



MEMBER

What Home Inspectors need from REALTORS^o

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Home inspectors depend on real estate agents to help them provide proper service to their customers. Co-operation between REALTORS and inspectors will increase the potential for customer satisfaction for the customers 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:

Name, address, phone #'s, email add., and *any special concerns of the client*.
Age, size, address, and MLS # 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 (often 4 hours). Online scheduling services help but the agents can list areas to be inspected and who will be present. It is key that buyers attend at least the final portion of the inspection to see conditions firsthand and better understand the inspector's findings. The buyer 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, respond to any inspector questions, 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. The homeowner should permit the inspector to have a private discussion with the buyer.

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 entering the house. Home 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 full access. Arrangements should be made for the inspector to have direct access to ALL areas of the property including:

- Closed house conditions (if radon testing is part of the inspection service)
- Garage (must be able to get in)
- Attic (must be able to open hatch and view the attic)
- Heating equipment (must be able to reach access panels, filters, etc.)
- Electrical panels (to stand in front of panel and access panel cover screws)
- Gas, Water, & Electric meters

Water heater

Crawl spaces (must be able to open any hatch and enter if safe to do so)

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 home inspectors to provide drop cloths 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 home 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

Sewers & fireplace flues are not inspected (other vendors can do this work)

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 inspection report is prepared for the customer (usually buyer) and the inspector will generally NOT discuss or release the report to other parties without permission from the buyer. Most inspectors will seek permission from the buyer to release the report to the their agent or suggest the buyer forward the report to the agent via email.

Inspectors encourage the buyer to listen to the inspection briefing and ask questions. Most inspectors will show the customer the key findings and maintenance tips as a part of the inspection service. However, inspectors reasonably expect customers to carefully read the inspection report. Often followup questions are answered in the inspection report text or the images. Many inspectors prefer followup questions be presented via email.

The home inspection report should be user-friendly. Terminology and key words must be well defined. If the inspection report is unclear, complicated, or hard to understand it is reasonable to contact the inspector for a clarification. (Email is often the best method.)

The inspector must take steps to create reasonable customer expectations. The inspector should provide the customer with the inspection agreement BEFORE the inspection. The inspector may need to explain the process, scope of work, and listen to customers questions and concerns. REALTORS® who facilitate communication with the inspector will greatly aid their customer, whether they represent the buyer or the seller.

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

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