

Tips for Preparing Your Seller for the Home Inspection.



A home inspection is a visible inspection of all areas of the home and all the major systems of the home as they were at the time of the inspection. It is a non-invasive inspection and the inspector is not permitted to put holes in walls or ceilings etc. The inspector typically will not move furniture, storage boxes etc. and thus will report these conditions as limitations

to the inspection.

A prospective purchaser may see too many limitations as a red flag, believing that the seller has something to hide. It is therefore very important to remove as much clutter as possible. The homeowner should insure that the home is neat and tidy and should remove any unnecessary storage during the inspection.

There are areas that need to be accessible during the inspection. These areas include:

- Attic hatches (house and garage)
- Furnaces and air conditioners
- Water heaters
- Basement walls and floors
- Electrical panels
- Areas under sinks
- Laundry facilities
- Water shutoffs

The inspector will need access to attic hatches to check inside the attic for proper insulation, ventilation, structure etc. and to check for any past or present roof leaks. If there is an attic hatch in a closet, shelving and clothing should be cleared from the immediate area. A good home inspector will cover these areas with a drop sheet to protect these areas, but bits of insulation can still contaminate the area so it is best if your valuables are removed before hand.

An important consideration that is often overlooked is access to the garage attic. The homeowner should be sure to remove any vehicles from the garage that will prevent access to the garage attic.

Major systems such as heating, plumbing, air conditioning are inspected as part of a home inspection. The areas around these

systems should be cleared to allow the inspector access to these systems. Be sure to leave plenty of space around the furnace, air conditioner, water heater and below all sinks. Also make sure that water shutoff valves and plumbing fixtures are accessible for a visual inspection.

Inspecting the electrical system is a very important part of the home inspection and access to the electrical panel and sub panels is important. The access should be adequate to allow for removal of the panel covers in a safe manner.

If there are any concealed system components such as electrical panels, water shutoff valves etc., leave a note for the inspector describing exactly where these items are located.

The basement walls are a very important part of the home inspection and any storage boxes etc. should be moved away from the walls to allow for a proper inspection. Remember, if there are any walls that are concealed it may arouse unnecessary suspicion in the mind of the purchaser if they are reported as a limitation.

Winterized Houses

If a house has been winterized, services should be restored to allow the inspector to do a thorough job. Water should be turned on, electricity should be restored and heating fuel should be turned back on.

Pets

Pets should ideally be removed from the premises. If this is not possible they should be confined to a specific area of the home such as the laundry room. This of course will limit the inspection of that area but is preferable to having the pet roam freely and possible escape outdoors during the inspection.

Documentation

If the homeowner has any documentation regarding any recent repairs, upgrades or service, this documentation should be left out for

perusal by the purchaser. Also, any building permits and inspection reports should be available for the purchaser to see. This may help to answer some of the questions the purchaser may have before they become an issue.

Existing Defects

If there are any obvious defects or damage such as holes, stains etc. these should be documented and pointed out by the homeowner. This will prevent speculation by the inspector and purchaser as to the cause and or severity of these defects.

Who Should be There

Ideally the inspection should be attended by the purchasers and their realtor, and the inspector.

The homeowner should be aware that an inspection on an average sized home takes 2.5 to 3.5 hours. While it is still the homeowner's property and they have the right to be there during the inspection, it is preferable to the prospective purchaser if they are not there. The purchaser may be intimidated by the presence of the homeowner and may not ask the appropriate questions of the inspector. Also, the homeowner may be offended by defects that the inspector points out to the purchaser and conflicts can arise that interfere with the inspection process.