

Home Maintenance and Preparation

The list below may be helpful when wondering what a home inspector may be looking at and how to prepare your home for sale or inspection. Many items can be done with little or no cost and are regular maintenance items for a home owner.

1. Remove grade or mulch from contact with siding. Six (6) or more inches of clearance is preferred.
2. Clean out dirty gutters or debris from the roof.
3. Divert all water away from the house; i.e. downspouts, sump pump, condensation drains, and the like. Grade should slope away from the structure. Clean out basement entry drains.
4. Trim trees, roots and bushes back from the foundation, roof, siding and chimney.
5. Paint all weathered exterior wood and caulk around the rim, chimney, windows and doors.
6. Seal asphalt driveways, if cracking.
7. Seal or point up masonry chimney caps. Install metal flue cap.
8. Clean or replace HVAC filter. Clean dirty air returns and plenum.
9. Point up any failing mortar joints in brick or block.
10. Test all smoke detectors to ensure they are in safe working condition.
11. Update attic ventilation if none is present.
12. Have the chimney, fireplace or wood stove cleaned and provide the buyer with a copy of the cleaning record.
13. Seal masonry walls in the basement.
14. Don't do quick cheap repairs. You may raise questions that will unfairly cause great concern to buyers and inspectors.
15. Ensure that all doors and windows are in proper operating condition, including kitchen cabinetry. Repair or replace any cracked windowpanes.
16. Ensure that all plumbing fixtures (toilet, tub, shower, and sinks) are in proper working conditions. Check for and fix any leaks. Caulk around fixtures if necessary. Fill and run jetted tubs.
17. Install GFCI receptacles near all water sources. Test all present GFCI receptacles for proper operation.
18. Check sump pump for proper operation.
19. Replace any burned out light bulbs, and clean globes.
20. Remove rotting wood and/or firewood from contact with the house.
21. Ensure that proper grading is followed under a deck. .
22. Caulk all exterior wall penetrations.
23. Check to ensure that the craw space is dry and install proper vapor barrier if necessary. Remove any visible moisture from a crawl space. Moisture levels in wood should be below 18% to deter rot and mildew.
24. Check the bath vents are properly vented and in working condition.
25. Remove paints, solvents, gas and similar materials from crawl space, basement, attic, porch and so forth. (Buyers really only want color sample matches.)
26. If windows are at or below grade, install window wells and covers.
27. Have clear access to attic, crawl space, heating system, garage and other areas that will need to be inspected.
28. Label all breakers in main panel. Avoid double tapping.
29. If the house is vacant, make sure that all utilities are turned on, including water, electric, water heater, furnace, air conditioning and breakers in the main panel.