HOME BUYER TIPS FROM A PROFESSIONAL HOME INSPECTOR

TIPS

FOR HOMEBUYERS

DeBoer
HOME INSPECTION

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Whether you're a first-time buyer or an experienced homeowner, these practical tips are designed to help make your real estate transaction smoother, more efficient, and better informed—with the support of a professional home inspector.

BEFORE YOU MAKE AN OFFER

1. Use a Buyer's Agent- A buyer's agent works for you, not the seller. They help protect your interests throughout the process.

2. Test Your Daily Commute- Drive to and from the home during peak hours. A "short drive" on a Sunday can feel very different on a weekday morning.

3. Walk the Neighborhood- Don't just drive through—walk it. Noise levels, Parking, and Nearby activity. These things matter more than most buyers expect.

4. Visit the Property in Different Conditions- If possible, check it in the rain. Look at drainage, watch how water moves around the home. Water mismanagement is one of the most common issues.

5. Check Cell Service and Internet Options- It's easy to overlook, but poor cell reception or limited internet options can become a daily frustration—especially if you work from home or rely on streaming.

DURING THE BUYING PROCESS

1. What You See Isn't Always What You Get- Things like water damage, insulation problems, or electrical concerns are often not visible during a showing. That's where a proper inspection makes the difference.

2. Focus on the Big Stuff- Every home will have minor issues—it's normal. What actually matters are problems that can: Affect safety, Lead to costly repairs, Get worse over time. This includes things like structure, water intrusion, roofing, and electrical systems.

3. New Doesn't Mean Perfect- Even brand-new homes can have defects. Homes are built by multiple trades, and mistakes happen—missed connections, poor installs, or incomplete work are more common than most buyers expect.

4. Small Signs Can Point to Bigger Problems- Things like minor staining, cracks, or unusual smells can be early indicators of larger issues. What looks small on the surface can sometimes mean there's more going on behind the scenes.

5. Systems Have a Lifespan- Major components like roofing, HVAC, and windows don't last forever. Understanding their condition and approximate remaining life can help you prepare for future maintenance and avoid unexpected costs.

DURING THE INSPECTION

1. What Really Matters- Most homes will have minor issues, and that is completely normal. What matters most are the larger items that can affect safety, cause costly repairs, or worsen over time. During the inspection, special attention is given to the home's structure, signs of water intrusion, roofing, electrical safety, and major systems, including heating, cooling, and plumbing.

2. What I Look For- When I inspect a home, I focus on what matters most, including the condition of the roof, foundation, and structure; electrical safety; plumbing; HVAC systems; attic insulation and ventilation; and any signs of moisture or water damage. My goal is to give you clear explanations and help you understand what matters most—not just hand you a report.

3. Things I Commonly Find- I look for issues that can have the biggest impact on the home; some of the most common include: water damage, attic ventilation problems, electrical safety concerns, signs of structural movement, and roofing defects. These are the types of problems that are often easy to miss during a showing but can become costly if left unaddressed.

4. The Truth About Home Inspections- The reality is that every home has issues. Most are minor and manageable, while a few may be more significant. A good home inspection helps you understand the property's overall condition, prioritize repairs, and avoid major surprises after you move in. The goal is not to find a perfect house—it is to give you the clarity you need to make an informed decision.

5. More Than Just A Report- I don't just hand you a report and leave. Before the inspection is over, I walk you through the home on site so you understand what matters, what's minor, what can wait, and what could become a more costly issue over time. My goal is to make sure you feel comfortable and have a clear understanding of the home's condition before we leave. You will also receive your full inspection report by email later that day, so you have all of the information right away.

AFTER THE INSPECTION

1. Review the Report Carefully- Take the time to read through the entire report, not just the summary. Even smaller items can help you understand how well the home has been maintained and what may need attention in the future.

2. Make a Plan for Repairs and Maintenance- Not everything needs to be addressed right away. Separate items into what should be done immediately, what should be monitored, and what can wait until later.

3. Keep the Report for Future Reference- Your inspection report can continue to be useful long after the purchase. It can help you keep track of maintenance items, system ages, and areas that may need attention over time.

4. Ask Questions If You Need Clarification- A good inspection should leave you with a clear understanding of the home. If there is anything in the report you are unsure about, ask. It is important that you fully understand the condition of the property.

5. Use the Report as a Homeowner's Guide- The inspection report is not just for the buying process. It can also help you learn where shut-offs are located, understand how systems work, and get familiar with the home before you move in.

AFTER YOU MOVE IN

1. Locate Important Shut-Offs and Safety Devices- Make sure you know where the main water shut-off, electrical panel, furnace shut-off, and gas shut-off are located. Check smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms to make sure they are working properly.

2. Stay Ahead of Routine Maintenance- Small maintenance tasks can prevent bigger problems later. Change furnace filters regularly, clean gutters, keep downspouts clear, and monitor caulking around windows, doors, tubs, and showers.

3. Watch for Changes Over Time- Pay attention to new cracks, leaks, musty smells, or changes in how doors and windows operate. Catching small issues early can save you money and prevent larger repairs.

4. Keep Water Away From the Home- Make sure grading slopes away from the house, downspouts discharge away from the foundation, and sump pumps are working properly. Water is one of the biggest threats to any home.

5. Budget for Future Repairs- Every home will need maintenance and repairs over time. Setting aside money each year for future expenses can make larger repairs easier to manage when the time comes.

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