

Home Inspections for Buyers

Whether you are on the buying or selling side of a residential real estate transaction, a home inspection will inevitably be part of the dialogue. A home inspection is a visual inspection of a house and the operating systems within it from the roof to the foundation and everything in between. An inspection is an opportunity to further examine a home and its condition, but also an opportunity to learn about the appliances and mechanicals from an unbiased professional. Below I'm answering frequently asked questions about home inspections from the buyer's perspective.

What is the objective of conducting a home inspection?

Purchasing a home is one of the biggest financial investments you will make. Often times a buyer has only walked through a home briefly before making the decision to write an offer. Your inspection is one of the only opportunities you will have to research the condition of the investment you are making. With that in mind, enlisting the services of a professional home inspector that can evaluate the condition of the home and its operating systems is critical to gauging the value of your investment. It will also help eliminate any unforeseen expenditures after closing.

Do I have to get a home inspection?

Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to have a home inspection performed on the property is yours. In keeping my clients best interest in mind and protecting their future investment, I will always advise my buyers to have an inspection performed.

When submitting your purchase agreement, you will select whether or not you elect to have an inspection completed and whether or not your purchase is contingent upon the findings of this inspection. If you select that the purchase agreement is contingent upon the home inspection, you will also establish a time period at which this contingency will expire. Within the allotted number of calendar days is your

window to have your inspections performed and go back to the sellers with any concessions.

How much does a home inspection cost and who pays for it?

A home inspection is paid for by the buyer of the home. A buyer can hire any inspector that they'd like, but I recommend working with a professional that you've received a personal recommendation for and whom holds membership with the [American Society of Home Inspectors](#). The cost of your inspection varies based on the age of the home, the square footage and style and how accessible areas of the home like roof and attic are.

The cost is also subject to any additional testing you elect to have performed. This could include radon testing or bringing in specialized inspectors to evaluate areas of the home like drains or chimneys.

The inspector will be able to give you an accurate estimate for the cost of the home inspection up front by answering a few simple questions.

How are home inspections scheduled?

I like to handle the scheduling of inspections on behalf of my clients so I can insure that I can be on site with my buyers. I use an online scheduling tool with my preferred home inspector. The inspection company will take care of coordinating with the sellers and listing agent and gaining access information for the property.

As a buyer, should I attend the home inspection?

In short - yes, a buyer should attend as much of their home inspection as possible. While an inspection is an opportunity to assess the condition of the home as it sits, it's also an opportunity to learn about the operating systems of your new home. Don't feel like you are intruding on the inspector, in fact it's quite the contrary! Follow the inspector around - ask questions as they arise and take notes whenever necessary.

How long does a home inspection take?

The amount of time a home inspection will take varies depending on the size of the home, accessibility and other factors. At a minimum, you should plan to be on site for

around 3 hours. This will allow time for the inspector to complete their inspection of the property and additional time for you to discuss any findings that the inspection may have brought forth.

What can I do to prepare for a home inspection?

A great way to prepare for a home inspection is to review any disclosures that the seller provided when listing the property. Cities like Minneapolis require a Truth In Sale of Housing (TISH) evaluation which will call attention to any areas of the home that fell short in their inspection. In addition, the Seller's Property Disclosure is a great place to look for any repairs, work performed or systems that may not be operational. Don't be afraid to call the inspectors attention to areas in question to verify their condition. This is your opportunity to ask questions before you are contractually obligated to close on the property.

What areas of the home does a home inspector look at?

The inspectors job is to inspect accessible, visually observable installed systems and components that make up the home. These systems and components are inspected to assess whether they are functioning properly, significantly deficient, unsafe or near the end of their service lives. These standards are set in place by the [American Society of Home Inspectors](#). You can click each area of the home below to read about the specifics the inspector will be weighing.

1. [Structural System](#)
2. [Exterior](#)
3. [Roof System](#)
4. [Plumbing System](#)
5. [Electrical System](#)
6. [Heating System](#)
7. [Air Conditioning Systems](#)
8. [Interior](#)
9. [Insulation and Ventilation](#)

10. Fireplaces and Solid Fuel Burning Appliances

After inspecting each area of the home, the inspector's report will include either a recommendation to correct any issues, items needing further evaluation or areas of the home to monitor for future correction.

How long do I have to complete my inspection?

How long you have to complete your inspection is dependent on the terms you established in your purchase agreement. Typically, most inspection periods last around 10 calendar days from the point of final acceptance. Within the established time period is your opportunity to conduct your inspections and wrap up any additions or amendments to the original terms of your offer, which may require some back and forth on behalf of the buyer and seller.

What happens after an inspection?

It's not uncommon to feel overwhelmed following an inspection. Not only are you inundated with information but your inspection will inevitably reveal shortcomings, necessary maintenance or surprises of both the positive and negative variety. No house is perfect and an inspectors job is to help you understand the condition of the property you are investing in.

Following the inspection, the inspector will turnaround a comprehensive report to you within about 24 hours. The report will highlight different items, propose remedies to mitigating issues and establish a level of urgency for the severity of each matter.

Equipped with the knowledge you took away from your inspection as well as the report prepared by your inspector, the days that remain in your inspection contingency are used to come to terms with the seller on any needed repairs or concessions you are proposing based on your findings.

Will the seller receive a copy of my inspection report?

Unless you choose to share the report with the seller, they will not receive a copy of it. The inspector will send the completed inspection report directly to you by email where you can view and download the interactive report.

Can I walk away from a purchase if a home inspection turns up more than I'm willing to take on?

We never want the outcome of a home inspection to be cancellation of a purchase agreement, but there can be extenuating circumstances where this is the best option for the buyer. If an inspection turns up major concerns or a buyer and seller aren't able to agree on terms following an inspection, whether or not there are repercussions to the buyer for cancelling the purchase agreement depends on the purchase agreement itself.

When submitting your initial offer, you specified whether the sale was contingent upon your inspection and the length of time you had to complete the inspection and subsequent negotiations. Within this specified period of time, the buyer reserves the right to cancel the purchase agreement and have their earnest money refunded to them without penalty.

The inspection period of your home purchase can be an overwhelming and stressful time. Try to keep emotions out of your inspection and focus on using the time as a period of information gathering. A home doesn't pass or fail an inspection, every inspection is going to turn up handfuls of shortcomings and that's completely normal. What's important is weighing these shortcomings against the purchase price of the home and gauging whether these issues impact the overall value.

As your Real Estate Professional, I am with you every step of the way. We'll navigate through any challenges we find during the inspection and I have a full list of recommended vendors to share with you for any repairs or future renovation ideas.