

PREPARING A HOME FOR A HOME INSPECTION

By
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(A friend who is a broker asked if I would be a guest speaker to help new salesman understand the task of a home inspector. I thought this might be a great opportunity to “break-them-in-right,” so I agreed to put on a show. I prepared an outline and lectured about numerous topics and answered questions. The brokers were very attentive and appreciative of my knowledge and advice. Yes, I did explain that I was not seeking their referral to clients. They seemed most interested in advice regarding the home inspector law and how to choose a good home inspector. I found the experience to be pleasurable and our profession was never assaulted. I even received a very nice “thank you” note. Before leaving, I explained that we work for different clients, but that we are members of the same buying team (broker, banker, attorney and home inspector). We have to learn to respect the role of each team member and fulfill the contractual expectations of our clients. I left them with the following gift of advice on **“Preparing A Home For A Home Inspection.”**

No one, not the broker, not the buyer nor the home inspector wants to spend all day waiting for a home inspection to conclude. No one associated with the sale wants systems or components to be inaccessible for inspection, resulting in delays in the buying process while further investigations are scheduled. It only makes sense that if the broker respects the needs of the home inspector and shares that knowledge with the owner that the inspection will precede more efficiently.

A home inspector follows a field practice that can be easily understood and can be made more efficient by the homeowner and the listing broker. By understanding the home inspector’s needs and objectives, a home can be prepared for a home inspection, thus saving all parties the need to stand around and “watch paint dry.”

So, what can be done to speed up the efficiency and accuracy of the home inspection? Well, here are some suggestions that I offer:

1. Notify the owner and other brokers that a home inspection is scheduled.
2. If possible, the broker should arrive early, open up the home and turn the lights on.
3. Suggest that the owner prepare the home by making it neat and tidy.
4. Suggest that the owner clean the yard of animal waste and restrain the pets.
5. Suggest that the owner provide a clear pathway, clear of storage to the:
 - a. Heating system
 - b. Electrical service panel
 - c. Water heater

d. Water service

6. If the attic access hatch is located in a closet, suggest that sufficient storage be removed so that the inspector can place a stepladder inside.
7. If the garage or basement are being used for temporary storage during the moving process, the inspector will be unable to fully view the structure and mechanical systems and will so note in his report. Any items that can be relocated elsewhere will greatly aid the inspector's task.
8. If a "seller disclosure" form is available, please inform the inspector so that he can review the document prior to performing the inspection.
9. Inform the inspector about any systems that should not be energized, items that should not be moved or areas that should not be entered.
10. Make sure that the utilities are turned on prior to the inspection and oil in the tank.
11. Inform the owner that the inspector must examine the basement, garage, kitchen, bathrooms, living spaces, closets, cabinets and attic.
12. The inspector will need to operate each bathroom fixture and operate the heating and central air conditioning systems.
13. If the home has been inspected before and defects are known, they should be disclosed both to the inspector and the prospective buyer.
14. If the sale already includes agreements for repairs or adjustments in the sale price to cover disclosed repairs, please inform the inspector.
15. The listing sheet does NOT contain helpful information for the inspector. The inspector needs to know the age of the roof, heating system, water heater, etc. Also needed is honest disclosure of any past wet basement problems, roof leaks, structural repairs or treatment for pests.
16. In case the buyer desires a radon test, the owner must be informed that doors and windows need to be kept closed for 12-hours prior to the test and for 48-hours during the test.
17. If a wood stove is present, make a copy of the permit (required since 1976) available for the inspector to review.
18. If the Title 5 inspection has been completed, make a copy of the complete 11-page report available for review.