

## CLOSING.COM LEARNING CENTER

# HOME INSPECTION CHECKLIST

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### HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Are you just starting your search or is the home you've fallen for as "perfect" as it looks? Use this checklist as a guide. If you plan to sell, use it to walk through your home to discover any defects that could delay the sale.

Get a quick check of a property's general condition so you can estimate future repair costs in your budget *before* you make an offer, or make repairs before you put your home on the market.

In some cases the seller will pay for repairs, often it falls to the buyer. Make sure that the responsible party is identified in the purchase agreement.

And, don't miss other Smart Tips at the end of this checklist.

**ATTIC**



- Can you get to the attic easily?  YES  NO
- Do you see signs of leaks or water damage?  YES  NO
- Is the attic well-ventilated (not damp)?  YES  NO
- Is the attic insulated?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**BALCONIES**



- Is the balcony pitched away from the house for proper drainage?  YES  NO
- Are the supporting beams in good condition, with no signs of rot or wear?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**BASEMENT**



- Does the basement smell damp or musty?  YES  NO
- Do you see signs of water leaks on the ceiling or floor?  YES  NO
- Do you see any signs of water seepage around the foundation?  YES  NO
- If beams are exposed, do you see any signs of termite damage?  YES  NO
- If beams are exposed, do you see any rotten wood?  YES  NO
- Do you see any cracks in the basement interior?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**BATHROOM**



- Put pressure on the floor by the toilet. Does it feel spongy?  YES  NO
- Are there loose tiles?  YES  NO
- Is the caulking around the tub or shower moldy or missing?  YES  NO
- Is the floor of the shower (shower pan) cracked or damaged?  YES  NO
- Are the electrical outlets in the bathroom GFCI outlets?  YES  NO
- Do you see water stains, sagging floors, or signs of mold?  YES  NO
- Run the faucets. Do the drains empty slowly? Do they gurgle?  YES  NO
- Run the faucets. Is the water pressure too low?  YES  NO
- Do you see water stains, sagging floors, or signs of mold?  YES  NO
- Run the faucets. Do the drains empty slowly? Do they gurgle?  YES  NO
- Run the faucets. Is the water pressure too low?  YES  NO
- Does the bathroom have ventilation? (an adequate window or fan)  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**CEILINGS, FLOORS, & WALLS**



- Are there any water spots on ceilings, walls or floors?  YES  NO
- Is the drywall pulling away on the walls?  YES  NO
- Are the walls cracked?  YES  NO
- Do the floors feel spongy or weak?  YES  NO
- Do the floors slope in any of the rooms?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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# HOME INSPECTON CHECKLIST



**CRAWL SPACE**

- Is crawl space easily accessible?  YES  NO
- Is the crawl space damp?  YES  NO
- Do you see cracks in the foundation?  YES  NO
- Is the foundation crumbling?  YES  NO
- Is there moisture along the foundation?  YES  NO
- Do you see any termite damage to the wood?  YES  NO
- Do you see any signs of rotting wood?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**DECKS & PORCHES**



Check the posts, railings, floor and steps.

- Do you see any signs of rot?  YES  NO
- Do you see any termite damage?  YES  NO
- Are the railings secure?  YES  NO
- Are the steps sturdy?  YES  NO
- Does the porch have its own foundation (not sitting on soil)?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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- Do you see water stains, sagging floors, or signs of mold?  YES  NO
- Run the faucets. Do the drains empty slowly? Do they gurgle?  YES  NO

## HOME INSPECTON CHECKLIST

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Run the faucets. Is the water pressure too low?

