

Why Have a Home Inspection?

After considerable looking, you've finally found a home and made your offer. Now it's time to consider the home inspection contingency. With reports of homes selling so quickly and multiple back up offers seemingly becoming commonplace, you may feel pressured to the point of just wanting to sign the contract, seal the deal and forego the inspection. Besides, you've walked through the house several times and even brought a friend who is a contractor. What could there possibly be that you or your friend wouldn't see? Why should you pay to hire a professional home inspector?

Consider something most all of us have gone through, purchasing a used car: Parked on the lot all cleaned up, detailed and shiny, the car looks awesome. The short test drive is exhilarating and you're like a child with a new toy. The excitement mounts and you just can't wait to get out the door and down the road. It is only after all is said and done you realize the brakes are nearly shot and the engine needs work. The fact is, having a nice looking car and knowing how to drive it just doesn't equate to being a mechanic. Personally, my level of automotive expertise is pretty much limited to filling the gas tank. That said, would I buy a used car without a mechanic's checkup? Not a chance!

Like the veteran mechanic who has dealt with vehicle after vehicle in his service bay, an inspector views every property with the same objectivity and impartiality. Further, an established inspector will have performed literally thousands of home inspections whereas some statistics indicate the average American may only purchase three homes in their entire lifetime. Therefore, it stands to reason that a skilled and experienced inspector can and will see things the homebuyer won't, no matter how seasoned they may be. The mechanic also understands how things work and how to diagnose the problem. Whether it's a vibration, a grind, or an otherwise odd condition that you just can't describe without sounding silly, he knows where to look and how to go about looking. That's what he was trained to do. In the same way, a professional home inspector has been specifically trained to understand and recognize adverse conditions, safety or health issues and how to systematically perform a thorough and complete inspection.

Back at the mechanic's service bay, it's time to get down and dirty in the grease and the goo, the home inspector's equivalent of the sub-structure crawl space. For home buyers who forego an inspection, the crawl space, like the attic, tends to be an "out of sight, out of mind" area that is often ignored: Hot in the Summer, cold in the Winter, dirty, itchy, damp or dusty, full of spider webs and pretty much miserable in virtually every regard, these are the most important inspection areas of all. And on those rare occasions where the intrepid buyer chooses to venture into these areas alone, will they know what to look for? How will they recognize if a condition exists? Will they be able to discern sawdust from frass? The substructure crawl space by itself is common territory for termites, carpenter ants, wood boring beetles, fungal rot decay, structural issues, plumbing issues

and more. It is only through the home inspector's trained and experienced eye that many conditions are detected. And it is this training and experience which allows the inspector to make appropriate recommendations for repairs and remediation.

The true art of home inspection rests in the intimate understanding of how structures work and how and why they fail. It requires specialized knowledge that is far different than that which is required to build structures, to live in structures, or to buy structures. An inspector must possess a set of skills which must be formally learned and must be constantly honed by ongoing training. Nothing in a home simply happens by itself, everything occurs for a reason. It remains a fact that every big and costly home repair which will need addressed tomorrow started out as a small defect today. These are the 'mechanics' behind what a professional home inspector has been trained to know and detect. This is why a professional home inspection can protect you.

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