

Prepare for a Home Inspection: A do-it-yourself checklist for sellers

To insure a smooth home inspection, consider the steps below. If there is anything listed that is above your home improvement or DIY comfort level, consider calling an expert.



1 Provide open access to areas that need to be checked

Clear away any clutter impeding access to areas or systems that the inspector needs to take a look at by including easy access to attic spaces, basements, furnace rooms, and under sinks.

2 Clear the perimeter

The inspector is going to be looking at the exterior, including siding, trims, and caulking around windows and doors. Leave areas around your home clear of plant growth, trash cans, and stored items so they can get an unimpeded look.

3 Check the roof

Get out a ladder and clean moss and debris from the gutters, check for damaged or missing tiles, and make sure downspouts are in their proper position. If you do find damage on the roof, you'll want to get it taken care of prior to the home inspection.

4 Keep a clean house

Maintain the same level of cleanliness for the home inspector even after the accepted offer. How clean your home is doesn't play into the inspection itself, but a dirty or messy house may make the inspector suspicious that other areas of the property aren't properly taken care of either.

5 Replace any bulbs that are out

A blown bulb suggests either the bulb itself is out, or there's something faulty in the fixture's wiring. Make sure that all of your bulbs are in working order.

6 Make sure your toilets are functioning properly

Fixing a running toilet is an easy and inexpensive repair you can take care of on your own, so take care of the problem before the inspection.

7 Put in a fresh furnace return filter

Regularly replacing the furnace filter is important for air quality and the overall function. Clean or replace the existing filter and show that it's something you do pay attention to.

8 Turn all pilot lights on

The pilot light in your water heater is probably always on (and you would have noticed already if it wasn't), but what about the pilot light in your gas fireplace? Many homeowners turn their fireplace off in warmer months, so it's important to double check that the pilot light – and the fireplace itself – is working prior to inspection.

9 Ensure the fuse box is properly labeled

Double check that each switch in the box is labeled clearly and correctly, and replace any labels that are incorrect or difficult to read.

10 Check your doors

Interior and exterior doors should be latching into the frame with no problem, doorknobs should be securely in place, and any locks need to be functioning properly as well.

11 Flag the top of the septic tank

Be prepared that the inspector may dig up your lawn in various locations.

12 Repair faulty cabinets

It's easy for the hinges on cabinets to get a bit loose, which results in doors that don't close correctly or that aren't flush with the frame. If you have a cabinet that's looking off, you can usually fix it pretty simply just by tightening the hinge with a screwdriver.

13 Look for leaks and water damage

Check under sinks, around faucets, around the base of your toilets and bathtubs and/or showers, and under any appliances that may leak. Examine walls, ceilings, and floors, looking for signs of warping, sagging, or buckling. Don't forget the exterior of your house for signs of leaks or water damage as well.

14 Take care of any bug problems

Most of us have to occasionally deal with an errant ant or spider in the home, but if you've got a wasp nest in the backyard or are regularly seeing lines of ants in your kitchen or other interior areas, you'll want to take care of these problems prior to inspection.

15 Be prepared on the day of the inspection

Keep all utilities on, double check that you've left clear access to areas and systems all around the house, and unlock any gates, electrical boxes, or other areas that you normally keep secure. Prepare yourself and your family to vacate the house during the inspection at least 2 hours before inspection time. It's best to take any pets with you, but if you can't, make sure they're safely crated or otherwise secured.



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