YES  NO

Does the bathroom have ventilation? (an adequate window or fan)

YES  NO

**DOORS & WINDOWS**



- Do any of the interior doors bind?  YES  NO
- Do any of the interior windows bind?  YES  NO
- Do the windows and sills have signs of mold or mildew?  YES  NO
- Are the windows foggy or discolored (seal may be broken)?  YES  NO
- Are any of the windows or doors broken?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**DRAINAGE**



- Is there standing water in the yard?  YES  NO
- Is there water around the foundation?  YES  NO
- Does the yard slope away from the house?  YES  NO
- Does the driveway slope away from the house or have a drain?  YES  NO
- Does the house have rain gutters in good repair?  YES  NO

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	Is there standing water in the yard?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Is there water around the foundation?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the yard slope away from the house?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the driveway slope away from the house or have a drain?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the house have rain gutters in good repair?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<b>Notes:</b>		

**DRIVEWAY & WALKWAYS**



- Are there large cracks in the driveway or walkway?  YES  NO
- Is the driveway or walkway uneven or buckling?  YES  NO
- Is the driveway or walkway crumbling around the edges?  YES  NO
- Is the driveway stained?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**ELECTRICAL**



- Is the fuse box or main panel easily accessible?  YES  NO
- Is the main panel in good condition (no rust or damage)?  YES  NO
- Are there enough outlets in each room to meet your needs?  YES  NO
- Are there CFGI outlets in the kitchen and bathroom?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**EXTERIOR**



- If the exterior is wood, are there signs of wood rot?  YES  NO
- If the exterior is wood, are there signs of termite damage?  YES  NO
- If the exterior is brick, are the bricks and mortar in good condition?  YES  NO
- If the exterior is aluminum, are there dents or scratches?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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# HOME INSPECTON CHECKLIST



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YES     NO

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**FIREPLACE & CHIMNEY**



- Is the mortar crumbling, pulling away, or loose?  YES  NO
- Does the chimney have a rain cap?  YES  NO
- Do you see smoke staining around the exterior of the firebox?  YES  NO
- Is there creosote buildup in the firebox?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**GARAGE**



- Is the floor cracked or stained?  YES  NO
- Is the exterior in good repair?  YES  NO
- Does the garage door function well?  YES  NO
- If the garage is attached to the house, is it pulling away from the home?  YES  NO
- If the garage is attached to the house, has it settled the same as the house?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING**



You'll need a home inspector and maybe even a specialist to determine the condition of the home's heating and cooling systems.

However, you can note the systems' make, model, and capacity. Then, contact the manufacturer to learn more about how long these systems are expected to last.

**Notes:**

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**KITCHEN**



- Is there ventilation above the cooking appliances?  YES  NO
- Are there GFCI outlets?  YES  NO
- Do you see any signs of leaking under the sink?  YES  NO
- Do you see any signs of leaking around the refrigerator?  YES  NO
- Are the cabinets secured well to the wall?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**ROOF**



- Are the shingles broken or missing?  YES  NO
- Are the shingles buckled?  YES  NO
- Is the coping broken or missing?  YES  NO
- Do you see pooling water?  YES  NO
- Do you see signs of do-it-yourself repair?  YES  NO
- If the roof has a sky-light, is it well-sealed?  YES  NO
- Are the gutters and downspouts in good repair?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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**TREES, LAWN & VEGETATION**



- Are tree roots affecting the foundation?  YES  NO
- Do the sprinklers work?  YES  NO
- Is overgrown vegetation a home for rodents or insect infestations?  YES  NO
- Are trees trimmed away from power, phone and cable lines?  YES  NO

**Notes:**

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## WATER HEATER



Is the shut-off switch accessible?

YES  NO

Is the water heater vented (gas only)?

YES  NO

Will the capacity meet your needs?

YES  NO

Write the make and model number in the notes section below. You can research the life expectancy of the water heater later.

