

HOMETOWN INSPECTIONS PRESENTS

HOME INSPECTION

Survival Guide



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Your Home Inspection Pocket Guide for Real Estate Agents!

At Hometown Inspections, we know that real estate moves fast, and as an agent, you need reliable, straightforward insights to navigate the inspection process with ease.

This pocket guide is designed to be your go-to resource for understanding home inspections, common issues, and how to help your clients make informed decisions.

Whether you're preparing a seller, guiding a buyer, or negotiating after an inspection, you'll find practical tips, expert advice, and key information to help you close deals with confidence.

 A well-informed agent is an empowered agent—let's get started!

Contact Us Anytime!

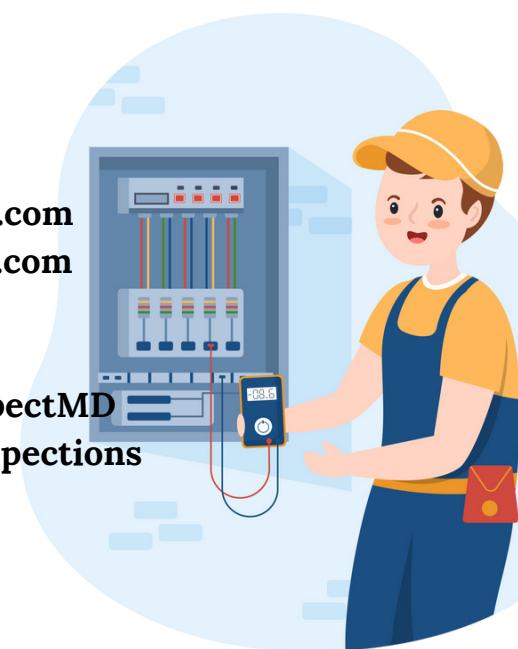
 **(410) 886-7000**

 info@hometowninspections.com

 www.hometowninspections.com

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PREPARING FOR INSPECTIONS

For Buyers:

- Be Present: Attend the inspection to ask questions and learn about the property firsthand.
- Allow Access: Ensure all areas of the home (attic, basement, crawl space) are accessible.
- Bring Questions: Prepare a list of concerns or areas you want the inspector to focus on.
- Take Notes: Jot down important details and ask for clarification if needed.
- Stay Objective: Focus on understanding the property rather than getting overwhelmed by minor issues.

Agent Tip: Encourage buyers to view this as a learning opportunity about their potential new home.

PREPARING FOR INSPECTIONS

For Sellers:

- Declutter Key Areas: Ensure access to the attic, basement, electrical panels, and HVAC systems.
- Turn On Utilities: Make sure all water, gas, and electricity are operational for testing.
- Replace Filters: Change HVAC and range hood filters to show proper maintenance.
- Check Light Bulbs: Replace burnt-out bulbs to avoid “faulty” labels for fixtures.
- Clean Up: A tidy home leaves a better impression and makes the inspection easier.

Agent Tip: Address minor repairs (leaky faucets, loose doorknobs) to help the inspection go smoothly.

WHAT HOME INSPECTORS CAN DO

Home inspections provide vital insights for buyers and sellers, but it's important to understand what an inspector can and cannot do during the process. Misconceptions can lead to frustration and unrealistic expectations.

✓ Identify visible defects and safety concerns

- Inspectors conduct a **visual** evaluation of the home's major systems and structure.

✓ Test major systems (when possible)

- HVAC – Inspectors will test heating and cooling (if outside temps allow).
- Plumbing – Run faucets, flush toilets, and check for leaks.
- Electrical – Test outlets, breakers, and look for potential hazards.

✓ Report on functional concerns

- If a furnace won't turn on, outlets don't work, or water pressure is low, they'll document it.
- They may note improper installation, aging materials, or visible signs of failure.

✓ Provide an unbiased, professional report

- Home inspectors are neutral third parties who do not make decisions about the home's value.
- The inspection report helps buyers and sellers understand what's working and what may need attention.

Agent Tip: Home inspectors offer information, not recommendations on whether to proceed with the purchase.

WHAT HOME INSPECTORS CAN'T DO

🚫 Predict the future

- Inspectors cannot guarantee when a system or appliance will fail.
- A furnace may work today but stop functioning next month
 - home inspections aren't warranties.

🚫 Open walls, floors, ceilings, or other inaccessible areas

- Home inspections are non-invasive, meaning inspectors don't cut into walls or remove flooring to check hidden issues.
- If signs of a problem exist (like moisture stains), they may recommend a specialist for further evaluation.

