

# From the Home Inspector:

## What Home Inspectors Aren't Required to Test

Have you ever gotten a call from your buyer after closing about an item in the house, which you feel that the inspector had surely tested, that isn't working properly now?! Sure, we all have, but have you ever looked back at the inspection report to find that particular item had been omitted on the summary report?! So you dig deeper into the entire report, which often isn't read in its entirety by the client or their REALTOR®, to find that it's not mentioned at all, or worse yet – that item had been purposely excluded?! Not good! I realize that items in a home can break at anytime, and it could be that's the simple answer – it must have broken after closing! However, it might be that the item was never inspected by that experienced inspector that you, the buyer's agent, highly recommended!

Did you know that there's an extensive list of these items associated with the house that inspectors aren't REQUIRED to inspect?! Did you also know that inspectors are only required to test a "representative number" of certain components, one such component per room? Think about windows in an older home that have been painted shut over the years, or outlets in a room not properly grounded, or a second light fixture in a room not coming on – there are several instances where this "representative number" can come back to bite you! Perhaps the windows that the inspector chose to open work well, but the others are painted shut OR the one outlet in the room the inspector tested was OK, but the others aren't working properly. Nothing is worse than hearing these stories after closing! And then the buyers expect someone to come "fix it" or compensation for this oversight.....from whom?!

The point of this article is for you, particularly as a buyer's agent, and your client to make sure you understand what your inspectors are (and aren't) inspecting! Make sure you understand what their limitations are. Don't wait until you get the entire inspection report to find out what they didn't test the day of the inspection (a good reason why the buyer and his agent should be present at the inspection)! Involve other inspectors too – whether it means getting an inspector for an alarm system, sprinkler system or fireplace, etc. – that money and time will be well-spent! Just make sure you and your buyer have a clear understanding of what systems the buyer wants (and is getting) inspected!

We have several local inspectors who will take a look at any item in a house, and if he isn't comfortable making an opinion on that item, or if it's an item that isn't covered by his inspection, he can refer you and your client to an expert in that area! There are also several inspectors who don't look at just a "representative number" of certain components – learn whom they are! We are lucky here in that our inspectors are very well-educated and experienced! Make good use of them! Learn from them – they really do make your job as a REALTOR® easier!

Denise Hickman

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For a complete list from NCHIL Board on items/components that inspectors are not required to inspect go [www.nchilb.com](http://www.nchilb.com) or pick up a complimentary copy of the standards at the WSRAR REALTOR® store!

## Why Home Inspectors Don't Inspect What They Don't and Why? The Meaning behind Representative Number

Have you ever wondered during an inspection if every item was inspected? Or have you been faced with a Home Inspection report with the wording "Representative Number" of a certain components inspected?

From the NC Home Inspectors License Board code of general statutes .1101 Definitions (22)"Representative number" means, for identical components such as windows and electrical outlets, one such component per room; and, for multiple identical exterior components, one such component on each side of the Building.

Why do you think the Home Inspectors Licensing Board would adopt such a policy provision? Frankly in a lived in Home or Home with extensive storage it may be physically impossible to move furniture etc. to get to every window and electrical outlet. Also the inspection is not technically exhaustive, meaning all components in the inspection are not disassembled inspected and reassembled to obtain a visual inspection of all components i.e.; the heat exchanger in a furnace. The inspection is to inspect, operate and determine if every possible component in the House operates as intended and help all parties involved to make the best decisions possible.

All Home Inspectors are required to use an Inspection Authorization and Agreement to be agreed upon and signed prior to the inspection. This inspection Authorization and Agreement should address the limitations and exclusions of the inspection as well inclusions and the price. If this tool is used correctly and explained to the REALTOR® Professional and the Client then the original question of "Why Home Inspectors Don't inspect what they don't and Why?" should have been answered prior to the inspection.

I believe that honesty, integrity and high Customer Service skills drive our Industries. I am here to help all parties involved and pride myself with going above and beyond the call of duty. Just because there are provisions that don't require us to inspect a representative sampling does not mean that we do, I inspect whatever is readily accessible as I'm sure most inspectors do as well.

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