

Choosing a Home Inspector Finding the Right Home Inspector for You



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INSPECTIONS

Most homebuyers will use a home inspector when they purchase their home. The following suggestions will help you to choose a reliable home inspection company and to understand what to expect from a home inspection.

What is a home inspection? A home inspection is a visual examination of the condition of the major systems of the home. Its goal is to identify and report on any existing major problems. A typical inspection takes about 2 to 3 hours depending on the size and complexity of the home. It should be accompanied by a written report that documents the inspector's observations. A home inspection is neither a guarantee that nothing will go wrong with a house nor an insurance policy that will cover any problems that may develop. It is designed to minimize your risk, not eliminate it. The inspector should never advise you whether or not to purchase the property. The inspection report is just one of the factors to consider when making your final decision.

How do you choose a home inspector? BC is currently the only province in Canada that requires home inspectors to be licensed. This makes it a bit easier for you to find a qualified inspector. You can easily determine for yourself if the inspector you would like to hire is licensed, and we recommend you do so. The website for the licensing board, Consumer Protection BC lists all inspectors who have active licenses. www.consumerprotectionbc.ca

To find the right inspector for you, a place to start is to obtain referrals from your realtor, your family and your friends. Most realtors are reluctant to recommend specific companies but they can usually provide you with several possible choices. Realtors obtain the majority of their business by referral and thus depend on satisfied clients for their success. They are unlikely to provide their clients with the names of companies they have found to be unreliable. Family and friends who have had inspections performed, and have lived in their homes subsequent to inspection, have had the opportunity to evaluate first hand the value of their inspection.

The most important professional qualification to look for in a home inspector is membership in the **Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors (BC) (CAHPI (BC))**. This ensures that the inspector has passed a series of technical exams, follows a widely recognized Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and meets a required standard for continuing education. Details can be obtained at www.cahpi.bc.ca or by calling **1-800-610-5665**.

It's wise to call several inspection companies before making your final decision. You should receive answers to all of your questions regarding inspectors' qualifications, what is included in the inspection, the inspection report format and when it is delivered, how long the company has been in business, follow-up service, limitation of liability etc. You should be encouraged attend the inspection. Many inspection companies have websites which contain more detailed information about their services than can be communicated in a short phone conversation. Take advantage of this.

Once you have decided on an inspection company and booked an appointment make sure that their contract is delivered to you by e-mail or fax prior to the inspection to give you the opportunity to review its terms and conditions. Doing your homework when choosing an inspection company will increase your odds of choosing the right home. It is time well spent!

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