Total Home Inspection Checklist

Use a checklist like this to make sure that you are looking at all parts of the house. Check off those items that are in good condition and make notes about those that are not. (Note that this list describes an ideal house, but in our experience no house is perfect – not even brand new ones!!)



Grounds

- [ ] Proper grading drainage away from house
- [ ] No evidence of standing water
- [ ] No leaks from septic tank or leech field
- [ ] Yard, landscaping, trees and walkways in good condition
- [ ] No branches or bushes touching house or overhanging the roof
- [ ] Exterior structures (fences, sheds, decks, retaining walls, detached garages) in good condition, no evidence of termite damage or rotted wood
- [ ] Railings on stairs and decks are adequate and secure
- [ ] Driveways, sidewalks, patios, entrance landings in good condition, and pitched away from structure
- [ ] Downspout drainage directed away from structure

Structure

- [ ] Ridge and fascia board lines appear straight and level
- [ ] Sides of house appear straight, not bowed or sagging
- [ ] Window and doorframes appear square (especially bowed windows)

- [ ] Visible foundation in good condition - appears straight, plumb, with no significant cracks

Exterior Surfaces

- [ ] Adequate clearance between ground and wood siding materials (6" minimum); no wood-to-earth contact
- [ ] Siding: no cracking, curling, loose, rot or decay
- [ ] Masonry veneers: no cracks in joints, no broken, spalling or flaking components
- [ ] Stucco: no large cracks (discuss all stucco cracks with a professional inspector)
- [ ] Vinyl or aluminum siding: no dents, damage, no bowing or loose siding
- [ ] No vines on surface of structure
- [ ] Exterior paint or stain: no flaking or blisters
- [ ] No stains on exterior surfaces

Windows, Doors and Wood Trim

- [ ] Wood frames and trim pieces are secure, no cracks, rot or decay
- [ ] Joints around frames are caulked
- [ ] No broken glass (window or storm panes) or damaged screens, no broken doublepaned, insulated window seals.
- [ ] Muntin and mullion glazing compound in good condition
- [ ] Storm windows or thermal glass used
- [ ] Drip caps installed over windows

Roof

- [ ] Composition shingles: no curling, no cupping, no loss of granulation particulate, no broken, damaged or missing shingles, no more than two layers of roofing
- [ ] Wood shingles or shakes: no mold, rot or decay, no cracked/broken/missing shingles, no curling
- [ ] Flat roofs: no obvious patches, no cracks or splits, minimal blisters/"alligatoring" and wrinkles, no silt deposits (indicates improper drainage), sealed tar at flashings
- [ ] Flashing around roof penetrations
- [ ] No evidence of excess roofing cement/tar/caulk
- [ ] Soffits and fascia: no decay, no stains
- [ ] Exterior venting for eave areas: vents are clean and not painted over
- [ ] Gutters: no decay or rust, joints sealed, attached securely to structure, no bending or sagging, no sections of gutter or downspout missing, gutters clean, no mud deposits
- [ ] Chimneys: straight, properly flashed, no evidence of damaged bricks or cracked joints, mortar/cement cap in good condition

Attic

- [ ] No stains on underside of roofing, especially around roof penetrations
- [ ] No evidence of decay or damage to structure
- [ ] Sufficient insulation and properly installed insulation (moisture barrier installed closest to the heated area of the house)
- [ ] Adequate ventilation, clear path into attic for air entering through soffit vents, adequately sized gable end louvers, all mechanical ventilation operational
- [ ] No plumbing, exhaust or appliance vents terminating in attic
- [ ] No open electrical splices

