

Home Inspection Checklist

Created By HomeInspectorSecrets.com

This home inspection checklist can be used by buyers, sellers, or for maintenance purposes. Use this as a guide to find defects and maintenance items with a home.

If you are buying a home, you can take this list to do some inspecting on your own along with a professional home inspection. This list isn't meant to cover every conceivable problem that a house can present --- but use it to spot some common issues.

When I inspect a home, I never use checklists, but I try to be extremely thorough --- but I know what to look for. If you see something that seems weird or unusual --- it probably is --- and you can take a picture for reference and have a contractor check it out.

Hire A Home Inspector For Peace of Mind

Please don't take this checklist and think it would cover everything that a professional home inspector would find... such a list would be impossible to make.

Home inspectors frequently find multiple repair items during a home inspection that are unique just for that specific house and would never be part of a checklist. If you are buying a home, I highly recommend spending a couple hundred bucks to hire a licensed or certified home inspector.

Exterior

The exterior part of the home inspection consists of stepping back from the home and looking at the roof. If it is safe, it is even better to walk the roof so you can properly inspect the flashing, vents, chimney, and shingles.

The exterior inspection will also involve walking the lot, taking a look at the grading, shrubs, siding, windows, and exterior doors.

Roof

Shingles

- Missing or damaged shingles
- Curling and warping
- Faded appearance (indicator of age)

Structural

- Sagging ridgeline
- Soft areas

Flashing

- Deteriorated or missing flashing around vents, chimney, skylights

Soffit Vents

- Is there soffit venting? Is it in good condition?
- Are the soffit vents painted over? (bad for air flow)

Gutters

- Should have gentle slope towards downspout
- Properly fastened to fascia board
- Clogged or need cleaning?
- Downspout extensions or splash guards to get water away from home

Exterior Walls

Wood Trim

- Rotted/deteriorated wood trim (doors, windows, garage etc)

Rotted wood around door trim

Caulking

- Missing caulking around wall penetrations (pipes, wires etc)
- Hairline cracks in caulk

Vinyl or Fiber Cement Siding

- Damaged siding like holes or cracks
- Bowing of siding or not properly installed

Brick/Stone

- Deteriorated brick or stone veneer
- Deteriorated mortar
- Cracking
- Bowing

Doors, Windows, Deck

Exterior Doors

- Do doors open smoothly and cleanly?
- Do the doors lock properly?
- There should be 1/2" to 1" gap under door for air flow

Windows

- Rotted/deteriorated window sills are common
- Windows should be properly caulked
- Are the windows cracked?
- Are the window drain channels in good condition?
- Do the windows have broken thermal seals? (Cloudy appearance)
- Rusted lintels (metal span above window)
- Old single paned windows (poor energy efficiency)

Windows falling down when opened and broken thermal seals

Deck

- Loose railings
- Missing/loose railing along stairs to deck
- Loose or warped deck boards
- Ledger board missing proper lag bolts (or rusted bolts)
- Missing ledger board flashing

Grounds

Lot

- Grading is flat or slopes toward home (should slope AWAY)
- Shouldn't be any holes or depressions on the lot that present trip hazards or collect water

Walkways & Driveway

- Walkways that are lifting up are a trip hazard
- Driveway cracking and seal coat deterioration

Trees And Shrubs

- There shouldn't be any dead trees (or dangerous limbs) on property
- Tree limbs should be trimmed back away from home at least several feet
- No decent sized trees should be close to the home (roots may damage foundation)
- All bushes and shrubs should be trimmed away from home at least 1-2 feet
- No holes presenting trip hazards

Electrical System

- Outlets are GFCI connected
- Do exterior lights turn on?

Interior Part of Home Inspection

The interior part of the home inspections consists of inspecting the bedrooms, kitchen, bathrooms, HVAC system, attic, and electrical system.

Bathrooms

Toilet

- Are the toilets loose at the base?
- Toilets flush properly (and no weird noises)

Sink

- Sink hot and cold water works
- Sink isn't slow to drain
- Sink is secure to wall

Drywall

- No soft drywall areas especially next to bathtub
- There should be any mold in the corners
- No soft areas along tile wall
- Cracked tiles

Exhaust fan

- Bathroom exhaust fan is working and has suction
- Outlet should be wired correctly and is GFCI connected (hit test button)

Plumbing System

- Branch pipes are blue/gray polybutylene piping (recalled & defective)
- Main water line may also be defective polybutylene
- Low water pressure
- Signs of pipe leaks or deterioration
- Old galvanized supply or drain pipes may be highly deteriorated on inside

Interior Doors

- Do interior doors open and close smoothly?
- Do they lock correctly?
- There should be a gap underneath doors for air flow

Windows

- Do the windows open smoothly?
- Can the windows be locked?
- Are the thermal seals intact?
- Glass cracks

Electrical System

Outlets

- Are the outlets wired correctly?
- Is there power?
- For old homes, are all of the outlets grounded?

Panel Box

- Has the model/brand been recalled?
- Undersized or oversized breakers
- Defective aluminum wiring

Bedrooms

Light Fixtures

- Do the lights work?
- Do stairways have 3-way switching?

Closet

- Do closets doors work properly?

Wall

- Deteriorated paint
- Soft areas
- Bowing of wall

Kitchen

- Does oven turn on and get to 500F?
- Do burners turn on properly?
- Does microwave work?
- Are kitchen outlets GFCI connected and working? (hit test button)
- Is icemaker and water dispenser working?
- Does garbage disposer work?
- Is sink leaking? (Open cabinet and check underneath)
- Does range hood turn on with adequate suction?
- Does dishwasher work and not leak?
- Is countertop properly secured?

Garage

- Does garage door opener work without loud sounds?
- Does laser reverse safety mechanism work?
- Does garage door reverse when it hits object?
- Are outlets in garage GFCI and working?

Smoke And Carbon Monoxide

- Is there a smoke detector in each room and one on each level?
- Is there a carbon monoxide alarm on each level if there are gas appliances?

Attic

- Is there insulation at least several inches above top of ceiling joists?
- Evidence of water leaks on roof sheathing
- Signs of mice or other animals like holes in insulation (urine or feces on insulation)
- Is the ridge vent clear of obstructions?
- Is the soffit venting clear of insulation? (Baffles?)
- Mold on sheathing or trusses

HVAC System

- Mold on air vent covers?
- Is the A/C cooling properly?
- Is the furnace, heat pump, or boiler adequately heating?
- When was the last time HVAC was serviced?
- Is the interior of furnace or heat pump clean of dust and mold?
- What is the age of HVAC system? (life expectancy is 15-20 years typically)

Crawlspace

- Evidence of damaged, deteriorated, or termite infested wood?
- Columns aren't properly supported
- Signs of water infiltration
- Is the crawlspace encapsulated?
- Missing vapor barrier
- Signs of rodents
- Is crawlspace properly ventilated?