



Preparing a House for a Home Inspection

Helpful Hints:

Having the property pre-inspected by a licensed real estate inspector at the beginning of the sale process will provide a list of specific defects which can then be addressed by the home owner (seller) as they prepare the home for showing and eventual sale.

Many of the items on this checklist can be handled with little or no cost. Alleviating these defects prior to the buyer's inspection will indicate to the inspector and buyer that the house has been properly maintained.

Avoid hasty or amateur repairs.

A. Exterior

1. Foundation / Grading and Drainage
 - a. Touch up all mortar cracks in foundation and brick veneer
 - b. Remove or grade soil or bedding material away from contact with siding or brick.

Preferably, with 4"-6" of clearance achieved. Soil line should slope nicely away from house to draw away storm water.
2. **Roof surface / Chimney**
 - a. Clean gutters and debris on roof. Make sure gutter downspout extensions are in place.
 - b. Perform any spot repairs needed on roof: spot shingle repair, caulking any exposed nail heads or seams of other vent stack through holes.
 - c. Trim trees and bushes away from contact with the house.
 - d. Touch up masonry chimney caps. Check to see that all firebox components are in working order, damper, screen, gas valve (if present) and doors. Clean chimney if dirty.
3. **Exterior – General**
 - a. Caulk any separated window / door frames.
 - b. Are there any signs of Wood Destroying Insects? Seal any pest entry points.
 - c. Remove any wood or other debris from contact with the house.
 - d. If economically possible, repair or replace any rotted trim, siding or decking.
 - e. Is stair hand rail present / secure?
 - f. If brick veneer exterior, are weep holes free of obstruction.

B. Interior

1. **Attic**
 - a. Are all vent stacks vented to the exterior? None should terminate in the attic.
 - b. Are there any open wire splices present in the attic / crawlspace? If so, contain in electrical junction boxes.
 - c. Clear insulation away from water heater and heater vent pipes, chimney, canister lights.

2. **Doors and Windows**

- a. Ensure that all windows, doors, garage doors, attic doors are in proper operating condition. This includes:
 - Unsealing any paint sealed windows, cracked windows, window locks, security bars, popped moisture seals (double pane).
 - Adjusting or repairing safety reverse mechanisms for garage doors.
 - Tighten nuts and bolts to (or repair) attic door springs or steps on attic access ladder.
 - Ensure that window / door locks are in working order
 - Repair any doors / windows that do not latch or stick in the frame
 - If electric garage door is present, manual door lock should be removed

3. **Walls**

- a. Seal and paint any cracked sheetrock
- b. Stop / seal off any water penetration points.
- c. Repair or replace rotting wood at door or window frames / sills.
- d. Repair or replace any water damaged sheetrock, wood trim or paneling.
- e. Repair the cause and any minor damage resulting from any water intrusion or leakage.

4. **Plumbing**

- a. Place all plumbing fixtures in working order.
 - Fix any leading or dripping fixtures, clogged drains
 - Replace or repair any broken knobs, drain stops
 - Check that toilets are secure to the floor
 - Check that kitchen disposal is in working order
- b. Caulk or re-grout any cracks in bath and shower tiles.
- c. Check bathroom and utility room exhaust fans to ensure that they are in working order and are vented to an exterior location.
- d. Have exterior hose bibs been upgraded to anti-siphon, frost free hose bibs.

5. **Electrical**

- a. Replace any burned out light bulbs.
- b. Label any dead switches, dead outlets, fixtures not working or other common and known defects. Making these known alleviates confusion and concern.
- c. Replace or install any missing or damaged receptacle or switch covers.
- d. Install GFCI receptacles near all water sources; test all present GFCI receptacles for proper operation.
- e. If overhead service wires lead to the house, check to see that connections are secure, clearance is adequate for safety and that service mast (where wires go into the house) is secure.

C. **Heating and Air Systems**

1. If economically feasible, it is recommended to have HVAC system cleaned, serviced and placed in working order by an HVAC technician prior to inspection. Provide receipt of work performed to verify.
2. Replace a/c filter. Clean any dirty air vents (returns or plenums).
3. If heater is gas powered, does unit have gas shut off valve?
4. If gas heater: Gas flex line should to not terminate in the heater cabinet. Hard pipe to the exterior, then attach flex line.

5. If gas heater: Heater vent pipe should have minimum 1" clearance to combustibles.
6. Operate both systems; is the condensing unit outside noisy, blower noisy?
7. Are both heat and air cooling or heating properly?
8. Is the primary drain line from the coil insulated near the coil drain area?

C. Water Heater

1. If unit is gas powered:
 - a. If gas, is pilot lit and unit producing hot water?
 - b. If contained in a closet, does closet have upper and lower combustion air vents?
 - c. If gas, does gas line have shut off valve?
 - d. If located in an area where combustibles may be stored, unit is required to be at least 18 inches off the ground (gas or electric).
 - e. Is T&P valve plumbed to an outdoor location (gas or electric)?
 - f. If gas, heater vent pipe must have minimum 1" clearance to combustibles.

E. Appliances

1. **Stove and range top**
 - a. Are all burners in operable condition?
 - b. Does oven work in bake and broil settings?
 - c. If gas or electric range, is anti-tip device installed?
 - d. "Vent-A-Hood" – is system operable?
 - e. If "Vent-A-Hood" system is through vented is it terminated in an exterior location?
2. **Dishwasher** – Check for proper operation
3. **Washer / Dryer**
 - a. Check for proper operation
 - b. Does dryer vent pipe terminate in an exterior location?
 - c. Does water supply shut off valves work?
 - d. Check for and repair any water damage in and around washer.

F. Smoke Alarms

1. Make sure they are present and in working order!

Note: This checklist is for educational and guidance purposes only. This checklist is designed to empower the homeowner in preparing their home for inspection by a perspective buyer and then a licensed real estate inspector. This list is not designed nor does it replace the need for inspection of the property by a licensed real estate inspector. This list does not represent a complete representation of items inspected by a licensed real estate inspector. This checklist, while designed to be helpful in identifying defects common in a home, is not a complete checklist of possible defects that may occur in any given property.