Interior Rooms

- [ ] Floors, walls and ceilings appear straight and plumb and level
- [ ] No stains on floors, walls or ceilings
- [ ] Flooring materials in good condition
- [ ] No significant cracks in walls or ceilings
- [ ] Windows and exterior doors operate easily and latch properly, no broken glass, no sashes painted shut, no decay; windows and doors have weather-stripping, "weep holes" installed
- [ ] Interior doors operate easily and latch properly, no damage or decay, no broken hardware
- [ ] Paint, wall covering, and paneling in good condition
- [ ] Wood trim installed well and in good condition
- [ ] Lights and switches operate properly
- [ ] Adequate number of three pronged electrical outlets in each room
- [ ] Electrical outlets test properly (spot check)
- [ ] Heating/cooling source in each habitable room
- [ ] Evidence of adequate insulation in walls
- [ ] Fireplace: no cracking or damaged masonry, no evidence of back-drafting (staining on fireplace façade), damper operates properly, flue has been cleaned, flue is lined

Kitchen

- [ ] Working exhaust fan that is vented to the exterior of the building
- [ ] Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter ("GFCI") protection for electrical outlets within 6 feet of the sink(s)
- [ ] Dishwasher: drains properly, no leaks, baskets, door spring operates properly
- [ ] No leaks in pipes under sinks
- [ ] Floor in cabinet under sink solid, no stains or decay

- [ ] Water flow in sink adequate
- [ ] No excessive rust or deterioration on garbage disposal or waste pipes
- [ ] Built-in appliances operate properly
- [ ] Cabinets in good condition: doors and drawers operate properly

Bathroom

- [ ] Working exhaust fan that doesn't terminate in the attic space
- [ ] Adequate flow and pressure at all fixtures
- [ ] Sink, tub and shower drain properly
- [ ] Plumbing and cabinet floor under sink in good condition
- [ ] If sink is metal, it shows no signs of rust, overflow drain doesn't leak
- [ ] Toilet operates properly
- [ ] Toilet stable, no rocking, no stains around base
- [ ] Caulking in good condition inside and outside of the tub and shower area
- [ ] Tub or shower tiles secure, wall surface solid
- [ ] No stains or evidence of past leaking around base of bath or shower

Miscellaneous

- [ ] Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors where required by local ordinances
- [ ] Stairway treads and risers solid
- [ ] Stair handrails where needed and in good condition
- [ ] Automatic garage door opener operates properly, stops properly for obstacles

Basement or Mechanical Room

- [ ] No evidence of moisture
- [ ] Exposed foundation; no stains no major cracks, no flaking, no efflorescence
- [ ] Visible structural wood: no sagging, no damage, no decay, no stains, no damage from insects, sills attached to foundation with anchor bolts
- [ ] Insula tion at rim/band joists

Crawl Space

- [ ] Adequately vented to exterior

- [ ] Insulation on exposed water supply, waste and vent pipes
- [ ] Insulation between crawl space and heated areas, installed with vapor barrier towards heated area
- [ ] No evidence of insect damage
- [ ] No evidence of moisture damage

Plumbing

- [ ] Visible pipes: no damage, no evidence of leaks, no signs of stains on materials near pipes; drain pipes slope slightly down towards outlet to septic/sewage system
- [ ] Water heater: no signs of rust, vented properly, sized to produce adequate quantities of hot water for the number of bedrooms in the house.
- [ ] Water pump: does not short cycle
- [ ] Galvanized pipes do not restrict water flow
- [ ] Well water test is acceptable
- [ ] Hot water temperature between 118 - 125 degrees Fahrenheit

Electrical

- [ ] Visible wiring: in good condition, no "knob-and-tube" wiring, no exposed splices, cables secured and protected
- [ ] Service panel: adequate capacity, all cables attached to panel with cable connectors; fuses or breakers are not overheating
- [ ] No aluminum cable for branch circuits

Heating/Cooling System

- [ ] Appears to operate well throughout (good air flow on forced hot air systems)
- [ ] Flues: no open seams, slopes up to chimney connection
- [ ] No rust around cooling unit
- [ ] No combustion gas odor
- [ ] No asbestos on heating pipes, water pipes or air ducts
- [ ] Separate flues for gas/oil/propane and wood/coal

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