



MEMBER

What Home Inspectors need from REALTORS[®]

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Home inspectors depend on real estate agents to help them provide proper service to their homebuyer clients. Improved co-operation between agents and inspectors will contribute to greater customer satisfaction for the clients of both professions.

The home inspector needs information and real estate agents are often the sources for most of the information about the house, the buyer, and the homeowner. Home inspectors usually need the following information:

Client name, address, phone numbers and *any special concerns of the client.*

Age, size, location, and list price of the house, *plus any special features of the house.*

The agent should also assist in communicating and confirming the inspection appointment and arrangements. This includes the scheduled time and day of the inspection, informing the owner of the length of the inspection (usually 3 hours or more for an ASHI[®] inspection), explaining what will be inspected and who will be present. It is vital that the client attend at least the final portion of the inspection so that they will see and more fully understand the inspector's findings. The client should plan to show the house to the friends and relatives at some OTHER time, in order to give their full attention to the inspector and the house. Ideally, the homeowner will greet the inspector upon arrival, answer questions about the house, and then depart for the duration of the inspection. However, if necessary, the homeowner can be home during the inspection, but should not participate in the inspection and should permit the inspector a private discussion with the client.

It is vitally important that complete and correct access information be given to the inspector. Arrangements should be made so that the inspector is NOT responsible for control of uncaged pets. Equipment that is damaged or NOT working should be labeled or reported to the inspector. This is necessary to prevent further damage by testing in use. Most inspectors will want to read the seller's disclosure and have a copy of the data sheet for the house.

Access involves more than just entering the house. Inspections should not be done on moving day, during a garage sale, or other times when there are extra people or traffic at the house. Tenants must be informed of inspections of rental property and agree to provide access. Arrangements should be made for the inspector to have direct access to ALL areas of the property including:

- Garage (must be able to get in)
- Attic (must be able to open hatch)
- Heating equipment (must be able to see burners, filters, etc.)
- Electrical panels (must be able to stand within reach of panel)
- Gas, Water, & Electric meters

Water heater

Crawl spaces (must be able to open any hatch)

All areas of the exterior (unlock gates in fenced yards if adjoining the house)

The house need not be completely clean and tidy, but the inspector will need access to each room of the house. Agents should expect inspectors to provide drop clothes below attic hatches or clean up any loose insulation that drops from an attic. Attic hatches that have not been opened will generally be opened, which will leave a barely noticeable hairline seam around the hatch cover. Hatches in closets may need to have items moved for access.

Vacant homes where some or all utilities are off must have all utilities back ON for the inspection. A winterized home should be de-winterized for the inspection.

Agents should be aware of the limits of home inspections. These include:

Air conditioners will not be run when outdoor temperature is below 65 degrees F.

A representative sample of items like electric outlets and windows will be checked.

Furniture will generally not be moved

Snow covered roofing will not be examined

The inspection is visual and will not find hidden or latent defects.

Inspections are not guarantees of future performance

ASHI® Members are required to report unsafe items, items that do not function, and items that in the judgment of the inspector are near the end of their service life. Further, we are required to report a recommended course of action for the unsafe or inoperable items. We do not determine who should be responsible for any corrections. The standard purchase agreement usually places the responsibility for correction of items not in working condition with the seller. The inspection contingency addendum should control the negotiation and settlement of other reported concerns.

The inspection report is prepared for the client (usually the buyer) and the inspector will generally NOT discuss or release the report to other parties without permission from the client. Most inspectors will seek permission from the client to release the report to the clients' agent.

Inspectors encourage the client and their agent to read the report and ask questions. Most inspectors will have already shown the client the key findings at the house as a part of providing a professional service. However, the inspector may not appreciate a call during his next appointment to answer to a question that could have been answered by simply reading the inspection report. A home inspection report should be user-friendly and the key findings should be obvious. If the inspection reports you receive are complicated or difficult to understand, it is reasonable to ask the inspector to provide a useful summary.

Finally, it is the inspector's job to create reasonable client expectations. The inspector should discuss the inspection arrangements with the client BEFORE the inspection. The inspector will want to explain the contract, limitations, fees, and learn of the clients' questions and concerns. REALTORS® who facilitate communication with the inspector will greatly aid their client, whether they represent the buyer or the seller.

For more information on the ASHI® Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, membership requirements, FAQ on inspections, or to find qualified inspectors, go to www.ashi.org.