



# For Your Protection: Get a Home Inspection

## Why a Buyer Needs a Home Inspection

A home inspection gives the buyer more detailed information about the overall condition of the home prior to purchase. In a home inspection, a qualified inspector takes an in-depth, unbiased look at your potential new home to:

- Evaluate the physical condition: structure, construction, and mechanical systems; Identify items that need to be repaired or replaced; and
- Estimate the remaining useful life of the major systems, equipment, structure, and finishes.

## You Must Ask for a Home Inspection

A home inspection will only occur if you arrange for one. FHA does not perform a home inspection.

Decide early. You may be able to make your contract contingent on the results of the inspection.

## Appraisals are Different from Home Inspections

An appraisal is different from a home inspection and does not replace a home inspection. Appraisals estimate the value of the property for lenders. An appraisal is required to ensure the property is marketable. Home inspections evaluate the condition of the home for buyers.

## FHA Does Not Guarantee the Value or Condition of your Potential New Home

If you find problems with your new home after closing, FHA cannot give or lend you money for repairs, and FHA cannot buy the home back from you. Ask a qualified home inspector to inspect your potential new home and give you the information you need to make a wise decision.

## Radon Gas Testing and other safety/health issues

The United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Surgeon General of the United States have recommended that all houses should be tested for radon. For more information on radon testing, call the toll-free National Radon Information Line at 1-800-SOS-Radon or 1-800-767-7236.

Ask your home inspector about additional health and safety tests that may be relevant for your home.

## Be an Informed Buyer

It is your responsibility to be an informed buyer. You have the right to carefully examine your potential new home with a qualified home inspector. To find a qualified home inspector ask for references from friends, realtors, local licensing authorities and organizations that qualify and test home inspectors.



## **Ten Important Questions to Ask Your Home Inspector**

### **1. What does your inspection cover?**

The inspector should ensure that their inspection and inspection report will meet all applicable requirements in your state if applicable and will comply with a well-recognized standard of practice and code of ethics. You should be able to request and see a copy of these items ahead of time and ask any questions you may have. If there are any areas you want to make sure are inspected, be sure to identify them upfront.

### **2. How long have you been practicing in the home inspection profession and how many inspections have you completed?**

The inspector should be able to provide his or her history in the profession and perhaps even a few names as referrals. Newer inspectors can be very qualified, and many work with a partner or have access to more experienced inspectors to assist them in the inspection.

### **3. Are you specifically experienced in residential inspection?**

Related experience in construction or engineering is helpful, but is no substitute for training and experience in the unique discipline of home inspection. If the inspection is for a commercial property, then this should be asked about as well.

### **4. Do you offer to do repairs or improvements based on the inspection?**

Some inspector associations and state regulations allow the inspector to perform repair work on problems uncovered in the inspection. Other associations and regulations strictly forbid this as a conflict of interest.

### **5. How long will the inspection take?**

The average on-site inspection time for a single inspector is two to three hours for a typical single-family house; anything significantly less may not be enough time to perform a thorough inspection. Additional inspectors may be brought in for very large properties and buildings.

### **6. How much will it cost?**

Costs vary dramatically, depending on the region, size and age of the house, scope of services and other factors. A typical range might be \$300-\$500, but consider the value of the home inspection in terms of the investment being made. Cost does not necessarily reflect quality. HUD Does not regulate home inspection fees.

### **7. What type of inspection report do you provide and how long will it take to receive the report?**

Ask to see samples and determine whether or not you can understand the inspector's reporting style and if the time parameters fulfill your needs. Most inspectors provide their full report within 24 hours of the inspection.

### **8. Will I be able to attend the inspection?**

This is a valuable educational opportunity, and an inspector's refusal to allow this should raise a red flag. Never pass up this opportunity to see your prospective home through the eyes of an expert.

### **9. Do you maintain membership in a professional home inspector association?**

There are many state and national associations for home inspectors. Request to see their membership ID, and perform whatever due diligence you deem appropriate.

### **10. Do you participate in continuing education programs to keep your expertise up to date?**

One can never know it all, and the inspector's commitment to continuing education is a good measure of his or her professionalism and service to the consumer. This is especially important in cases where the home is much older or includes unique elements requiring additional or updated training.