

# Let the Buyer Beware

## *A Buyer's Guide to Inspecting a Home*

For many home buyers, finding the right house is a strenuous and arduous task. How do you know if the home you like is a good buy? Will you find problems and suffer the consequences later? In most parts of the country, sellers must present to their buyer a ***Seller's Property Disclosure Form*** that lists any and all problems and defaults with a home before they purchase the house. This should be a contingency to the offer of purchase. However, it is vital that you make an inspection of the home before you offer to buy it. Your home inspection not only gives you the status of a home from your analysis, but may give you bargaining power by detailing deficiencies that could bring a seller down on the price of their home.

### **How to use this guide:**

This pamphlet was specifically created for a potential buyer to analyze the condition of a home. An inspection of the property is one of the most important steps prior to making an offer and should be conducted with a very careful eye. As you walk through the home, check "OK" if each room meets to your satisfaction or make comments in the adjacent column. At the end of the checklist, rate and score the home as it meets your needs. You can use this score to compare against other homes that you have inspected.

Don't hesitate to have a seller move furniture, open rooms, or show you every aspect of the home. Remember that once the sellers are gone and you are moved in, it could be a very long and difficult challenge to be awarded damages for overlooked deficiencies that you should have seen earlier.

**NOTE:** Many items on this checklist require the eye of a skilled professional to determine if they are a problem. If you have questions about an item, seek the advice or services of a professional inspector to assist you with your selection. Homes vary from property to property. This guide has tried to provide an all inclusive list of those features and may not include every system that should be inspected before making an offer to purchase.

*This pamphlet is compliments of*  
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***Property Address:*** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Floors</b>		
<b>Check each room for the following:</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Carpets clean and in good shape		
No spots or discoloration		
Wood floors in good shape		
Baseboards clean and in good shape		
Floor electrical sockets clean and working		
Tile or linoleum		
No cracks or breaks		
No bubbles or sloping		
No discoloration		
Does furniture need to be moved for inspection?		

<b>Walls</b>		
<b>Check each room for the following:</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Do wall hangings need to be removed for inspection?		
Walls clean with no cracks		
Wallpaper seams (top & bottom) secure		
Holes patched and painted		
No discoloration		
Light fixtures in good shape		
Switch plates in good shape		
Socket plates in good shape		
Mirrors and glass unbroken and not stained		

<b>Doors</b>		
<b>Check each room for the following:</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Paint/finish in good shape		
No discoloration		
No chipping or loose panels		
Move smoothly and no dragging		
Handles, hinges, and locks work well		
No squeaks		

<b>Windows and Window Coverings</b>		
<b>Check each room for the following:</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
No broken glass		
No cracks in frames		
Open and close easily		
Hinges in good shape		
Latches, handles, and cranks in good shape		
Slide smoothly and tracks clean		
All locks working well		
Drapes and curtains clean and in good shape		
Blinds in good shape and working well		
Pull cords in good shape		
Drapes operating smoothly		
Curtain rods straight and attached well		
No discoloration on walls or coverings		

<b>Ceilings</b>		
<b>Check each room for the following:</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
No stains or discoloration		
No damage		
Paint or finish in good shape		
Acoustic in good shape		
Light fixtures in good shape		
Track lighting working properly		

<b>Kitchen</b>		
	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Dishwasher clean and in good shape		
Stoves and ovens clean and in good shape		
Switches and buttons in good shape		
All drip pans in place and in good shape		
Sink in good shape (no chips or stains)		
Cupboards, shelves, etc. in good order		
Faucets not discolored or stained		
Faucets, sinks, and pipes no leaks or drips		
Window coverings in good shape		
Garbage disposal working properly		
All other appliances working properly		

<b>Living Room &amp; Family Room</b>		
	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Does it have a good feel?		
Good traffic flow		
Enough room for furniture		
Good lighting		
Fireplace, hearth, and mantel is what you want		
Convenient to other rooms		
Drapes and curtains clean and in good shape		
Blinds in good shape		
Shelves secure		
Is noise a problem?		
Wet bar in good order		

<b>Bathrooms</b>		
	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Bathtub clean (no stains or chips)		
Soap holders in place		
Tile walls (no chipping or peeling)		
Grout in good shape		
No mildew stains		
Shower curtains/doors clean and in good shape		
No water stains		
Faucets and handles in good order		
Cabinets and cupboards adequate		
Any evidence of leaks or seepage?		
Toilet and toilet seat in good shape		
Towel holders affixed properly and secure		
All drains working well		
Mirrors in good shape		

<b>Bedrooms</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Enough room for furniture		
Good lighting		
Sun faces room at the right time of the day		
Windowsills in good shape		
Curtains/drapes/blinds clean and in good shape		
Accessible to bathrooms		
Lots of privacy		
Closets large enough		
View is okay		
Good ventilation (heating & cooling)		

<b>Closets</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Enough closets		
Enough hanging space		
Well lit		
Hanging bars secure and straight		
Walls in good shape		
No odor		
All shelves in place and secure		

<b>Laundry Area</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
No odor		
Well Lit		
Exhaust connected properly		
No gas odor		
Cabinet and shelves in good order		
Proper connections for your appliances		
Sink in good shape (if applies)		
No swelling in floors from leaks		

