

## HOW TO PREPARE *Your Home for Inspection*

You just accepted a stellar offer. Next up come the hurdles in the race to closing. Inspections, survey, appraisal, remedy etc. All of these processes have their way of throwing up a potential road block to the finish line. We can't give you advice on all those things but we can certainly help you guide you to a smooth and easy Home Inspection. The following is a quick checklist to help make it quick and painless.

### **Tips and Suggestions**

The inspection is a visual examination of the home major systems and components and is limited to visible, accessible areas. It's not exhaustive nor an opinion about whether or not to buy the property.

A representative number of electrical switches, lights, receptacles, and windows will be tested for operation. So everything should be plugged in and working. The inspector has no way of knowing why something's been turned off and he won't risk activating a malfunctioning system or appliance if it is unplugged or turned off.

The inspector doesn't activate pilot lights, turn on gas or water valves, or reset electrical breakers. In other words, he won't perform any procedure that could cause potential damage to the property or lead to personal injury (his or others attending). He has no know way of knowing why something's off or unplugged in the first place. That's why it's in your best interest to make everything's turned on.

*Here are some specific suggestions to prepare your home for the inspection:*

**1. LEAVE THE HOME DURING THE INSPECTION:** Treat the main home inspection as a showing, and have something to do away from the home for those 2-3 hours. Most inspectors encourage buyer attendance during the inspection as it's a great time for the buyer to get familiar with the house and its systems, ask questions of the inspector, take room measurements, etc. When the seller is present, the buyer may feel apprehensive about exploring the home and asking questions.

**2. TRY TO MAKE EVERYTHING ACCESSIBLE FOR THE INSPECTOR:** Attics, garages, basements, crawl spaces, and storage sheds will need to be fully accessible. Access will also be needed at electrical panels, water heaters, jetted tub motors, and water and gas cutoff valves. Make sure keys are available when needed, and take steps to insure these areas are not blocked or obstructed. If the attic is sealed, it should be opened ahead of time for inspection. The inspector will be respectful of your things, and typically won't move your items to get into these areas. Chances are if something is in the way, you'll be getting a call to move those items so the inspection can be completed.

**3. HAVE A COPY OF THE PROPERTY DISCLOSURE AVAILABLE FOR THE INSPECTOR TO REVIEW:** Chances are the buyer may have questions about any items noted on it. Also, have any recent maintenance receipts handy, such as HVAC maintenance records, roof repair work, and any other recent repair or upgrade receipts. Even minor defects can present your home in a less favorable light. It always helps if the little things can be addressed before the inspection is scheduled; repairing any known defects in advance such as loose doorknobs, running toilets, rotten wood, and plumbing leaks can greatly reduce the repairs that buyers may ask for.

**4. HAVE THE HOUSE IN SHOW-READY SHAPE:** An impeccable house during the showing and then clutter during the inspection may plant seeds of doubt in the buyers' mind, and make it more difficult for the inspector to navigate through their process.

**5. IF VACANT MAKE SURE UTILITIES ON:** If the home is vacant, make sure the water, electricity, and gas (including pilot lights) are kept on. The inspector will need to test the heating and cooling equipment, the kitchen appliances, the water faucets and drains at sinks and tubs, and the electrical system. Without the utilities, the inspection can not be completed which could delay the closing or require a follow-up inspection.

**6. REMOVE OR KENNEL PETS:** They don't know the inspector and he doesn't know them. Plus there's a lot of traffic and out of the house... it's simply not always possible to catch the family pet before it slips out.

**7. CHANGE BURNT OUT LIGHT BULBS AND DOUBLE CHECK ELECTRICAL FIXTURES:** Connect as if you are going to operate them (appliances, overhead lights, fans, garage door openers, etc.). Replace burned-out bulbs. It will help buyers feel the home is well-maintained.

**8. CLEAN OUT DIRTY OR CLOGGED GUTTERS:** They can lead to a variety of problems, on the roof and on the ground below and can create the impression of poor maintenance.

**9. TRIM TREES AND BUSHES:** Tree limbs overhanging the roof and bushes too close to the house should be trimmed or cut back.

**10. HAVE NEW AIR FILTERS IN HVAC RETURNS:** Heavily soiled filters can cause a faulty AC differential and can cause a buyer to think there is a more in-depth issue. It's easy and inexpensive. Plus, it shows the home is being maintained.

**11. TEST ALL SMOKE DETECTORS:** Make sure safety items such as smoke detectors are fully functional. Replace batteries if necessary.

**12. CHECK DOORS AND WINDOWS FOR TIGHT FIT AND PROPERTY OPERATION:** Finding doors and windows that need minor repairs and adjustments is very common.

**13. CHECK ALL PLUMBING FIXTURES FOR LEAKS:** Leaks are typically a big concern for buyers because it suggests the possibility of water damage and mold. Check sinks, drains, and toilets.

**14. TEST ALL GFCI OUTLETS AND REPLACE ANY THAT ARE NOT OPERATING CORRECTLY:** Defective GFCI outlets are very common defects during home inspections. They can be replaced relatively inexpensively before the inspection.

**15. AND MOST IMPORTANT FOR BOTH THE SELLER AND FOR THE BUYER:** Manage expectations. Most homes have a few things wrong and all issues can be corrected. Keep your eye on the prize - selling your home and moving on to the next chapter in your life.