

Home Inspection Checklist: 156 Things Inspectors Evaluate

Why This Home Inspection Checklist Matters for Every Buyer

A thorough property inspection checklist can save you thousands of dollars. Whether you're buying a house or a condo, you need to understand the inspection process before attending any inspection.

Major structural issues cost \$47,000 on average when missed. Knowing what the report covers protects you.

Quick test: Which would make you walk away?

- A) Small foundation cracks (less than 1/8")
- B) Active roof leak with water stains
- C) Safety outlets missing in bathrooms
- D) Old heating system

If you answered anything except B, you might pay too much for hidden problems.

Foundation (12 Items)

Structure & Condition

- ☐ Foundation material (concrete, block, or stone) is solid and in good condition.
- ☐ Foundation is free from serious cracks (none wider than 1/4").
- ☐ Structure shows no signs of settling, sinking, or movement.
- ☐ Brick and masonry elements are intact with no significant damage.
- ☐ Anchor bolts are present and secure (required in earthquake areas).

Moisture & Drainage

- ☐ Ground slopes away from house, directing water away from foundation.
- ☐ Foundation walls are free from white mineral deposits (efflorescence).
- ☐ Foundation vents are open, unobstructed, and providing proper airflow.
- ☐ Crawl space is accessible, dry, and in acceptable condition.

Exterior & Hazards

- ☐ Proper clearance exists between soil and wood siding (no soil-to-wood contact).
- ☐ Soil type around foundation is suitable and not causing issues.
- ☐ Foundation is free from pest damage or evidence of infestation.

Roof (18 Items)

Roof Surface & Materials

- ☐ Roof age and material type are documented and within expected lifespan.
- ☐ Shingles or tiles are in good condition with no curling, cracking, or missing pieces.
- ☐ Flashing around vents, chimneys, and penetrations is intact and sealed.
- ☐ Gutters are clean, secure, and draining properly.
- ☐ Downspouts are present and directing water away from foundation.
- ☐ Overhangs and soffits are intact with no rot or damage.

Structural Integrity

- ☐ Roof is free from sagging areas or structural deformities.
- ☐ No evidence of past or current roof leaks.
- ☐ Chimney is in good condition with intact mortar and cap.
- ☐ Roof is free from damage caused by dishes, antennas, or other installations.

Ventilation & External Factors

- ☐ Roof ventilation is adequate with functional vents.
- ☐ Ridge vent is in good condition and unobstructed.
- ☐ No overhanging tree limbs threatening the roof surface.
- ☐ Roof surface is free from excessive moss, algae, or debris growth.

Attic Inspection

- ☐ Attic vents are present and providing adequate ventilation.
 - ☐ Insulation is present and at proper depth for the region.
 - ☐ Vapor barrier is properly installed.
 - ☐ Attic is free from mold, mildew, or moisture signs.
 - ☐ Roof decking is solid with no rot, staining, or deterioration.
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Electrical (24 Items)

Service Panel

- ☐ Panel type and age are documented.
- ☐ Panel is not a recalled brand (Federal Pacific, Zinsco, etc.).

- ☐ Wiring is copper (no aluminum wiring present, which is a fire risk).
- ☐ Service size (amps) is adequate for the home's needs.
- ☐ Breakers are properly labeled and organized.
- ☐ No double-tapped breakers present.

Wiring Safety

- ☐ Wire sizing matches breaker ratings throughout.
- ☐ GFCI outlets are installed and functional in all wet areas.
- ☐ AFCI breakers are present in bedrooms (where required by code).
- ☐ Electrical system is properly grounded.
- ☐ All outlets are in good condition with proper three-prong configuration.
- ☐ All outlets tested and functioning correctly.

Switches & Wiring Condition

- ☐ All light switches operate properly.
- ☐ No signs of overheating, burn marks, or scorching at outlets or panels.
- ☐ Junction boxes have proper covers installed.
- ☐ Wire coating/insulation is intact with no exposed wiring.
- ☐ Home is free from old knob-and-tube wiring.
- ☐ Outdoor outlets are present, functional, and weather-protected.

Safety Systems & Additional

- ☐ Subpanels are properly installed and connected.
- ☐ Smoke detectors are present and functional in required locations.
- ☐ Carbon monoxide detectors are present and functional.
- ☐ Service mast is in good condition and securely attached.
- ☐ Meter base is in good condition with proper weatherproofing.
- ☐ No evidence of unpermitted DIY electrical work.

HVAC System (16 Items)

Heating System

- ☐ Furnace age and model are documented.
- ☐ Heat exchanger is free from cracks or damage (no carbon monoxide risk).
- ☐ Burner flame is blue (not yellow or orange, which indicates problems).

- ☐ Air filter is clean or recently replaced.
- ☐ Ductwork is intact, connected, and properly insulated.

Cooling System

- ☐ AC unit age and condition are documented.
- ☐ Refrigerant lines are insulated and in good condition.
- ☐ Condensate drain line is clear and draining properly.
- ☐ Thermostat operates correctly and controls system as expected.
- ☐ Adequate airflow is present at all supply vents.

System Performance & Maintenance

- ☐ System achieves proper temperature differential (heating and cooling).
- ☐ Airflow is balanced throughout the home with no dead spots.
- ☐ Air returns are unobstructed and adequate for system size.
- ☐ Flue pipe is properly connected and in good condition.
- ☐ Gas lines are secure with no leaks or corrosion.
- ☐ Maintenance records are available and show regular service.