🚫 Provide exact repair costs

- Inspectors may identify a leaking roof or aging HVAC system, but they don't estimate costs for repairs.
- Clients should consult contractors for accurate pricing.

🚫 Move furniture or stored items

- If a basement wall is blocked by boxes or attic access is obstructed, the inspector won't move items to inspect it.
- Sellers should ensure easy access before the inspection.

🚫 Inspect areas outside their expertise

- Inspectors may note possible concerns, but clients should schedule further testing as needed.

Agent Tip: Setting realistic expectations with clients prevents frustration and ensures a smooth process!

QUICK REFERENCE FOR HOME SYSTEMS

HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning)

- Typical Lifespan: 15–20 years (with regular maintenance)
- What to look for: Dirty filters, unusual noises, uneven heating/cooling.

Agent Tip: Regular HVAC maintenance can be a strong selling point! Encourage sellers to service their HVAC system before listing and provide recent maintenance records. For buyers, suggest asking about the system's age and last service date—a well-maintained HVAC system can prevent unexpected expenses after moving in.

Plumbing

- Typical Lifespan: Pipes (50+ years for copper, 40–50 years for PEX).
- What to Look For: Signs of leaks, rusted fixtures, low water pressure.

Agent Tip: Water quality matters! Encourage buyers to request a water quality test, especially if the home has a well system or older plumbing. For sellers, addressing minor leaks, replacing corroded fixtures, and ensuring proper water pressure can make a great impression and prevent buyer concerns.

QUICK REFERENCE FOR HOME SYSTEMS

Electrical Systems

- Typical Lifespan: Panels (30–40 years), Wiring (50+ years).
- What to Look For: Outdated knob-and-tube wiring, lack of GFCI outlets, tripped breakers.

Agent Tip: Highlight modern upgrades like smart thermostats or USB outlets.

Roofing

- Typical Lifespan: Asphalt shingles (20–30 years), Metal (50+ years).
- What to Look For: Missing shingles, sagging areas, moss growth.

Agent Tip: A well-maintained roof is a major selling point! If the home has an older roof, recommend the seller get a roof inspection or minor repairs done before listing to prevent last-minute surprises during negotiations. Buyers appreciate documentation of recent maintenance or warranties, which can add confidence to the sale.

Foundation

- What to Look For: Cracks, uneven floors, water pooling near the home.

Agent Tip: Stress the importance of proper grading to prevent water damage.

INSPECTION RED FLAGS

Roofing Issues

- Missing, curled, or cracked shingles.
- Signs of sagging or leaks in the attic.
- Moss or algae growth, indicating trapped moisture.

Foundation Problems

- Cracks in walls, ceilings, or floors.
- Doors or windows that stick or won't close properly.
- Evidence of water pooling near the foundation.

Plumbing Concerns

- Low water pressure or rusty water.
- Visible leaks under sinks or in basements.
- Corroded pipes or signs of previous water damage.

Electrical Hazards

- Outdated wiring (e.g., knob-and-tube, aluminum).
- Lack of GFCI outlets in kitchens, bathrooms, or exterior areas.
- Overcrowded or outdated electrical panels.

HVAC System Warning Signs

- Unusual noises or odors when the system runs.
- Dirty or clogged filters and ductwork.
- Visible rust or corrosion on the unit.

Water Damage

- Stains on ceilings, walls, or floors.
- Musty odors in basements, crawl spaces, or attics.
- Warped or soft flooring near bathrooms or kitchens.

INSPECTION RED FLAGS

Structural Weakness

- Improperly notched or cut framing.
- Rotting wood in decks, porches, or support beams.
- Signs of termite or pest damage.

Windows and Doors

- Fogged windows, indicating seal failure.
- Drafts around doors or windows, indicating poor insulation.
- Misaligned frames or difficulty opening/closing.

Exterior Problems

- Cracks or damage in siding or stucco.
- Peeling paint or wood rot on exterior trim.
- Gutters clogged or not properly attached.

Safety Concerns

- Missing or non-functional smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Stairways without handrails or uneven steps.
- Lack of egress windows in basements or bedrooms.

Agent Tip: Inspection red flags don't have to derail a deal! Educate buyers on the difference between routine maintenance issues and major concerns. For sellers, addressing known issues before listing can prevent surprises and strengthen negotiation power. A proactive approach helps keep transactions smooth and stress-free!

