



## HomePro's Pre-Settlement Walk-Through Guide

**Give yourself about an hour.**

**Be diligent.**

**This is your last visit to their property.**

**Conditions may have changed since your last visit.**

**H**ouses can be damaged accidentally by the weather or even purposefully by a disgruntled tenant or owner. Pests and pets can damage the residence after your last visit. Now that the house is empty much more will be visible. Perhaps the weather has changed- snow melted, freshly fallen rain results in large puddles, high winds may have brought down limbs, leaves are gone, etc. This is your last chance to find any issues before your taking ownership.

**R**emember to secure copies of receipts/warranties from the tradesmen (electrician, plumber, heating contractor, etc.) who made the repairs based on your response to the home inspection. Secure copies of the receipts (heater service, chimney sweep, basement waterproofing contractor, etc.) who worked on the property. Have questions answered from the home inspection such as: *Was it just a burned-out bulb?* Or *Where does the downspout underground drain discharge?* Or *What caused that stain?*

**C**heck items that could not be inspected during the home inspection process. For example; the A/C if it was too cold to operate during the home inspection, or the gas fireplace if the pilot was not on/lit. Are all the remotes for overhead door openers, gas fireplace, paddle fans, skylights, etc. still present? Ask about any warranties that may need to be transferred into your name such as roofing, basement waterproofing systems. Request any paperwork regarding security systems, awnings, property boundaries (fences & gates), generators, pools, hot tubs, fire & lawn sprinkler systems, etc.

**A couple more things:** Check to make sure that any repairs necessitated by the local municipality for an approved *"Use of Occupancy"* or required by the FHA or VA appraiser were completed professionally. Be sure anything you purchased aside from the house is still there such as a lawn mower, furniture, pool equipment, etc. Likewise verify that any window treatments & remaining building materials, siding, flooring, bundle of shingles were not accidentally moved while the seller vacated.

**You will never get another chance to get the "before" pictures.** Take a video of each room if you want to document the condition prior to your assuming possession. Get a picture to record the readings on the utilities: *gas, propane and oil tank fill gauge, water & electric meter*. Grab another set of pictures of the appliance data plates to include *heater, A/C, dishwasher, refrigerator, freezer, etc.* This may help if you need to engage your homeowner's insurance or home warranty.

### ✓ Structure

- Secure any paperwork regarding past/ previous structural repairs/ reports.
- Wood destroying insect paperwork/ treatment/ carpentry repairs.
- Walk on the deck and stairs to assure yourself that they feel safe.
- Inspect areas that previously had restricted access due to personal possessions.
- Shine a light into the crawl space.

## ✓ Electrical

- Lights not working at the time of the home inspection.
- Switches that operate something not determined during the home inspection.
- Push the test button on the GFI outlets to verify they still trip as intended.
- Open the panel cover to look for tripped breakers that may correspond with something not working in the house.
- Push the test button on the smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarm.

## ✓ Heating

- Turn on the furnace/ boiler. Let the house get hot. Feel the heat at the ducts/ touch the warm radiators.
- Look for condensate on the floor around the boiler, furnace or air conditioner.
- Ask where to purchase any special filters.
- Is the propane tank leased or owned?
- Does the thermostat need an instruction manual?
- Inspect for leaks around the humidifier.

## ✓ Air Conditioning

- Ask the seller/ listing agent to turn on the A/C 24 hours prior to the walk through to determine that the system can adequately cool the house.
- Feel hot/ lukewarm air coming overtop the compressor.
- Watch the compressor spin.

## ✓ Plumbing

- Operate all of the sinks, showers, tubs, toilets, hose faucets, etc. and look for new fixture leaks, slow drains, clogged toilets, etc.
- Make sure the water heater is operating and there isn't any water around the bottom of it, indicating a leak.
- For homes with wells, ask who services the water treatment equipment, especially if there is an Ultraviolet light.
- In a vacant house run lots of water to try to detect any frozen pipes.

## ✓ Basement

- Any new or recent signs of water penetration: wet carpet, damaged drywall, musty smells, etc.?
- Lift the float on the sump pump to make sure it is still working.
- Engage the battery backup too by lifting the float.
- Check to make sure the radon gauge is in the shape of a "J", not a "U" touch the vent pipe to feel it vibrating.
- Run water in the basement bath to verify the sewage ejection pump operates.

## ✓ Kitchen

- Check the burners, bake and broil on the stove.
- Start the dishwasher- operate it in the cycle you think you will operate most frequently.
- Run water in the sink and operate the disposal for a minute or two.
- Look under the sink for leaks.
- Flip the switch to get the exhaust fan and light to operate.
- Inspect for any damage to the cabinets, countertop, floor in front of the refrigerator,
- Operate the special appliances- microwave, wine refrigerator, trash compactor, Insta-hot, water purifier, etc.

## ✓ Interior

- Walk through each room, scan the finishings.
- Inspect for stains on the ceilings- leaks from plumbing above, window a/c or roofing.
- Check around the skylights for leaks or broken seals. They often show themselves in different light.
- Inspect windows for broken glass seals (condensation), damaged and missing screens, etc.
- Check for recently soiled and damaged carpets. Cracked floor tiles, etc.
- Are there burn marks around the fireplace or wood stove?
- Look at the floors that may have been previously covered by area rugs.
- Operate the bath & paddle fans and lights.

## ✓ Attic

- Mold is outside the scope of the *American Society of Home Inspectors Standards* but look for discoloration on the roof sheathing.
- If possible, pull down the stairs and look for wet spots especially around the chimney or vent pipes.
- Check the steps for damage since so many possessions were just moved down.
- Is the roof or gable fan working? It may be on a thermostat and not just a switch.
- Operate the whole house fan for just a moment or two (they are often covered by insulation).

## ✓ Garage

- Operate the overhead doors.
- Ask for copies of the keys to unlock the overhead door.
- Get the code to operate the overhead door.
- Often possessions restrict the access to the walls and floor- since everything is now empty and visible, inspect the accessible condition carefully.
- Remember to get all the keys at settlement – exterior doors, padlocks, shed, closets, etc.

## ✓ Exterior

- Walk around the entire house and in the yard.
- Are there any missing shingles on the roof, any lying on the ground?
- Are there any missing or loose pieces of siding?
- Are the downspout extenders still in place?
- Have any limbs fallen that affect you or your neighbors?
- Is there any “water” around the septic field?
- Check the shed.

## ✓ Appliances

- This personal property is often purposefully left, renegotiated, or purchased outside the home sale,
- Run the washer in the longest cycle.
- Check the hoses and make sure there aren't any bulges. Remember the washer hoses are the weakest point of plumbing in the house.
- Operate the dryer in the longest cycle. Look for the dryer vent to open and vent.
- With the refrigerator/ freezer- check for cold, ice in the freezer; any bad smells because it was unplugged and closed.

➡ **A pre-settlement walk through is not a home inspection, but it can be equally important. If the pre-settlement walk through generates any significant concerns, address them to whomever let you into the building.**