



SELLER GUIDE

Home Inspection Handbook



10 Things to do before your home inspection

Sellers can speed their home inspection by following these suggestions. The inspection will go smoother, with fewer concerns that could potentially delay closing.

- Confirm that water, electric and gas service are on, with gas pilot lights burning.
- Ensure pets won't hinder the inspection. Ideally, they should be removed from premises or secured outside. Tell your agent about any pets at home.
- Replace burned out bulbs to avoid a "light is inoperable" report that may suggest an electrical problem.
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and replace dead batteries.
- Clean or replace dirty HVAC air filters. They should fit securely.
- Remove stored items, debris and wood from foundation. These may be cited as "conducive conditions" for termites.
- Remove items blocking access to HVAC equipment, electric service panels, water heaters, attics and crawl spaces.
- Unlock areas the inspector must access—attic doors or hatches, electric service panels, closets, fence gates and crawl spaces.
- Trim tree limbs to 10 feet from the roof and shrubs from the house to allow access.
- Attend to broken or missing items like doorknobs, locks and latches, windowpanes, screens and locks, gutters, downspouts and chimney caps.

Checking these areas before your home inspection
is an investment in selling your property.

Home Inspection 101

The first point you must understand is that a home inspection is NOT a repair list for the sellers.

The only exception to this rule applies to new construction homes, where the builder or contractor must provide a finished product free of defects.

With used homes, inspection reports provide information for the sellers. This does not mean that buyers cannot submit repair requests to sellers, but such requests are negotiable; not legally binding upon the sellers.

Repair requests can, and perhaps should be, made but with the understanding that most sellers have rights of refusal.

Inspection findings are divided into three distinct categories:

01 LEGALLY MANDATED REPAIRS

Some conditions require repairs in accordance with state laws or local ordinances. Common in many areas are requirements to upgrade smoke detector placement, or to comply with various building and safety standards. Such items are non-negotiable and must be addressed by the sellers.



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02 CONTRACTUALLY MANDATED REPAIRS

Some conditions are specified for repair in the real estate purchase contract. Common are stipulations that:

- All building components are in safe working condition
- Plumbing leaks are repaired
- Structural problems are corrected.
- The roof be made free of leaks

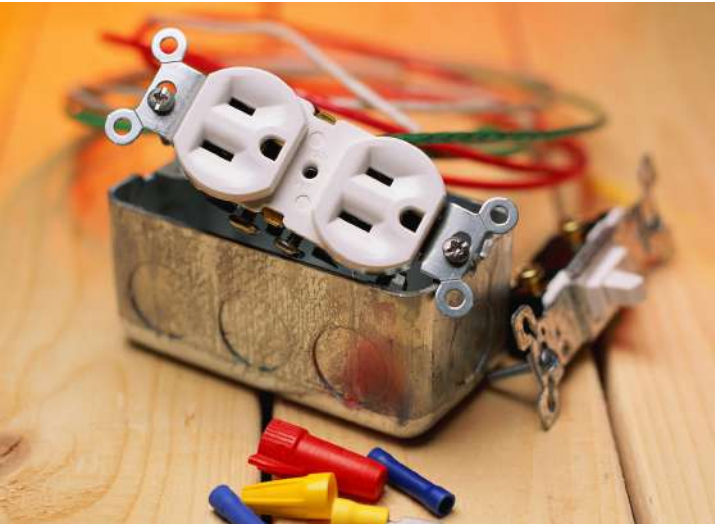
Contractual agreements of this kind are binding upon sellers. However, the seller's obligation may be limited to a dollar figure, above which the seller has the right to refuse to make the repairs. If the Seller refuses to make repairs the buyer thinks are necessary, the buyer must then decide whether to:

- accept the dollar figure limit in the contract and accept the property in its present condition,
- or terminate the contract and receive a refund of the earnest money (offer deposit).



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02 CONTRACTUALLY MANDATED REPAIRS (CONT'D)



The Roanoke Valley Association of Realtors Purchase Agreement, Paragraph 14 and Paragraphs F, G, H & I of the Standard Provisions section, address these conditions and requirements. Remember, *all property defects are negotiable*; buyers should carefully evaluate these according to importance.

Vital repairs are generally regarded as reasonable repair requests. Examples of these repairs include:

- a defective furnace or heat pump
- a substandard chimney
- faulty electrical wiring
- double taps in electrical panel box

Although sellers are not obligated for such corrective work, most reasonable sellers will agree to address conditions of this kind, either by making repairs or by adjusting the sales price of the property. Even though sellers are not required to make these repairs, buyers should feel comfortable requesting that such corrections be completed.



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03 CONDITIONS OF MINOR CONCERN

Finally, there are common property defects which should be regarded for disclosure purposes only and which buyers should accept as conditions to be repaired after the sale.

Examples are numerous and include:

- rotted fence posts
- peeling paint
- rubbing doors
- cracked pavement
- worn carpet
- unextended downspouts, etc.
- fogged windows
- lack of GFCI plugs in older homes

These deferred maintenance items are usually visible and a diligent buyer would have noticed them before going to the contract stage, and made an offer accordingly.

The key here is don't nit-pick. The buyer needs to know about these items, but the buyer is responsible for correcting them



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NEXT STEPS

These three standards should be applied, when reviewing the inspection report, as a means of separating repairs to be requested from conditions to be accepted.

Most sellers are honest and are often surprised to learn of defects uncovered during an inspection. No home is perfect. Keep things in perspective. Don't ruin your deal over things that don't matter. It is inappropriate to demand that a seller address deferred maintenance, conditions already listed on the seller's disclosure, or insignificant items.

At this point, the buyer's agent will formulate a letter of 'Request of Repairs' and submit it to the sellers. A wise approach is to state that some defects will be accepted in "as is" condition. Listing the items to be accepted is a good strategy for negotiation. Itemizing the accepted defects demonstrates a willingness to be reasonable, rather than demanding.

The letter should list the items for which repairs are requested, beginning with conditions required by law or by contract, and concluding with items that are subject to the sellers' approval.

