

# HOME BUYERS CHECKLIST

## WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING AT HOMES:

1. After making sure the water is not running anywhere, toilets, faucets, hose bibs, etc... Look at the water meter to see if the small indicator is moving (usually a small triangle for star shape) if it is moving even slightly, you have water leak somewhere.
2. Bring a marble or golf ball with you to test the level of the floors.
3. Look for flush round circles in the concrete around the front door – usually an indication of a termite treatment.
4. If the house you're looking at has old wood or clapboard siding, look at the bottom edge of the panels. Many times the painting contractor will prep, prime and paint the most visible surfaces, but will not always completely cover the drip edge. This oversight, or negligence, usually occurs at the bottom 4 or 5 panel courses. If the drip edge is not protected by priming and painting it is susceptible to moisture exposure. When moisture comes in contact with the unprotected drip edges of the hardboard panels, the drip edges may "broom", meaning the bottom edge will begin to swell and the glues/resins in the hardboard panel will fail, causing the drip edge to look like the bottom of a broom- open and separated.
5. When looking at the kitchen, always look under the counter top at least around the bottom of the sink – Most counter tops show evidence of previous water leaks and water damage in those areas.
6. A visual inspection of the water heater often reveal problems such as corrosion around fittings and the tank its self.
7. Toilets and their bolts tend to loosen up over time and the wax rings that seal the drain will rupture and leak onto the floor and ceilings below. It's never fun (nor healthy) to touch these devices, so I use the 2-knee method. I simply walk up to the bowl, straddle the device with two knees and give a little wiggle left and right. If it moves, you know it needs to be tightened with a new seal. If it doesn't, you can move on to the next item with clean hands. Your work pants may get the grime, but they can be washed.
8. I have found that the sheets of plywood/ wood or plaster board that appear to be stored in the garage or cellar, quite often are place in front of "damage" to the walls, holes, and even rot, pull them back just enough to see behind them.
- 9.. This works for area carpets as well. I always look under in bathrooms and wherever there is a tile floor as people tend to cover the cracks so they do not have to look at them!
10. Check the basement staircase as soon as you can after entering the home and be very aware as you enter the cellar stair well of what you smell. Your ability to detect odors normalizes after 15 minutes or so.



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### The “WALK THROUGH”

1. Check the heating system. Ensure heat from all discharge points.
2. Check the A/C system. Systems should not be activated when the outside air temperature is below 65 F. Forced operation can cause damage to the compressor.
3. Check all included appliances. All appliances should be run through full cycles to ensure proper working order.
4. Operational and visual inspection of all windows and doors.
5. Operational and visual inspection of the hot water tank to ensure against leakage.
6. Visual inspection of all walls, floors, ceilings and basement areas to determine the presence of any damage and/or water leakage/penetration. (Check Closets)
7. All kitchen, bathroom and exterior plumbing fixtures should be functionally tested and inspected for leakage to ensure proper operation prior to closing.
8. As applicable, operational check of electronic garage door openers and all safety features.



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### AFTER YOU MOVE IN:

**1. Annual HVAC inspection** - Spring or fall. HVAC, companies aren't as busy, and you're not in dire need of heat or Air Conditioning

**2. Chimney Inspection** - Once a year, before your first fire in winter. A simple chimney cleaning can prevent chimney fires and damage to your entire house. Water is the No. 1 problem with chimneys.

**3. Termite Inspection** - Once a year, any time, although termites are more active in spring and early summer. If left untreated, these bugs damage framing, trim, drywall, furniture, carpet, copper and other soft metals. Termites cause more than \$5 billion in damages a year in the U.S. "Termites eat the wood from the inside out, a typical homeowner would not be aware they are even in their home until months or years after they get in and start causing damage.

**4. Power Washing and Sealing Wood Deck** - Every one to three years, depending on the amount of traffic, moss and mold. Have it done any time in sunny weather.

Power washing gets rid of stains, algae, mold, mildew and moss. Algae and mold can make your deck slippery and dangerous, sealing your deck after it is cleaned helps prevent water damage. Wood soaks up rain like a sponge, expands and then shrinks, sealing makes the water bead up and roll off. A properly cleaned and sealed wood deck can last 20 to 30 years.

**5. Dryer Vent Cleaning** - Every year on a sunny day. The purpose is to get rid of lint buildup. If your dryer is not on an exterior wall, it's likely that the vent leading outside is clogged up, if you ignore it, the result could be a disastrous fire. Once the vent gets clogged, the dryer starts overheating and it can catch on fire