

Preparing Your Home for a Home Inspection

1. Verify that the water supply is ON at the kitchen or bathroom tap by running water for one minute. The flow should be strong and steady. Also, verify that hot water is available.
2. Verify that electric power is ON and all circuit breakers are switched to the ON position (HINT: Turn on one of the electric range's cooktop elements to HIGH. If the house is fully powered, the element will get hot quickly).
3. Verify that the heating equipment has fuel---natural gas service ON, LP gas or oil in the tank. If it is a heat pump in cold weather, the outside unit needs power ON for 4-6 hours to warm the compressor.
4. Remove enough stored items from the attic and crawl space entries to allow access and reasonable viewing.
5. Replace burned out bulbs and fluorescent tubes so that the inspector won't report an electrical problem. Turn off computers because their power may be shut OFF temporarily.
6. Ensure that all gas pilot lights for furnaces, water heaters and fireplace logs are burning.
7. Provide clear access to electrical panels, water heater, the main water disconnect, plumbing fixtures, and furnace or air handlers. Is there a picture covering the electrical panel?
8. Clear under lavatories and kitchen sinks to allow viewing of the plumbing, water, and waste lines. The inspector will open every cabinet under sinks to look for leaks and inspect the piping.
9. Remove all obstacles to the attic access scuttle door and provide protection from falling insulation over clothes.
10. Stack all packing boxes in the middle of the floor areas so as not to block access to windows, doors, registers, electrical outlets, and fireplaces.
11. Remove personal items set on or hanging from window sashes to allow for window operation. The inspector will open and shut any or all windows.
12. Remove stacked dishes and pans from kitchen sinks and clear countertops other than typical countertop appliances.
13. Remove dogs and cats, at least those not caged, from the dwelling, including the garage and yard. Inspectors go into every room and space, including the yard, to inspect.
14. Remove all stored and stacked items from tubs and shower stalls.
15. Don't forget to unlock all storage closets, buildings and crawl space doors and leave keys on the kitchen countertop. The inspector will lock up when he is done.

16. If a radon test is to be conducted, please be aware of the "closed house" conditions required for short-term testing (2-6 days): a) no windows are to be left open. b) exterior entry doors and garage doors can be opened for brief entry and exit as usual. c) HVAC controls should be set for cooling or heating, depending on the weather; leave the fan control on "AUTO" (not "ON"). d) whole house fans, bath exhaust fans and clothes dryers are not to be operated. Tampering with test devices or changes in the environment may void the test, requiring a re-test, possibly at the seller's expense.

17. It's a good idea to assemble various house records that can be used to answer questions from buyers and home inspectors. Leave the inspector an "FYI" list of any appliances not working or plumbing that should not be used at that time.

18. Allow the inspector ample time (2-5 hours for most homes) to complete the inspection and answer questions from the buyers before returning home.

19. It would be helpful to the buyer if the following information is provided:

- a. Appliance receipts, service records and warranties
- b. Information on the age of major components, such as the heater, air conditioner and roofing
- c. Major component warranties (carpeting/flooring, siding, windows, roofing, etc.)
- d. Information on retired well, septic system, oil tank and/or structural repairs

20. Anticipate well and/or septic tank issues:

- a. Leave information on where they are located and the repair and maintenance history; also note whether there is a County record of the permits
- b. Be sure to discuss in advance who will be responsible for returning the well and/or septic tanks (and the general area around them) to acceptable conditions (it is possible a separate addendum may be required)
- c. Be aware the appraisal may raise further questions about the function of these components and may lead to further inspection(s)

Disclaimer: These are recommendations for a seller to prepare for a home inspection as part of the real estate transaction. This is not a mandatory real estate form or an obligatory standard of practice.