

Preparing Your Home for Upcoming Inspections

Now that your home is under contract, the next phase will be the inspection process. I very much want everyone involved with the home, radon, wood destroying insect, chimney and well & septic (when applicable) inspection process to have a positive experience.

Typically, the inspectors are very careful to protect your possessions and make every effort to ensure the property is left the way they found it. Since "time is of the essence" please realize these inspections will happen rather quickly. Please know that inspections are arranged at the buyer's convenience and our contract determines how quickly all this occurs. I will let you know their scheduling when I know.

Here are some helpful hints I have found over the years. It is always best if you leave for the home inspection. Anticipate a three hour time frame, maybe more in larger or more complex houses. In vacant houses especially, all utilities: gas, oil, water and electricity must be on for the inspection and radon testing.

Home Inspection

Prior to the home inspection, please consider:

- Placing a throw rug at the door for everyone to wipe their feet. Often there are contractors and family members who use this opportunity to see the house; not just the inspectors.
- Putting detergent in the dishwasher- typically the inspector runs the dishwasher through a complete cycle. It is nice to have clean dishes to come home to.
- If the attic access is in a closet, then please cover any clothes hanging on the rod with a towel. You may want to remove any clothes that require dry cleaning. Insulation always falls when they access the attic. If the attic hatch is in the garage, then please make sure there is no car beneath.
- Making sure there is adequate access to the heater, a/c, water heater, electrical panels, sump hole and other mechanicals. Inspectors don't want to move your possessions.
- Verifying the gas is on and the pilot is lit to the fireplace. Inspectors don't light gas appliances. Kindly leave out any remote controls- fireplace, A/C units, ceiling paddle fans, skylights & awnings, etc. too.
- If anything is particularly complicated or unique- like a thermostat, stove or whirlpool tub then feel free to leave a note on how to operate.
- Having all keys accessible- house, garage, shed, closets, etc. We don't want the inspectors to have to return to complete the inspection or have items needlessly checked later by another professional due to the lack of access or the inspector's inability to operate an item.
- Uncovering any lower crawl space opening or electrical sub panels in order to make them accessible, if applicable.
- Keeping the security system off for the home. Inspectors do not want to be responsible for properly turning off and resetting alarms.
- Caging or taking any pets off premises.

Radon Inspection

When there is radon testing, please follow these EPA Protocols. Depending on monitor availability the inspector may choose to place the radon monitor early or at the home inspection. The inspector will call me regarding the radon placement, and I will contact you. The testing period is a 2 day minimum and 5 day maximum. If high wind conditions occur, then the radon testing may need to be extended beyond the original date for retrieval.

- Closed house conditions means: 12 hours prior to the radon testing equipment placement close **ALL** exterior windows and doors and keep them closed until the radon unit is picked up (normal coming and going is fine).
- Operate the heat or A/C as you normally would, somewhere between 67 and 77 degrees. Window A/C units may only be operated in the re-circulation mode. If they do not have this feature, then they cannot be operated. Sorry.
- Do not use fireplaces or whole house fans. Use bath, ceiling paddle and kitchen fans sparingly.
- Remind me if any animals are on site. Kindly cage your pets when the technician is visiting the property. We want your pets to be safe too.
- Keep the security system off the day the inspections have been scheduled.
- In order to keep industry fees as low as possible, radon placement and pick up depends on monitor availability and the inspector's convenience.

Wood Destroying Insect Inspection

The wood destroying insect or “termite” inspection does not take long, maybe half an hour to forty-five minutes. The inspector looks outside and inside. They tend to be quiet and unobtrusive. They will probe suspected areas. Anticipate that they will dig into the door jambs slightly as they explore. The more thorough inspectors will actually look into the attic. Some inspectors will move and reset the basement ceiling drop tiles for more access.

Well Inspection

There are two types of well testing. One is a flow test where the technician will run the well water for an hour to check the delivery system. The water is usually discharged through a hose to the outside. The second is for potability. A sample is drawn to send to the lab. If a lead test is being performed, then a faucet may need to be identified and not used for 12 hours prior to the testing. Just 15 minutes is needed to obtain a water sample; whereas a flow test takes about an hour and a half.

Septic Inspection

With regard to the on-site septic, kindly mark the tank location or leave a note for the inspector. If you have any documentation regarding the septic system, please leave a copy out for them to review. They will need to dig down to the lid for access. This will disturb the soil, lawn or garden. They typically replace the disturbed soil, placing it on top of the lid. They will mark the field location with removable flags. If there is snow or heavy rain, then don't be disappointed if the inspection is postponed. This is true for a stucco inspection too.

Fireplace Inspection

Some buyers choose to have the wood burning fireplace inspected professionally. A chimney sweep will visit. They are likely to inspect the flue from both the top and inside. They place heavy tarps over the hearth to protect the interior and extend a camera up the flue. They will document any deficiencies. Anticipate an hour for the chimney inspection. Longer with multiple flues.

Stucco Inspection

Stucco or “moisture intrusion testing” is an intrusive test. The technician will drill two holes in suspect areas such as under windows, where the gutters meet the house and around chimneys & doors. A moisture meter will test the first hole for water penetration. The second hole is probed to determine if the sheathing is still sound. The holes will be caulked shut. Since the testing process is intrusive, they will need to have you sign a consent form. This testing process can take up to four hours and is noisy since they drill holes through the cement siding.

Things to Remember

Since so many people (home and termite inspectors, radon technician, buyers, realtors, family members, well, septic, stucco, mold, tradespeople, appraisers, insurance agent, etc.) may have visited the property, I encourage you to check your house when you get home. You should verify that:

- All the doors and windows are locked
- Lights are off
- Thermostats and GFI's have been reset
- The heater, A/C, refrigerator, stove, freezer and other appliances are still operating
- Plumbing is not running
- Gates are closed
- Litter boxes and designated pet areas are still accessible
- Security systems are reactivated

I want to make sure there are no lingering problems after the inspection process is complete.

Thank you for helping to make the inspection process flow as smoothly as possible. I realize it is often quite intrusive and inconvenient- even perhaps a little nerve wracking. After all of this, we will review and discuss and reply to the various reports. If you have any questions or concerns, then please contact me. I hope these thoughts help everything flow more smoothly.