

# Complete Home Inspection Guide

A thorough home inspection is one of the most important steps in the home-buying process. This guide will help you understand what inspectors look for, what red flags to watch for, and how to interpret your inspection report.

## 1. Why Home Inspections Matter

**Uncover Hidden Issues:** Inspectors find problems you might miss, from structural issues to safety hazards.

**Negotiate Repairs:** Use inspection findings to request repairs or price reductions.

**Plan for Future Costs:** Understand what maintenance or replacements you'll need soon.

**Protect Your Investment:** Avoid buying a money pit with significant hidden defects.

**Peace of Mind:** Know exactly what you're buying before you commit to the purchase.

## 2. What Inspectors Examine

**Structural Components:** Foundation, framing, walls, and roof structure for cracks, settling, or damage.

**Exterior:** Siding, trim, windows, doors, driveways, walkways, and drainage systems.

**Roofing:** Shingles, flashing, gutters, downspouts, and roof ventilation.

**Plumbing:** Water supply, drain systems, water heater, fixtures, and signs of leaks.

**Electrical:** Service panel, wiring, outlets, switches, and GFCI protection.

**HVAC:** Heating and cooling systems, ductwork, filters, and thermostat operation.

**Interior:** Walls, ceilings, floors, stairs, windows, doors, and built-in appliances.

**Insulation and Ventilation:** Attic and basement insulation, ventilation, and moisture control.

## 3. Red Flags to Watch For

**Foundation Cracks:** Large or horizontal cracks can indicate serious structural problems.

**Water Damage:** Stains on ceilings, walls, or floors suggest leaks or moisture issues.

**Mold Growth:** Visible mold or musty odors indicate moisture problems that need addressing.

**Electrical Hazards:** Outdated wiring, overloaded circuits, or missing GFCI protection.

**Roof Damage:** Missing shingles, sagging areas, or signs of multiple layers.

**Pest Infestations:** Evidence of termites, rodents, or other pests.

**Plumbing Issues:** Low water pressure, slow drains, or signs of previous leaks.

**HVAC Problems:** Systems that don't heat or cool properly or are near end of life.

## 4. Questions to Ask Your Inspector

- How long have you been doing inspections?
- Are you licensed and insured?
- What type of certification do you hold?
- Do you have experience with homes built in [year]?
- What does your inspection cover?
- How long will the inspection take?
- Can I attend the inspection?
- When will I receive the report?
- Do you offer any specialized inspections (radon, mold, pests)?
- What happens if you find major issues?

## 5. After the Inspection

**Review the Report Thoroughly:** Read every section carefully and note any concerns.

**Prioritize Issues:** Distinguish between major repairs and minor cosmetic issues.

**Get Repair Estimates:** For significant problems, get quotes from contractors.

**Negotiate with Seller:** Request repairs, credits, or price reductions based on findings.

**Consider Walk-Away Clause:** If issues are too severe, you may choose not to proceed.

**Plan for Maintenance:** Create a schedule for recommended upkeep and future repairs.

**Keep the Report:** Use it as a reference for future maintenance and repairs.

## Common Repair Cost Estimates

Use these ballpark figures to understand potential repair costs. Actual costs vary by region and scope.

<b>Repair Type</b>	<b>Typical Cost Range</b>
Foundation repair	\$2,000 - \$7,000
Roof replacement	\$5,000 - \$12,000
HVAC replacement	\$3,500 - \$7,500
Electrical panel upgrade	\$1,200 - \$2,500
Plumbing repairs	\$150 - \$1,500
Water heater replacement	\$800 - \$1,500
Mold remediation	\$500 - \$6,000
Termite treatment	\$1,000 - \$3,000
Window replacement (per window)	\$300 - \$1,000
Siding repair/replacement	\$5,000 - \$15,000