

Buyer Preparation

A little time spent in planning and preparation before the Inspection will help reduce your chances of uncertainties during and after the Inspection.

Many buyers arrive at their Home Inspection unprepared. They are not aware of what all is involved in an Inspection, so they are not able to adequately prepare for it. Due to this, sometimes a buyer will have questions or concerns arise about the home. . .often days after the inspection was performed. Many times these questions could have been answered by the Inspector, had it been brought to his attention. The following sections will explain what a Home Inspection is, and what you as a buyer, can do to better prepare yourself for one.



What is a Home Inspection?

A Home Inspection is a visual inspection of a structure, made by a qualified professional, who is trained and has experience in evaluating all the component features in a house, and who is able to give a clear and accurate picture of the condition of these components. It is important to remember that a Home Inspection is basically visual in nature, with no intrusive drilling or digging performed. When you and your Home Inspector have completed the Inspection, the house must be in the same (or better) condition than it was when you first began.

A Home Inspection should have a distinct two-prong focus. **First**, the primary goal is to clearly identify any potential significant defect that will affect your buying decision, and give you a realistic approximation of repair costs. **Second**, is to clearly identify any areas in need of near term repairs, or any components that are reaching the end of their useful life span. Even though it is secondary, this area provides very useful information that you will need when setting up your maintenance budget.

A typical Home Inspection can be separated into three distinct areas:

- 1. The Home Inspection** – where you meet your Home Inspector and the actual evaluation of the property takes place. The inspection of a typical home usually takes between 1½ to 3 hours, depending upon the size and condition of the home.
- 2. The Report & Summary** – given at the end of the Inspection, where the condition of the house is summarized for you, and any significant defects and their repair costs are brought to your attention. ([See a completed copy of one of our Home Inspection Reports http://www.homegauge.com/report/1484410/](http://www.homegauge.com/report/1484410/))

3. Resource After The Inspection – an Inspector should make himself available to you after the Inspection, to clarify or answer any questions you may have about the Inspection and Report. This is part of the Inspection, and you should not expect to be charged an extra fee for this. An Inspector can be an invaluable resource for you, long after you have moved in. He can help provide you with referrals for contractors, advice and tips on home repairs, etc. Most Inspectors will not charge you for consultation over the telephone. If you want a home visit however, expect a fee to be involved.

A quality Home Inspection, performed by a professional, is designed to provide you with the information you need to make a more informed decision about your potential purchase. You should be able to walk away from the Inspection knowing, in a clear way, what your immediate major issues are (if any), and what items will need repair and/or maintenance in the near term.

Gather together pertinent information about the home that may be useful to the Inspector, when you meet him for the Inspection. These items could include the MLS (Multiple Listing Service) Data sheet, which gives the square footage of the house, the year it was built, and other important information; a copy of the Seller's Disclosure Statement, which can be helpful when trying to establish historical continuity; copies of any previous Home Inspections; and any other useful information you may have. The more information that your Home Inspector has about the property he is inspecting, the better he is able to do his job.

Prepare Questions, Make a list of any questions or concerns you have about the house, based upon your initial visit(s). If you are not familiar with the workings of a particular type of system or appliance in the house, note this as well. Are you planning to remodel after you move in? Maybe enlarge a room and move some walls but are not sure whether or not you can? Make note of this, too. Share your questions and concerns with your Inspector, when you meet at the property. **Remember, this is your Inspection!** The purpose of the Inspection is not only to identify potential significant defects, but also to answer questions you may have about the operation and maintenance of the components in the house.

Pad & Pencil, Be sure to bring something to take notes with. Your inspector will likely share valuable insights into the workings of your home that may be worth noting. You may also wish to record measurement of room sizes, floor layout, lot layout, etc. Some Sellers' will not permit pictures to be taken of the inside of the home, unless prior permission is granted. If you want to take pictures, you should have your Realtor contact the Seller for permission, prior to the inspection.

Consider Additional Testing, In addition to a general Home Inspection, you should be aware that optional testing in certain specific areas, is often desirable. **Radon Testing, Pest Inspections, Lead Paint Testing, Asbestos Testing**, etc., are several of the more commonly requested additional tests. **Most Home Inspectors** should be able to coordinate any additional testing for you. These optional tests are rarely included in an Inspectors standard fee, so be sure to ask about the extra costs involved. Also, be sure that the individual performing the additional testing is qualified in that particular area. Some testing (such as Radon) should only be performed by an individual with the necessary credentials. For instance, to be certain of the accuracy of a radon test result, and if the result is going to be used in a Real Estate transaction.

Be sure to contact your Home Inspector in advance, so he can prepare and coordinate the additional tests for you. If you plan on having any of these tests performed as a part of the general Home Inspection, often times they must be agreed upon ahead of time, and written into your Purchase Agreement with the Seller. You should contact your Realtor or your Attorney, to be sure that the specific additional test(s) you want performed is specified in your Purchase Agreement.

What if you can't be present for the inspection? Obviously, being able to walk through the house and talk face-to-face with the Inspector is the best option. However, there are many times, due to various circumstances, where a buyer cannot be physically present for the Home Inspection. This is a frequent occurrence, and there are several steps you can take to help ensure that the information you need is conveyed to you in an accurate and timely manner.

If you can't personally be present at the Home Inspection then;

- **Have a friend or relative** join the Inspector at the home. Convey to them any specific questions or concerns you have, so they can relay this information to the Inspector. Have them take notes for you. Always try to talk to your Inspector by telephone after the Home Inspection!
- **Talk to your Inspector by telephone** after the Home Inspection. It is important to connect with your Inspector verbally, as soon after the Inspection as possible. He will be able to review his notes with you, and summarize what the major issues are (if any), and what areas are in need of near term maintenance. This first-hand information is invaluable in giving you a clear picture of the condition of your home. You need to be made aware of any potentially significant defects, as soon as possible. Most Inspection Companies have toll-free telephone numbers, and will encourage out-of-state clients to use them.
- **Your Realtor** can assist by accompanying the Home Inspector, taking notes for you.
- **Always try to talk to your Inspector** by telephone as soon as possible, after the Home Inspection!

Should the Home Owner be present for the Home Inspection? Generally, no. There are some things that work, and then there are some things that don't work. Having the Seller present during an Inspection is something that often does not work! A professional Home Inspection, by its very design, is intended to be thorough and complete. Often times a Seller can become defensive because he feels the privacy of his home is being invaded. Sometimes a Seller can even become angry, if defects are found, or areas of "do-it-yourself" renovations are noted.

Remember, this is your inspection. This is the time for you and the Inspector to look at the house, and be able to freely discuss what you are seeing without fear of hurting someone's (the Seller's) feelings. When a Home Inspection is scheduled, it is important to emphasize this to your Realtor. If you happen to be purchasing a home without the services of a Realtor, then the responsibility of interacting directly with the Seller, will be totally up to you. It can sometimes be difficult asking a Seller not to be present, during the Inspection. After all, this is still his home. We have found, however, that if at all possible, it is the best route to take.