



Insight

Insight from the Area's Leader in Inspections
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LEBAN ENGINEERING & INSPECTION SERVICE

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HOW TO PREPARE A House for a Home Inspection

Here's a Fundamental Primer That Gives an Explanation to Your Clients

Many Realtors have had clients ask them how to prepare for a home inspection. There are routine steps sellers can take to ensure that the inspection goes off without a hitch. Most of them are regular maintenance chores and quite easy and inexpensive to do. Above all, sellers should not try to do quick, cheap repairs, as this could cause questions and concern to home inspectors and prospective buyers.

First, the home seller should concentrate on the exterior of the house. He or she should provide at least six inches of clearance between grade/mulch and siding. Dirty gutters and debris should be cleaned from the roof.

Basement entry drains should be cleaned out as well.

The grade of the land should slope away from the home so that water is diverted away from the house. Downspouts, sump pumps, condensation drains, and the like should all drain away from the home.

Trees, roots, and bushes should be trimmed away from the home's foundation, roof, siding, and chimney. All weathered exterior wood should be painted.

Caulking should be placed around the chimney, windows, and doors. Rotting wood and/or firewood should not be in contact with the house. Decks should be properly graded.



Some of these remedies are obvious but might be overlooked by anxious sellers. If the asphalt driveway is cracking, it should be sealed. Masonry chimney caps should be sealed or pointed up. Metal flue caps should also be installed on chimneys.

The home's HVAC filter should be cleaned or replaced, if needed. Dirty air returns and plenum need cleaned as well.

Any faulty mortar joints in a home's brick or block should be pointed up.

All doors and windows must be in proper working condition. If windowpanes are cracked, sellers need to

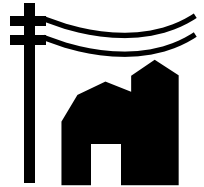
have them replaced, or repaired if possible.

Turning to the interior of the home, the seller should make sure that any burned out light bulbs are replaced before a home inspection. Sellers need to ensure that all smoke detectors work. If a home's attic is not ventilated, it needs to be. Also, a professional should clean the chimney, fireplace, or wood stove. The buyer must be provided with a copy of this cleaning record.

Plumbing fixtures, including toilet, tub, shower, and sinks, should be in proper working order. Any leaks must be fixed, and caulking should be done around plumbing fixtures if necessary. The sump pump should be operating properly.

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Upgraded Electrical



By today's standards, a typical residential electrical system could be 100, 125, 150 or 200 amps. Federal guidelines and national codes require a minimum upgrade of 100 amps for a single-family residence. If a home does not meet this minimum, one should consider to upgrade.

A licensed electrician should evaluate and analyze the system to determine the current and future power needs of the household. An upgrade isn't cheap (the national average for upgrading to 200 amps is over \$2,000), but it should be considered an investment. It can increase the value of the home and make it easier to sell. The homeowner should get bids from licensed electricians before commissioning the job. If the circuits are mapped out before the electrician arrives, it could cut costs of the job. 🏠 🔌



Home On The Web

Do you have clients who have termite problems coming out of the woodwork? Check out these two web sites to learn everything you ever wanted to know about termite homewreckers!

➔ Termite Info

www.utoronto.ca/forest/termite/termite.htm

➔ Termite Bites

www.termitebites.com/home.html

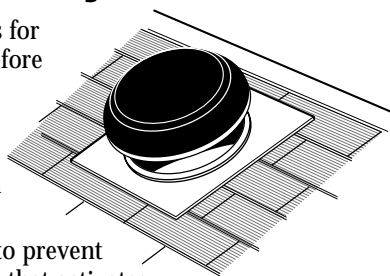
The Benefits of Reducing Attic Heat

When selling a house, the last thing a Realtor wants is for shingles to be falling off and/or disintegrating right before the buyers' eyes! This tragedy doesn't have to occur, with the right planning and a little know-how.

It is important for Realtors and others to understand that excessive heat build-up in the attic of a home can cause its roof shingles to deteriorate.

Some home inspectors will tell you that the best way to prevent this is to install an electric attic fan, with a thermostat that activates the fan when temperatures rise to a certain point.

Although this is one alternative, there is a cheaper, simpler way to lengthen the life of a roof. Adding two or more heat-driven turbine vents near the roof's ridgeline can work just as effectively. You've probably seen such vents on the roofs of commercial buildings. They can be used on the average home's roof as well. They work quite simply. When the attic gets too warm, the air rises, causing the turbines to spin and expel the hot air from the attic. Unlike attic fans, turbine vents require no maintenance and will not raise electric costs. This is a much less expensive, easier option to solve this embarrassing problem. 🏠 🏠 🏠



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As final measures before a home's inspection, if applicable, make sure that vapor barriers are installed in crawl spaces and that the crawl spaces are dry.

Moisture needs to be removed, as moisture levels in wood should be below 18 percent to prevent dry rot and mildew. Also, remember to remove any paints, solvents, gas, and similar materials from crawl spaces, basements, attics, porches, etc. Access to the attic, crawl space, heating system, garage, and other areas the home inspector will check must be clear, with nothing blocking the way.

All GFCI receptacles need to be tested to make sure they are operating correctly.

If not already in place, GFCI receptacles must be installed near all water sources. Masonry walls in the basement need to be sealed. Window wells and covers need to be in place if windows are at or below grade.

Finally, if the house is vacant, all utilities must be turned on, including water, electric, water heater, furnace, air conditioning, and breakers in the main panel. Sellers who follow these steps should have no problem with a home inspection, making themselves, their Realtors, and their prospective buyers very happy. 🏠 🏠 🏠

Home Highlights

Shrunk Pools

Is that a pool or a bath tub in your back yard? Today's swimming pools have shrunk about 14% over the past ten years, or about 3,700 gallons — enough to fill a large U-Haul truck!

Hung Out To Dry

The clothesline is making a comeback! Due to a combination of high electricity prices and the yearn for the feel-good scent of outdoor-dried clothes, clothesline manufacturers have reported a jump in sales of 40% to 80%. To account for recent homeowner association rules, the most popular models are the portable ones, designed much like a deck umbrella.

Bird In Hand

Have you ever found an abandoned baby bird and not known what to do with it? Check out Project Wildlife's web site, www.projectwildlife.org, which will help you come to the rescue!

This newsletter contains basic information on the home and general topics of interest. Due to the variations in homes, individual recommendations require a comprehensive evaluation. To reprint any article in this newsletter, please contact our office. © 1996-2002. All rights reserved. (ISSO02)

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