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HOW SELLERS CAN PREPARE FOR A BUYER'S HOME INSPECTION

It happens every day, sellers who don't take the time to ensure a smooth home inspection will pay for it in the long run. A little preparation can ensure sellers have great home inspections.

If something isn't working properly, don't try to hide it. The inspector will find it. Buyers get very suspicious when sellers deliberately try to conceal defects. They immediately see you as dishonest and wonder what else you're hiding. It's not worth losing their confidence over a trivial defect. Just leave a note: "We know about it and we're getting it fixed."

Home sellers quite frequently ask, "What will a home inspector be looking for in my home and how can I be more organized for the home buyer's inspection?" Informed sellers can make the home inspection process easier and faster, ensuring a more thorough and accurate inspection for buyers.

Here is a list that may be helpful for you in preparing your house for a home buyer's inspection. Many of these items can be done at little or no cost and are part of a regular maintenance program for any home.

HOUSE EXTERIOR

- Remove soil or mulch from contact with siding. Six or more inches of clearance is best.
- Clean out dirty gutters and any debris from the roof
- Check to make sure all water from downspouts, sump pump, condensation, and basement entry drains are diverted away from the house
- Observe grading to see if water is draining away from the home
- Trim trees, roots, and bushes back from the foundation, roof, siding and chimney
- Paint weathered exterior wood and caulk around the trim, chimney, windows, and doors
- Repair any failing mortar in brick or block
- Remove wood and/or firewood from any contact with the house
- Caulk all exterior wall penetrations
- Provide the location of the septic tank location.



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HOUSE INTERIOR

- Clean or replace heating and cooling filters, clean dirty air returns and plenum.
- Test all smoke detectors to ensure that they are working.
- Have the chimney, fireplace or wood stove serviced and provide the buyer with a copy of the cleaning record.
- Replace any burned out light bulbs.
- Have clear access to attic, crawl space, heating system, garage and other areas that will need to be inspected.
- If the house is vacant, make sure all utilities are turned on. This includes water, electricity, furnace, A/C and the water heater because they will need to be inspected.
- Ensure ready access to all rooms and crawl spaces. Clear all furniture, boxes, clothes, toys and other personal items that may block access to the furnace, water heater and electrical panel.
- Make it easy to access under sinks to inspect plumbing
- Banish sink and toilet drain clogs
- Cap off any unused gas lines, chimneys or flues, electrical wires
- Flush toilets to see if any aren't performing as they should
- Check each electrical outlet and any flickering light fixtures
- Investigate roof leaks and running toilets
- Repair carpet with rips, loose handrails, loose boards on deck and handrail spindles

BASEMENTS, CRAWL SPACES, ATTICS

- Be sure the crawl space and attics has easy access and is clear of items. Check to ensure that the crawl space is dry and install a proper vapor barrier if necessary.
- Remove paints, solvents, gas, wood and similar materials from crawl space, basement, attic and porch.
- Update attic ventilation if none is present.
- If windows are at or below grade, install window wells and covers
- Check cracks in the foundation or exterior, or your doors and windows aren't closing from misalignment.



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DOORS AND WINDOWS

- Ensure that all doors and windows are in proper operating condition, including repairing or replacing any cracked windowpanes.

KITCHEN AND BATHROOMS

- Ensure that all plumbing fixtures such as the toilet, tub, shower, and sinks are in proper working condition. Fix any leaks and caulk around fixtures if necessary.
- Ensure GFCI receptacles are functional.
- Check bath vents to see if they are properly vented and in working condition.
- Clear out areas under sinks so they can be inspected.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST!

- Give the home a good cleaning. Clean homes say you care and take care of the house.
- Provide repair documents
- Crate your pets if you cannot remove them from the premises

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