lights. Test all light switches.

___ Electrical outlets. Are all outlets working and anchored firmly to the walls? Are the electrical outlets ground faulted?

___ Windows. Can the windows be opened and closed easily? Are the blinds and curtains functioning?

___ Appliances. Check any appliances included in the sale, to see that they are working.

___ Exhaust Fans. Does the fan work?

___ Faucets, Sinks and Drains. Turn on any faucets, watching the color of the water, how long it takes for hot water to get there, and whether the sink drains easily. Check under the sink for any moisture from leaky drains.

___ Other.

Bathroom Home inspection Checklist

___ Walls. Are there any cracks, bulges, peeling paint or wallpaper?

___ Ceiling. Is there any peeling paint? Is the ceiling sagging?

___Floor. Does the floor feel level? Is there any loose or bulging linoleum? Loose flooring tiles? Are there any large stains or damaged areas?

___Lights. Test all light switches.

___Electrical outlets. Are all outlets working and anchored firmly to the walls? Are wall outlets ground faulted?

___Can the windows be opened and closed easily? Are the blinds and curtains functioning?

___Exhaust Fan. Test the fan. Does it sound normal?

___Faucets, Sinks and Drains. Turn on any faucets, watching the color of the water, how long it takes for hot water to get there, and whether the sink drains easily.

___Bathtub and Shower. Does the shower work? Does the tub drain easily? Is there any damage to walls around the tub? Are there heavy mineral stains in the tub?

___Toilet. Flush the toilet to test it. Is there any dripping from valves behind the toilet? Can you still hear dripping after the tank is full?

___Mirrors. Is the mirror delaminating? Are there any cracks?

___Other.

Attic Inspection Checklist

___Insulation. Is there sufficient insulation, and is it in good condition?

___Wires. Is the wiring updated (no bare wires on insulators)?

___Roof. Can you see light coming in through the roof anywhere? Is it sagging? Do the supports look normal and sufficient? Do you see any evidence of water running down boards or trusses? Can you see black spots or patches that might be mold?

___Vents. Are there air vents? Are they properly screened?

___Pests. Is there any sign of animals (droppings, fur, chewed wood)?

___Other.

Electrical Inspection Checklist

___ Mast. Is the electrical connection (the mast) attached solidly to the house? Are the wire ends bare? (They need to be re-taped.)

___ Outside wires. Are any wires rubbing against the house? Is there a proper drip-loop, to keep rain water from entering into the service panel? Are the lines more than 10 feet above the ground or driveway? Are there any lines going to exterior lights? Do these lights work?

___ Breaker Box. Are there breakers, and not fuses (some insurance companies won't insure a house with fuses)? Are they labeled? Are the breakers the right size (no 40 amp breakers with 30 amp wire)? Is the breaker box covered? Are any of the terminals corroded? Are any of the circuits "doubled up" – more than one set of wires running to them?

___ Wiring. Does the wiring look normal? Is copper wire mixed with older aluminum wire? Are there any exposed splices? (These need to be in junction boxes.) Are there any wires with evidence of burning? (Fire hazard.) Is there exposed wiring? (Needs to be in conduit.) Any exposed wire ends? (Need to be capped.) Wiring in open framing (garage) is supposed to be 7 feet above the floor.

___ Outlets. All should have undamaged covers. Outdoor outlets should have weather protection.

___ Other.

Basement Home Inspection Checklist

___ Water. Is there any standing water? Are there any stains indicating there is water at times?

___ Floor Joists. Do the floor beams look good (no sagging or rotting or insect damage)?

___ Walls. Are there any large cracks in the walls? Do they bulge in anywhere? Is there discoloration along the floor line that might be evidence of water effervescence through a block walls?

___ Supports. Do the supports look good? Are any of the supports new? If so, ask the seller why.

___ Faucets, Sinks and Drains. Try any faucets and drains.

___ Sump Pump. Does the sump pump work?

___Floor. Are there any large cracks in the floor?

___Other.

Fireplace Checklist

___Damper. Does the fireplace damper open and close easily?

___Structure. Are there any gaps or cracks? Is there a spark-arrester screen?

___Chimney. Is the chimney in good condition? Are the bricks coming apart? Is the chimney pulling away from the house? Is there creosote build-up? If the chase is wood, is the bottom sound or rotted? Is there a chimney cap on the chimney?

___Other.

Home Inspection Checklist - All The Rest

___Entry. Is the entry well lit? Is there any damage to the floor or walls?

___Furnace. Is the furnace working (turn down the thermostat to get it to turn on)? Does the fan sound smooth when it's on? Is the flame blue (best) or orange? (Yellow is a problem.) Are the ducts firmly attached? Is there any smell of gas? If there's a humidifier, does the pad look clean and is the water hooked up and working?

___Water Heater. Is the hot water hot? Is the water heater in good condition? Is there any staining around it that indicates leakage? Are any of the fittings rusting? Is there a water shut-off valve? Does the water heater have the proper overflow relief valve pipe installed (the pipe should extend from the valve to about 1-2 inches from the floor).

___Crawl space. Are the crawl spaces big enough to actually crawl in? When you look into them, is there any standing water? Is there any sagging in the floorboards, or any damage?

___Stairways. Are the stairs comfortable and safe for walking on? Any loose steps? Any broken edges? Do all stairways have handrails?

___Air Conditioning. Turn on the air conditioning to see if it works. Is the drainage causing any stains or damage? Are there plants too close to the outside condenser unit? Are the condenser units cooling fins clean and in good condition? Does the condenser unit run quietly?

___Are there smoke detectors on each level? Is there a carbon monoxide detector in the basement or lowest level?