



## **Home Inspection Seller Preparation**

*Prepared by Ana Maron for her clients*

The majority of home inspection preparation rests on the property seller. Here are some ways you, my sellers, can prepare for a home inspection.

### **Make repairs ahead of time.**

Even minor blunders can present your home in a less favorable light. Fix the little things like handles, knobs and faucets. Repair major defects (like roofs), or be straightforward about them and adjust the asking price.

### **Have the home ready on time.**

A home inspection can take as long as three hours. With busy schedules to keep and reports to prepare, home inspectors try their hardest to be on time. Often, inspectors are early. A good rule of thumb is to be ready half an hour before the appointment time. Remember as well that inspectors often think little of starting early around the outside of the property, without your knowing they are even there.

### **Leave keys.**

Leave keys to all locked utility boxes and doors. Inaccessible systems are cause for incomplete inspections and delays. Arrange a place for the inspector to find the keys, or provide them ahead of time.

## **HOUSE INTERIOR:**

### **Thoroughly clean the house.**

It may seem obvious, but cleaning is often overlooked before an inspection. Inspectors aren't always looking beyond the mess to the real issues within the home.. An unkempt house gives the impression of uncaring owners and neglected regular maintenance. Additionally, new buyers are likely to accompany the inspector and will feel the same way; they may possibly rethink their purchase or find the property less appealing than they originally envisioned. Clean or replace heating and cooling filters; clean dirty air returns and supply registers. Test all smoke detectors to ensure that they are working. Replace any burned out light bulbs. Replace any broken/missing outlet and light switch covers.

### **Keep utilities connected.**

If the property is unoccupied, be sure all utilities--electricity, gas, oil, water--are connected and filled enough for appliances to run. The home inspector will need to test heating and cooling



systems, plumbing, appliances, faucets, electrical systems and more. Without utilities, required testing cannot be done. The result is an incomplete inspection. Incomplete inspections will delay the release of the home inspection contingency clause, which, in turn, will delay closing. Make sure the appliances are all really working and are at least somewhat clean. Believe me, a greasy range or vent hood is a complete turn off for the inspector and the potential buyer when it is discovered.

### **Keep pilot lights lit.**

For liability reasons, home inspectors will not light pilot lights on stoves, furnaces and water heaters. When pilot lights are not lit, inspections are rendered incomplete. Delays ensue.

### **Vents.**

Check out all bathroom and kitchen vent fans. Make sure they turn on and move at least some air.

### **Make sure all windows and doors are in proper operating condition.**

Heat and humidity can cause wooden windows and doors to swell and stick. To repair a sticky door or window, first mark where it is sticking. Then, remove the door or window, and carefully remove any excess material with a hand plane. For sliding windows, the surrounding trim is often the culprit. Lubricate window tracks. To keep windows and doors from sticking in the first place, make sure that they are sealed with a good coat of paint, including the tops and bottoms. Be careful not to paint the channels where windows need to slide, though—instead, use a light coat of linseed oil as a sealer.

### **Clean lint from the entire clothes dryer vent system.**

It should be removed from the dryer to the exterior vent cap. Because lint is incredibly flammable, this common build up can create a fire hazard. And if a gas clothes dryer is not properly vented, it can even force deadly carbon monoxide back into the home.

### **Clear workspace around systems.**

Home inspectors need adequate room to access appliances, electrical panels, water heater, and heating and cooling units. Remove boxes, stored items and debris from these areas; at least three feet of workspace is recommended. Check the filter in your furnace. Remove the dirty one and install one that looks clean. Click the AC unit on and make sure it really cools.

### **Provide access to additional spaces.**



Attics, garages, sheds, basements and crawlspaces need to be accessible to the home inspector. Clear away any blockages and make sure doors can be opened (unlock if necessary). This includes accessing inspection hatches for bathtubs, water meters and shutoff valves. **Crawlspace:** If the crawl space is located in a unique place, please let me (Ana Maron) know so I can pass it on. **Attic:** Examine your attic. Make sure the bulb works. Check to see if the vents in the attic are clear and allowing enough air to draw through them. Clear out the closets where the attic access is located. Move the clutter to another area that the inspector may not be as likely to look at. Try out the garage door opener to see if it really opens that door that has been closed for months. **Examine the sump pump.** Make sure that it is working. Flush each toilet to see if it properly refills. **Faucets:** Turn the hot and cold water faucet on in that basement bath and make sure it drains properly too. **Basements:** Walk through your basement. Look UP and see if there are any uncapped electrical junction boxes. If so, spend 25 cents and go buy and install the proper lid. Home inspectors are just waiting for this to be found.