### Notes:

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## HIRING A PROFESSIONAL INSPECTOR

- **Hire a knowledgeable inspector.** Your inspector should have experience in engineering, architecture, or contracting.
- **Require certification.** Make sure your inspector is certified or has a professional affiliation.
- **Require licensing.** Make sure your inspector is both bonded and licensed.
- **Beware of conflict of interest.** Your inspector should not be in the business of repairing or remodeling homes.
- **Be flexible about the cost.** Home inspections cost between \$300 and \$700. It's best not to select an inspector based solely on the fee. Highly-recommended, licensed professionals who can accurately assess a home's condition are worth the cost.
- **Ask about the inspection report.** Some reports are completed by hand, some are computerized. Some reports are simply checklists, others may be more detailed. If you have a preference about the report format, ask before you hire.
- **Ask about turn-around time.** You'll want to know how soon you can expect the finished report once the inspection has been completed.

## YOUR LIFESTYLE MATTERS



Knowing about your lifestyle can help the home inspector determine if the home's systems and features are right for you. Let your inspector know about:

- **Your high-tech equipment.** If you have computers, home entertainment systems, and other high-tech items, your inspector can check to make sure the home has the electrical capability to run them.
- **Your family's needs.** Inspectors who know about your family's needs can assess the condition and safety of the home in a way that is more personal.

For example, if the home has a small water-heater, but you have several family members who shower frequently, the size of the water heater should be noted as deficient.

Or, if you have young children and the home has a pool, the safety features of the pool may be more closely scrutinized.

## SPECIAL INSPECTIONS

**If you are buying a condominium**, make sure you hire an inspector who is experienced in assessing these types of buildings. It is not enough to inspect the condo alone. Common features such as roofs, plumbing, hallways, and stairs; elevators; shared heating and cooling units; and swimming pools must also be assessed.

**If you are purchasing a home not yet built**, hire an inspector who is experienced with new construction. Try to schedule inspections at these critical building stages:

- foundation
- framing
- electrical and plumbing (open walls)
- before closing

**If you are purchasing an older or historic home**, you should hire an inspector who is experienced with historic homes. These inspectors will know more about galvanized plumbing systems, knob and tube wiring, and older construction and foundation methods.

**If the home has a swimming pool, tennis court, well, or septic system**, make sure you hire a home inspector who has experience in evaluating the condition of these features.

**You will need to hire a specialist** if you or your home inspector suspects any of these items:

- Radon
- Asbestos
- Pest or rodent infestation
- Water quality problems
- High electromagnetic exposure

## DURING THE INSPECTION

- **Plan to tag along.** Accompany your home inspector during the inspection and ask as many questions about the house as you can. If you completed our *Home Inspection Checklist* before the inspection, be sure to discuss any concerns you noted with the inspector.
- **Gather information.** If the appliances are included in the sale of the home, write down their make and model numbers. You can research their life expectancy later.
- **Start the dishwasher.** You can ensure that the dishwasher runs through its cycles during the home inspection.
- **Check the washer and dryer.** Home inspectors are not required to assess washer and dryers. So, if these appliances come with the house, now is a good time to check them out.
- **Check the sprinkler system.** Home inspectors are not required to check sprinkler systems. If the home has sprinklers, turn them on and check for broken heads and malfunctioning valves.
- **Be careful.** Since you are unfamiliar with the home, it's important to be extra careful. Structures such as balconies, decks, and railings may not be solid. The home may also have exposed wiring or other hazards.

## AFTER THE INSPECTION

- **Confirm report receipt.** Ask the inspector when you can expect to receive the report.
- **Ask about uncompleted items.** In some parts of the country, winter weather may not allow for a complete inspection. Ask your home inspector if weather or other factors prevented a complete assessment. If so, you can include a future inspection of these items in your contract with the seller.
- **Review the report.** Make sure you schedule a time to review the report with your inspector. If the home has defects, ask the inspector what you can expect when repairing or replacing the defected items. If the defects are major, you might want to ask a professional for an estimate before deciding to purchase the home.
- **Take action.** Based on your inspector's findings, you can request that the seller fix defective items. Most sellers expect some changes to the terms of sale after the home has been inspected. If the defects are major or the house is not compatible with your needs, you may decide not to purchase the house. Either way, you'll have made a sound decision based on a professional assessment.