<b>Staircases</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Handrails, top and bottom posts secure		
Stairs tight and no squeaks		
Does sound carry through the house?		
Tile, carpet or other covering secure		
No rails protruding		
Side slats and vertical rail secure		
Decorative knobs and pieces secure		
Good lighting on entire staircase		
Plenty of head room		
Pull-down staircase working smoothly		

<b>Shelves, Bookcases, &amp; Drawers</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Shelves level and secure		
Finish or covering in good shape		
Adequate lighting		
Drawers move easily		
Handles and knobs are tight		

<b>Fireplaces and Wood Stoves</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Chimney clean with no excessive burn marks		
Grate in place and good shape		
All fans and heating units in good shape		
Any signs of leaks—no gas odor		
Mantel and hearth in good shape		
Screens or doors working well		
Gas lighters and fans working properly		

<b>Electrical</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Adequate number of outlets in every room		
All switches and plugs operative		
Specialty lighting working properly		
Any burned areas around switches or plugs?		
No open wiring or plugs		
Dimmers working properly		
Wall plates in good shape		
Pull cords in good shape		

<b>Heating &amp; Cooling</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Units and thermostats working properly and recently serviced		
Vent covers in place and working properly		
Window units secure and sealed		
Exposed ducting clean		
Pilot lights stay lit?		

<b>Sound Inspection</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Showers and tubs running—how much noise?		
Staircases—does sound carry?		
Conversations in rooms—does it carry?		
Does noise from appliances carry?		
Noise from outside		

<b>Security System</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Operates properly		
Instructions available		

<b>Porches, Patios, &amp; Entryways</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Convenient access to other rooms		
Is there a coat hanging area		
No uncomfortable steps		
Well lit		
No odor		
Any rotting or damage?		
Locks and doors in good shape		
Floors and decks level		
Glass and screens in good shape		

<b>Garage/Parking</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Well lit with doors open or closed		
Neatly arranged with no excessive storage		
Rafter area in good shape		
Stains and spots removed from garage floor		
All cabinets and shelves in good shape		
Workbenches in good shape		
Washer and dryer accessible with cars inside		
Fans and ventilation in good order		
Doors and windows secure		
Doggy door in good shape		
Good storage for tools, equipment, etc.		
Electric outlets working		
Garage door opener in good shape		
Appliances out of the way (hot water heater, water softener, etc.)		

<b>Pools, Spas, and Saunas</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Decks in good shape		
Proper chemical balance in water		
All pumps, heating, and drains in good shape		
Skimmers, hoses, cleaners operative		
Ladders, slides, diving boards in good order		
Pool furniture well maintained		
Safety equipment and signs in place		
Gates lock properly and doors close tightly		
Lighting works properly		
Heating units and timers work properly		
Door closes and seals well		
Good storage for equipment		
No mildew or odor		

<b>Home Exterior</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Work to be done / Comments</b>
Foundation in good shape and no cracks		
Exterior finishes in good shape with no chipping, peeling, cracks or holes		
No discoloration from water splashes, drains, or the sun		
Eaves no peeling, chipping, or molding		
Window frames caulked well and in good shape		
Crawl spaces covered and accessible		
Vents and eave vents opened and screened		
Any wooden structures against the house? Termites?		
Bushes and trees trimmed away from the house		
Exterior doors (including garage door) clean, properly finished, and working well		

Roof	OK	Work to be done / Comments
No low spots or sagging		
No missing tiles or shakes		
No leaks		
No antennas or satellites causing damage		
No stain or discoloration		
No wires connected which cause damage		
Gutters secure and clean		
Caulking in good shape		
No trees or bushes scraping the roof		

Yard	OK	Work to be done / Comments
Do you like the yard?		
Grass, bushes, and trees in good shape		
Sprinkler system working properly		
Driveways, sidewalks, and walkways free of stains		
Fences in good shape		
Parking areas in good shape		
Animal areas in good shape		

Rate each room or feature of the home by circling the score below. Once finished and tally your score.  
 5 – Excellent 4 – Above Average 3 – Average 2 – Below Average 1 – Poor

Room/Feature	Score	Room/Feature	Score
Floors	5 4 3 2 1	Remaining Bathroom(s)	5 4 3 2 1
Walls	5 4 3 2 1	Closets	5 4 3 2 1
Doors	5 4 3 2 1	Laundry Area	5 4 3 2 1
Windows & Coverings	5 4 3 2 1	Sound & Noise	5 4 3 2 1
Ceilings	5 4 3 2 1	Porches, Patio & Entry	5 4 3 2 1
Kitchen	5 4 3 2 1	Garage/Parking	5 4 3 2 1
Living Rm/Family Rm	5 4 3 2 1	Home Exterior	5 4 3 2 1
Master Bedroom	5 4 3 2 1	Yard/Landscaping	5 4 3 2 1
Remaining Bedroom(s)	5 4 3 2 1	Neighborhood	5 4 3 2 1
Master Bathroom	5 4 3 2 1	Selling Price	5 4 3 2 1

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 100