SYSTEM LIFESPANS CHART

System/Component	Average Lifespan
ROOFING	
Asphalt Shingles	20-30 years
Metal Roofing	40-70 years
Flat Roof Membranes	15-20 years
Gutters	20-50 years
HVAC	
Furnace	15-20 years
Central Air Conditioning	10-15 years
Heat Pump	10-15 years
Ductwork	20-25 years
Thermostats	10-15 years
PLUMBING	
Copper Pipes	50+ years
PEX Pipes	40-50 years
Tank Water Heaters	8-12 years
Tankless Water Heaters	20+ years

SYSTEM LIFESPANS CHART

System/Component	Average Lifespan
PLUMBING CONT.	
Toilets	50+ years
ELECTICAL	
Wiring (Copper)	70-100+ years
Circuit Breaker Panel	30-40 years
Smoke Detectors	8-10 years
Carbon Monoxide Detectors	5-7 years
WINDOWS/DOORS	
Vinyl Windows	20-40 years
Exterior Doors	30-100+ years (depends on materials)
Garage Doors	15-30 years
APPLIANCES	
Refridgerator	10-15 years
Dishwasher	8-10 years
Washer/Dryer	10-15 years
Oven/Range	10-20 years

MAINTENANCE TIPS

Winter Home Maintenance Checklist

- Inspect Heating Systems: Service your furnace or heat pump and replace filters.
- Seal Drafts: Check windows and doors for gaps; install weatherstripping or caulk.
- Protect Pipes: Insulate exposed pipes to prevent freezing and check for leaks.
- Test Detectors: Replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Clean Gutters: Clear debris to prevent ice dams.
- Inspect the Roof: Check for loose shingles or damage before snow arrives.
- Reverse Ceiling Fans: Set them to spin clockwise to push warm air down.
- Prepare Outdoor Faucets: Drain and shut off outdoor water lines.
- Stock Emergency Supplies: Ensure flashlights, batteries, and blankets are accessible.

Pro Tip: Early preparation can save you from costly repairs during the cold months!

MAINTENANCE TIPS

Spring Home Maintenance Checklist

- Inspect the Roof: Check for missing shingles, leaks, or damage from winter weather.
- Clean Gutters and Downspouts: Remove debris to ensure proper drainage.
- HVAC Tune-Up: Service your air conditioner and replace filters.
- Test Detectors: Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for functionality.
- Seal Cracks: Inspect windows and doors for gaps; reseal to improve energy efficiency.
- Pressure Wash Exterior: Clean siding, patios, and decks to remove dirt and mold.
- Lawn Care: Reseed bare patches, trim trees, and check sprinklers for proper function.
- Check Plumbing: Look for leaks under sinks and around outdoor faucets.

Pro Tip: Tackle these tasks early to enjoy a worry-free spring and summer!

MAINTENANCE TIPS

Summer Home Maintenance Checklist

- Service the AC: Clean or replace filters and ensure the system is running efficiently.
- Inspect the Roof: Look for damage or leaks from spring storms.
- Clean Windows and Screens: Wash windows and repair or replace damaged screens.
- Maintain the Lawn: Water, fertilize, and mow regularly; check sprinkler systems for leaks.
- Inspect Outdoor Spaces: Check decks, patios, and fences for wear; reseal if needed.
- Clean Gutters: Remove debris to prepare for summer storms.
- Test Detectors: Ensure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working.
- Check Plumbing: Inspect for leaks or drips, especially outdoor faucets and hoses.
- Inspect the Attic: Look for signs of pests or ventilation issues.

Pro Tip: Stay on top of maintenance to keep your home cool, comfortable, and efficient all summer long!

MAINTENANCE TIPS

Fall Home Maintenance Checklist

- Inspect the Roof: Check for loose shingles and clean debris to prepare for winter weather.
- Seal Drafts: Check windows and doors; add weatherstripping or caulk to prevent heat loss.
- Service the Heating System: Test your furnace, replace filters, and schedule a tune-up.
- Check Smoke Detectors: Replace batteries and test for proper functionality.
- Inspect the Fireplace: Clean and inspect the chimney and ensure the damper works.
- Prepare the Lawn: Rake leaves, aerate the soil, and fertilize for healthy spring growth.
- Drain Outdoor Faucets: Shut off water to exterior faucets and store hoses.
- Inspect Trees: Trim branches away from your home to prevent damage from storms.

