

Home Inspection Checklist for Sellers

How exciting! You've listed your home, located a buyer and negotiated a purchase price! The sale of your home is almost complete; however, you still have to cross the finish line. In most real estate transactions, a home inspection will occur after the buyer has signed a purchase agreement and before the final closing date. Many home buyers will elect to make the closing contingent upon the results of the home inspection. As a seller, you will want the home inspection to go as smoothly as possible. Fortunately, there are some things you can do to prepare:

- Provide access to areas that need to be inspected** Ensure the home inspector has easy access throughout your property. Areas that cannot be accessed cannot be inspected, and those areas could be a red flag for the inspector and the buyers. Clear away any clutter impeding access to areas or systems that the inspector needs to check, including basements, attics, furnace rooms, and under sinks.
- Declutter the perimeter** The inspector will be reviewing the exterior of your home, to include siding, trim and caulking around windows and doors. Ensure areas around your home remain clear of plant growth, debris, and stored items so the inspector has easy access and clear visibility.
- Look at your roof** The roof is an integral component of the home inspection, so do not ignore it as you prepare. Clean moss and debris from the gutters and make sure downspouts are in their proper position. Look for damaged or missing shingles. If you do find roof damage, make efforts to get it repaired prior to the home inspection.
- Look for leaks and water damage** The home inspector is definitely going to be looking for signs of leaks or water damage, so it's better you beat them to it and get any water-related issues repaired prior to the inspection. When looking for leaks, be sure to check under sinks, around faucets, around the base of your toilets and bathtubs and/or showers, and under any appliances that may leak, such as dishwashers and refrigerators. In terms of water damage, examine walls, ceilings, and floors, looking for signs of warping, sagging, or buckling. Don't forget to check the exterior of your house for signs of leaks or water damage as well. If you see water pooling near the base of your house, that should be a cause for concern.
- Replace any inoperable light bulbs** An inoperable bulb suggests to a home inspector that either the bulb itself is out, or there is a defect in the wiring of the fixture. Lights that operate as intended are not noted as defective. It also makes your house look better!
- Ensure your toilets function properly** It's easy to overlook toilets that run for an extended period of time after flushing, but the home inspector will likely comment upon this as a defect. Repairing a running toilet is simple and relatively inexpensive and in most cases can be repaired by the homeowner prior to the inspection.
- Replace furnace filter** Inspectors become concerned about the regular or routine maintenance of HVAC systems when they notice dusty, dirty furnace filters. Regularly replacing the furnace filter in your home is important for air quality and the overall functioning of your heating system and shows the inspector that it is something you pay attention to.
- Ignite all pilot lights** Inspectors are not permitted to open gas valves and ignite pilot lights. Homeowners sometimes close the gas valve and turn off the pilot light in a gas fireplace during warmer months. If your home has a gas log fireplace, we recommend that you ignite the pilot light and check to see that the fireplace is in working order prior to the inspection. Any other pilot lights should be ignited as well.
- Make sure breakers and fuses are properly labeled** Take the time to review that each switch in the main electrical panel is clearly and correctly labeled. Switches and breakers without proper labels will likely be called out as a safety concern by the inspector. The ability to safely control the electrical power in the home is important for you and the new homeowner, as well as the inspector.
- Ensure the main electrical panel is accessible** Inspectors typically remove the front cover of the electrical panel to inspect the interior wiring. Electrical panels that are inaccessible due to stored items or installed shelving cannot be inspected. To avoid a re-inspection fee, make sure the main electrical panel is accessible and unobstructed.
- Check your doors** Take a walk-through of your house and check each door to make sure that it's in working condition. Interior and exterior doors should be latching into the frame with no problem, doorknobs should be securely in place, and any locks, particularly on doors that lead outside, need to be functioning properly as well. Sometimes cold or heat can warp normally functional doors and lead to problems, so be sure to check all doors, including those you don't use very often.
- Repair faulty cabinets** It's easy for the hinges on cabinets to get a bit loose, which results in doors that don't close correctly or that aren't flush with the frame. If you have a cabinet that's looking off, you can usually fix it pretty simply just by tightening the hinge with a screwdriver.

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- Take care of any bug problems**

Most of us have to occasionally deal with an errant ant or spider in the home, especially in warmer temperatures. But if you've got a wasp nest in the backyard or are regularly seeing lines of ants in your kitchen or other interior areas, you'll want to take care of these problems prior to inspection. Most bug problems aren't a huge deal, but they can turn off buyers.
- Keep a clean house**

The cleanliness of your home does not affect the inspection, however a dirty or cluttered home could cause the inspector to consider that other areas of the property haven't been properly maintained. Presenting a clean and tidy house suggests you pay attention to regular, routine home maintenance.
- Be prepared on the day of the inspection**

By the day of the home inspection you should have done everything you can to prepare. Now, it's just about making sure it goes as smoothly as possible. To do that, keep all utilities on, double check that you've left clear access to areas and systems all around the house, and unlock any gates, electrical boxes, or other areas that you normally keep secure. Most of all, be ready at least two hours before the inspector is set to arrive (they're known for being early) and prepare yourself and your family to vacate the house during the inspection. It's best to take any pets with you, but if you can't, make sure they're safely crated or otherwise secured.