

Preparing Your Home for an Inspection

There is no doubt that the inspection process adds another level of stress to the transaction, however, it doesn't necessarily need to be a, "nail biter". Addressing a few typical home care and safety issues is not only an important part of normal maintenance, but can also do a lot to facilitate the inspection.

The Exterior

- [] Try to keep plants and bushes away from the siding.
- [] Keep at least 4 to 6 inches of clearance from the bottom of the siding to the soil.
- [] Avoid storing things against the house, especially wood or firewood.
- [] Always maintain good caulking around doors and windows and over nail heads.

The Roof

- [] Keep debris and moss off your roof. A pressure washer can be quite damaging, so use one only if absolutely necessary.
- [] Make sure the gutters are clean and in good repair. Downspouts should always be diverted away from the house with splash blocks or drain lines.

The Garage

- [] Check the automatic reverse function on the garage door opener to be sure it is properly adjusted.

The Interior and Attic

- [] Check the plumbing supply and drain lines beneath sinks for leaks.
- [] Check the floor around the toilet for signs of leaking such as discolored, swollen, or soft vinyl.
- [] Repair any damaged caulking or grout on tub and shower surrounds. Restore any failed caulking on the floor in front of tubs and showers.
- [] Look in the attic for any leaks, signs of mildew or disconnected fan ducts.
- [] Be sure all windows are operational, especially in bedrooms.
- [] Take care that smoke detectors are present and functional.

Plumbing

- [] Make sure the water heater has proper earthquake strapping. Check for signs of leaking.
- [] Check for any plumbing leaks in the sub-structure crawl space.

Heating

- [] Change furnace air filters regularly.
- [] Have your heating/cooling system serviced yearly.

Sub-Structure Crawl Space

- [] Be sure the crawl space is free of any wood or cardboard debris and/or fallen insulation.
- [] Repair any damaged foundation vent screens with ¼ inch non-louvered wire cloth and be sure the vents are never blocked.
- [] Be sure all bare ground is fully covered with plastic. If more is needed, use only 6 mil black plastic.
- [] Repair any disconnected heat ducts or clothes dryer ducts.

On The Day of the Inspection

- [] It's best to plan on being out of the home during the inspection as the buyer and inspector will feel more at ease to discuss any issues. Typically, allow at least 3 hours for the inspection.
- [] Make sure all animals are secured regardless of how friendly you may think they are. No animal's behavior can be guaranteed, especially in the presence of a stranger who is poking around their territory. Also, it can be difficult for an inspector to perform their job when animals are underfoot or when they must guard against animals getting loose.
- [] Be sure there are no locked gates restricting access to the yard.
- [] Make sure the utilities are on and all gas pilot lights are lit.
- [] Be certain there is complete and unrestricted access to the electric panel, the furnace, the water heater, the attic and the sub-structure crawl space. The inspection will not be completed if the inspector cannot readily remove service covers or access all the areas of the home.

Larry Stamp AD, BS, RREI