UtahStateUniversity
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

HOME OWNERSHIP
FACT SHEETS

Home Inspection

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What is a home inspection?

A home inspection is an objective visual examination of the physical structure and systems of a home, from the roof to the foundation. The standard home inspector's report will include an evaluation of the condition of home's heating system; central air conditioning system; interior plumbing; electrical system; roof; insulation in the walls and ceiling; energy efficiency of the windows and doors; and structural systems.

How do I find a home inspector?

The best source is a friend, or perhaps a business acquaintance, who has been satisfied with, and can recommend, a home inspector they have used. In addition, the names of local inspectors can be found in the Yellow Pages telephone book where many advertise under "Building Inspection Service", or "Home Inspection Service". Real estate agents are also generally familiar with the service, and should be able to provide you with a list of names from which to choose.

Since there are no licensing requirements for home inspectors in Utah, you will want to ascertain the home inspector's professional qualifications, experience, and business ethics before you make your selection. You can do this by checking with the local consumer affairs office or Better Business Bureau, as well as by verifying the inspector's membership in a reputable professional association which relates to inspecting a home.

How much will it cost?

The inspection fee for a typical one-family house varies, as does the cost of housing. Similarly, within a given area, the inspection fee will vary depending upon the size of the house, particular features of the house, its age and possible additional services, such as septic, well, or radon testing. It is a good idea to check local prices on your own. However, do not let cost be a factor in deciding whether or not to have a home inspected.

When inspecting a house, the following items should be checked:

INSPECTING THE INSIDE OF THE HOUSE

Structure: Does the house feel solid? Jump up and down on the floors. Check support posts and floor supports in basement. Look for looseness, bending, rot, and termites.

Floors: Check for levelness, bowing, and movement when you walk on them.

Stairs: Look for loose treads and loose handrails.
Plumbing System: Check water pipes and sewer lines for leaking or rusting. Flush all toilets. Turn on faucets to test water pressure. Look for clogged or sluggish drains and dripping faucets.
Heating System: Find out what type of heat and fuel are used. How much does it cost to heat the house?
Hot Water Heater: Check for signs of leaking or rusting. What is the capacity? How old is it?
Electrical System: Look at the service box-are there fuses or circuit breakers? Look for exposed wires and signs of wear.
General Layout: Are the rooms conveniently located? What are the traffic patterns?
Kitchen: What appliances are included? Check for age and workability. Are there enough shelves and counter space? Are there enough electrical outlets? Are there leaks under the sink?
Bathrooms: Are there enough for your family? Check for cracks in tiles, signs of leaks, and how long it takes to get hot water. Is there a window or fan for proper ventilation?
Living Room and Dinning Room: Are they large enough? If it has a fireplace, does the damper work? Has the chimney been cleaned recently?
Bedrooms: Are there enough for your family? Are they large enough?
Storage Space: Are there enough closets in the house? Are there other rooms you can use for storage?
Windows and Doors: Are they broken or is the seal broken? Are they energy efficient? Do they close properly? Are there good locks?
Walls and Ceiling: Check for major cracks, loose or falling plaster, signs of leaks and stains.
Basement: Check for signs of leaks, dampness, and flooding.
Attic: Look for signs of roof leaks. Check insulation-are there signs of squirrels or other rodents? What is the condition of the rafters and roof gutters from inside the attic?

INSPECTING THE OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE

Foundation: Check for holes, cracks, and unevenness.
Brickwork: Look for cracks, loose mortar, and missing mortar.
Siding: Look for loose pieces, missing pieces, and warping.
Paint: Look for peeling, chipping, and blistering.
Entrance Porch: Examine steps, handrails, and posts for loose or unsafe features.
Windows and Screens: Look for cracked or broken glass and holes in screens. See if windows are double pane.
Roof: Look for worn or bald spots. Ask how old it is and if it is under warranty.
Gutters and Downspouts: Check for missing sections, gaps or holes in joints, and signs of leaks.
Chimney: Look for tilting, loose, and missing bricks.
Walls and Fences: Look for holes, loose or missing sections, and rotten posts.
Garage: Check doors, roof, siding, and windows.
Driveway and Sidewalks: Look for holes and cracks.
Grounds and Landscaping: Locate property line. Are trees, shrubbery, and grass in good shape?
Proper Drainage: Will rain or snow flow away from the house?

A professional inspector is likely to uncover things that you will not find on your own and may prevent you from making a potentially disastrous mistake. After an inspector has found

that the house that you are considering is in good shape, you can then be reassured about the condition of the house.

Adapted from The Home Inspection & You (booklet), written by American Society of Home Inspectors, 1993.

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