#### **Remove appliance contents.**

Dishwashers and washing machines are subject to the home inspection and will be run. Even if an appliance is not included in the sale, inspectors will run your machine to ensure that the plumbing, venting and electrical supplies are in working order.

### **HOUSE EXTERIOR**

#### **Paint all weathered exterior wood and caulk around trim, chimneys.**

Also paint and repair rusty exterior fixtures. Paint additives are now available to help paint stick to rust, while also neutralizing the rust and stopping corrosion from continuing under the paint. If left untreated, rust will eventually cause fixtures to lock up. Caulk all exterior wall penetrations.

#### **Clear exterior clutter and debris.**

Foundations, outside electrical outlets and faucets are a few of the items inspectors will want to see outside. Remove trash cans, trim branches and brush back from the foundation, roof and siding., dispose of dead limbs and clear an accessible path around the home, especially in winter. Again, the inspection will be easier, but the appearance of your house will improve as well.

Walk around the exterior of your house and make sure all of the gutter downspouts are actually hooked onto the downspouts. Clean out dirty gutters and any debris from the roof. Watch the water, when it rains, and make sure that it really does drain away from the foundation. Divert downspouts away from the house. While walking around your house, look up and if you see wasp or hornet nests, bird nests or other unsightly nature occurrences, clean them up and get rid of them. Remove soil or mulch from contact with siding. Six or more inches of clearance are best.

### **KITCHEN AND BATHROOMS**



- Check that all plumbing fixtures such as the toilet, tub, shower, and sinks are in proper working condition. Fix any leaks and caulk around fixtures if necessary.
- Caulk and gaps around the backsplash in the kitchen and bathrooms.
- Caulk any gaps where tub/shower surround meets the wall or floor.
- Clean out areas under sinks so they can be properly inspected.
- Tighten up any loose hinges or handles on all cabinet doors and drawers.
- Ensure GFCI receptacles are functional.

### **OTHER:**

#### **Collect receipts for repairs.**

Leave receipts and repair invoices for anything you have had fixed in the home. This shows proof of upkeep and answers to many questions an inspector may have.

#### **Remove pets.**

If possible, take your pets with you or have them boarded elsewhere for the day. At the very least, secure animals in crates, kennels or leads far away from any area where the inspector will be. Avoid an incomplete inspection, pet loss or liability resulting from nervous pets.

#### **Leave.**

Plan to leave for at least three hours. This includes children and other home occupants. Inspectors are often accompanied by buyers, and both will want uninhibited, free access to ask questions and explore the home.

#### **ANA'S LAST THOUGHTS:**

Certainly I could go on with additional items to be concerned about, but I could never list all of the things I have seen in inspection reports. Just be aware that your buyer and his/her home inspector are there to discover all the things you may or may not know are wrong with your home. The inspector's job is to disclose everything they see that is not right, doesn't meet code, or is not of safe and sound quality. Sometimes they list more than necessary or list things that may seem of little importance (like a burned out bulb). Although this may be the case, in order to protect themselves and the buyer, an inspector will disclose everything. The inspector is the eyes and ears of the buyers. He's is there to protect the buyer, his client. The buyer's agent is not their client.

I like to give this list to my sellers to help them prepare for the inspection. The less the inspector can add to the report, the better for you, my seller. I've experienced that this is an area where many deals fall apart. If too many things come up, many buyers walk away and many can get their Earnest Money back – depending on how the contract was written. If the buyers give the sellers a list of repairs and the sellers choose not to repair any or just some repairs and the buyers



are not happy, once again, the buyers may rescind their offer per the contract and get their Earnest Money back.