

Do Your Homework – Home Inspections

You do not want to end up with costly renovations you had not anticipated when you just purchased a house. That is why home inspections are often an important part of the pre-purchasing routine. Choosing an experienced home inspector can be a difficult process. It is important to consult with family and friends to find a reliable inspector that has good references.

Contact several inspectors in your area and interview them in advance to determine their qualifications. Be sure to do your own independent investigation of the inspector's qualifications.

Questions to Ask

1. How long has the inspector been in business with A HOME INSPECTION firm?
2. Is the inspector specifically experienced in RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION?
3. What does the inspection include? Inspections should include visual inspections covering exterior, structure, garage, plumbing, heating, cooling, electrical, and interior insulation and ventilation. Extras include radon testing, a pest infestation survey or inspection of septic system or wells. Be sure the inspector will provide a written report.
4. How much will it cost? Determine fees up front. Inspections cost from as little as \$200 to as much as \$1,000, depending on the size of the home and which inspection services requested.
5. How long will the inspection take? The time depends on the size and age of the home; the average is 2 to 3 hours. Anything less isn't enough time to do a thorough inspection but many inspectors take a full day to thoroughly inspect your potential purchase.
6. Does the inspector encourage the client to attend the inspection? This is an educational opportunity, and an inspector's refusal means you should look for a better-qualified inspector.
7. Bluntly ask what educational and/or training facility the inspector attended. Does the inspector participate in continuing education programs to keep his/her expertise up to date? Ask to see the inspector's papers. When hiring a company, make sure that a registered professional will inspect your home.
8. Does the company offer to do any repairs or improvements based on its inspection? This might cause a conflict of interest. We do not recommend that you deal with these firms.
9. Do they belong to an association that will investigate a consumer complaint?
10. Do they carry errors or omission insurance?

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