Plumbing (22 Items)

Supply Lines & Pipes

- ☐ Pipe material is documented (copper, PEX, or galvanized).
- ☐ Pipes are free from rust, corrosion, or mineral buildup.
- ☐ Water pressure is adequate (40-60 psi is ideal).
- ☐ Drain pipes are clear and draining properly.

Fixtures

- ☐ All sinks are free from leaks underneath.
- ☐ All toilets flush properly and do not run continuously.
- ☐ All showers and tubs drain quickly with no standing water.
- ☐ Water heater age is documented and within expected lifespan.

Water Heater

- ☐ Temperature/pressure relief valve is present and functional.
- ☐ Water heater venting is properly installed and unobstructed.

- ☐ Expansion tank is present and in good condition (where required).

Main Systems

- ☐ Main water shutoff valve is located and operates properly.
- ☐ Sewer line condition is known or has been scoped.
- ☐ Sump pump is present (where needed), tested, and functional.
- ☐ Well system is functional with adequate flow (if applicable).
- ☐ Septic system is documented and in good condition (if applicable).

Valves & Additional

- ☐ Individual fixture shutoff valves operate properly.
 - ☐ No cross-connections exist between potable and non-potable water.
 - ☐ Backflow preventer is present and functional (where required).
 - ☐ Visible gas lines are secure and free from corrosion.
 - ☐ No signs of past frozen pipe damage or repairs.
 - ☐ Water quality is acceptable (consider testing if concerns exist).
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Windows and Doors (12 Items)

Window Inspection

- ☐ All windows open, close, and lock smoothly.
- ☐ Window locks engage and hold securely.
- ☐ Window glass is clear with no fogging (seals are intact).
- ☐ Window frames are free from wood rot or water damage.
- ☐ Window screens are present and in good condition.
- ☐ Caulking around windows is intact and not cracked or missing.

Door Inspection

- ☐ All doors open, close, and latch properly.
 - ☐ Weatherstripping is present and provides a good seal.
 - ☐ Deadbolts are present on exterior doors and function correctly.
 - ☐ Door glass is free from cracks or damage.
 - ☐ Storm doors are in good condition (where present).
 - ☐ Door sills and thresholds are intact with no rot or damage.
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Interior: Walls, Ceilings, Floors (19 Items)

Walls and Ceilings

- ☐ Walls are free from significant cracks.
- ☐ Ceilings are free from water stains or discoloration.
- ☐ Paint is in good condition with no peeling or bubbling.
- ☐ Interior is free from visible mold or mildew.

Flooring

- ☐ Flooring is in good overall condition.
- ☐ Floors are free from excessive squeaking or soft spots.
- ☐ Carpet is in acceptable condition with no major wear patterns.
- ☐ Tiles are secure with no loose, cracked, or missing pieces.
- ☐ Hardwood floors are free from significant gaps or buckling.

Basement & Attic

- ☐ Basement is dry with no signs of moisture or water intrusion.
- ☐ Attic insulation is adequate for the climate.
- ☐ Attic ventilation is sufficient to prevent moisture buildup.

Safety Features

- ☐ Smoke detectors are present and functional on every level.
- ☐ Carbon monoxide detectors are present near sleeping areas.
- ☐ Fireplace and chimney are in safe, working condition.
- ☐ Stairs are solid with secure handrails that meet code.
- ☐ Attic access is present and functional.
- ☐ Built-in appliances operate correctly.
- ☐ Garage door and safety sensors function properly.

Exterior (21 Items)

Siding and Structure

- ☐ Siding is in good condition with no major damage or deterioration.
- ☐ Exterior is free from wood rot.
- ☐ Exterior is free from pest damage or infestation signs.

- ☐ Trim and fascia are intact and properly secured.

Drainage and Grading

- ☐ Ground slopes away from house on all sides.
- ☐ Downspout extensions direct water at least 4-6 feet from foundation.
- ☐ Yard is free from areas of standing water after rain.
- ☐ Window wells are clean, clear, and draining properly.

Outdoor Features

- ☐ Deck or patio is structurally sound and in good condition.
- ☐ Exterior railings and stairs are secure and meet safety codes.
- ☐ Outdoor electrical outlets are present, functional, and GFCI-protected.
- ☐ Outdoor lighting is functional.
- ☐ Hose bibs operate properly and are free from leaks.

Driveway and Walkways

- ☐ Driveway is in good condition with no major cracks or heaving.
- ☐ Walkways are level and free from trip hazards.
- ☐ Concrete surfaces are free from significant cracking or damage.
- ☐ Retaining walls are stable and free from leaning or displacement.

Garage

- ☐ Garage door opens and closes smoothly.
- ☐ Garage door safety sensors are present and functioning.
- ☐ Garage floor is in good condition with no major cracks.
- ☐ Proper firewall separation exists between garage and living space.
- ☐ Garage electrical outlets are functional.

Inspection Results Summary

Major Issues Found (Tier 1 - Immediate Attention)

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Important Repairs Needed (Tier 2 - Near-term)

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Routine Maintenance (Tier 3 - Normal Wear)

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Notes Section

Use this space to document specific findings, measurements, and observations during your inspection.

Resources:

- HUD Home Inspection Guide
- CFPB Home Buying Resources
- EPA Mold Information
- USFA Fire Safety Guidelines

This checklist is for informational purposes. Always hire a licensed professional inspector for a complete evaluation.