Pro Tip: Fall is the perfect time to prepare your home for a safe, cozy winter!

HOW TO NAVIGATE INSPECTION REPORTS WITH CLIENTS

A home inspection doesn't make or break a deal—it provides an opportunity for buyers and sellers to negotiate smartly. Here's how you can guide your clients through post-inspection negotiations with confidence.

For Buyers:

- **Prioritize Major Issues Over Cosmetic Fixes**
 - Focus on health, safety, and structural concerns (e.g., foundation issues, mold, roof leaks).
 - Avoid nitpicking minor flaws like chipped paint or worn carpets.
- **Understand the Three Main Negotiation Options**
 - Request repairs before closing.
 - Ask for a seller credit to cover the cost of repairs.
 - Negotiate a price reduction to reflect the home's condition.
- **Know When to Walk Away**
 - If the inspection reveals major structural issues or costly repairs, it may be wise to reconsider the purchase.
 - An inspection isn't meant to be a price renegotiation tool, but if the home has undisclosed major issues, buyers may have grounds to back out.

Agent Tip: Guide buyers on what's reasonable to request based on the home's age, market conditions, and severity of issues.

HOW TO NAVIGATE INSPECTION REPORTS WITH CLIENTS

For Sellers:

- **Be Proactive—Address Common Issues Before Listing**
 - Consider a pre-listing inspection to identify problems early.
 - Make easy fixes like leaky faucets, missing GFCI outlets, or cracked caulking before the buyer's inspection.
- **Don't Panic—Not Every Request is a Dealbreaker**
 - Review buyer requests carefully—some may be reasonable, others may not.
 - Focus on safety-related repairs to prevent future liabilities.
- **Consider Offering a Home Warranty**
 - Providing a one-year home warranty can reassure buyers about potential future repairs.
 - This can minimize post-inspection negotiations and boost buyer confidence.

Agent Tip: Help sellers understand that no home is perfect, and a well-handled negotiation keeps deals moving forward.

FINAL WALKTHROUGH CHECKLIST FOR AGENTS & BUYERS

The final walkthrough is the last chance to ensure the home is in the expected condition before closing. Use this checklist to catch any last-minute issues and give your clients peace of mind.

Verify Repairs & Agreed-Upon Fixes

- Ensure all seller-agreed repairs have been completed.
- Ask for receipts or documentation for major repairs.
- Test fixed items (e.g., HVAC, plumbing, electrical).

Inspect Major Systems & Appliances

- Run faucets, check for leaks, and flush toilets.
- Test HVAC—confirm heating & cooling work properly.
- Turn on lights, check outlets, and test appliances.
- Open & close all doors, windows, and cabinets.

Check for New Damage

- Look for new wall cracks, stains, or flooring damage.
- Ensure all fixtures, shelving, and included items remain in place.
- Confirm no moving damage has occurred.

FINAL WALKTHROUGH CHECKLIST FOR AGENTS & BUYERS

Exterior & Safety Checks

- Walk the property—look for yard, fence, or foundation issues.
- Check that smoke & carbon monoxide detectors are functional.

Final Utility & Functionality Tests

- Turn on water, gas, and electricity to confirm they're active.
- Check water pressure and test drains for backups.
- Ensure all keys, remotes, and security codes are provided.

Agent Tip: Bring a copy of the inspection report to compare any previously noted issues. If a problem arises, discuss next steps before closing!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When will I receive the inspection report?

You can expect to receive the full inspection report within 48 hours after the inspection is completed. We prioritize quick turnaround times without sacrificing the quality or thoroughness of the report.

What happens if major issues are found?

The inspector's role is to identify issues, not to estimate repair costs or recommend specific contractors. If major problems are found, the buyer can negotiate repairs or credits with the seller or decide to walk away.

What are the limitations of a home inspection?

Home inspections are non-invasive, meaning inspectors don't damage or dismantle parts of the home. Areas not accessible (e.g., behind walls or under heavy furniture) may not be fully assessed.

Can a buyer or seller attend the inspection?

Yes! Buyers are encouraged to attend the inspection to ask questions and learn about the property. Sellers can be present but are often advised to give the inspector space to work.

What is included in a home inspection?

A home inspection covers the major systems and components of a home, including:

- Roof, attic, and insulation.
- Foundation, basement, and crawl spaces.
- HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems.
- Doors, windows, and exterior surfaces.

SCHEDULING

📞 (410) 886-7000

✉️ info@hometowninspections.com

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ITS OUR OWN”