

No Home Is Perfect In Search of the Right Home for You

The inspectors of James Dobney Inspections have conducted over 40,000 home inspections and we haven't found a perfect house yet. Since perfection is not an option, what should you expect?



James Dobney
INSPECTIONS

The 1% Rule

When you consider the life cycle of every component of a house, a reasonable annual estimate of the cost of normal maintenance is 1% of the value of the house. One year you may replace the furnace; a few years down the road you may re-surface the roof. Throw in the odd unexpected repair in between and you average 1% per year. It's incredible but this rule is not far off even for very expensive and very inexpensive houses.

Normal Maintenance

If you strip away the cosmetics, a house is made up of the structure, roof, exterior envelope and the "systems" of the house. The "systems" are things like heating, plumbing, electrical and cooling.

All components and systems eventually wear out. Fortunately, they don't all wear out at the same time. Different components have different life cycles. Houses tend to settle into what you might call a "normal maintenance pattern".

What's the Message Here?

A homebuyer should arrive at the home inspection with realistic expectations. If you are buying a 12-15 year old home, let's face it, you may need a new roof covering. If you are buying a 60 year old home, you may have to update some plumbing. Don't let this scare you away from a perfectly good home.

How Long Does it Last?

Below is a short list of typical life cycles of the most common components of the home. Please keep in mind that there will be exceptions in every category.

ROOF

conventional asphalt shingles	12 - 15 yrs
top quality asphalt shingles	25 - 30 yrs
low slope shingles	10 - 15 yrs
slate	40 - 200 yrs
tar & gravel roof (built up roof)	15 - 20 yrs
single ply roof membrane	15 - 20 yrs
roll roofing	5 - 10 yrs

EXTERIOR

gutters & downspouts	20 - 30 yrs
copper gutters & downspouts	50 - 100 yrs
aluminum siding	50 plus yrs
wood siding	maintenance dependent
stucco	maintenance dependent
exterior paint	4 - 6 yrs
deck	10 - 20 yrs
asphalt driveway surface	10 - 20 yrs
driveway sealer	1 - 3 yrs
concrete driveway	30 - 40 yrs
garage door opener	8 - 12 yrs

INTERIOR

paint	5 - 10 yrs
windows	maintenance dependent

HEATING

conventional furnace	20 - 25 yrs
mid efficiency furnace	20 - 25 yrs
high efficiency furnace	unknown, < 20 yrs
cast iron boiler	35 - 50 yrs
steel boiler	20 - 30 yrs
copper tube boiler	10 - 20 yrs
humidifier	5 - 10 yrs
electronic air filter	10 - 20 yrs

COOLING

air conditioning condenser	10 - 15 yrs
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PLUMBING

galvanized steel supply pipe	40 - 50 yrs
copper pipe	indefinite
toilet	30 - 40 yrs
sink	12 - 20 yrs
faucet	10 - 15 yrs
whirlpool bath	15 - 25 yrs
shower pan	unpredictable
submersible pump for well	10 - 15 yrs
suction or jet pump	10 - 15 yrs
water softener	5 - 15 yrs
sump pump	2 - 7 yrs
water heater	8 - 12 yrs
tile bathtub enclosure	10 - 50 yrs

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