

What a Home Inspection Should Cover

Home inspections will vary depending on the type of property you are purchasing. A large historic home, for example, will require a more specialized inspection than a small condominium. However, the following are the basic elements that a home inspector will check with a Whole House Inspection.

You can also use this list to help you evaluate properties you might purchase.

Structure: A home's skeleton impacts how the property stands up to weather, gravity, and the earth. Structural components, including the foundation and the framing, should be inspected.

Exterior: The inspector should look at sidewalks, driveways, steps, windows, and doors. A home's siding, trim, and surface drainage also are part of an exterior inspection.

- Doors and windows
- Siding (brick, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood, etc.)
- Driveways/sidewalks
- Attached porches, decks, and balconies
- Proof of termites, wood destroying insects, pests, rodents and/or other insects

Roofing: A well-maintained roof protects you from sun, rain and other forces of nature. The inspector should take note of the roof's age and conditions of:



- Flashing
- Roof Draining Systems
- Pooling Water
- Buckled Shingles or Missing Tiles
- Loose Scuppers and Downspouts
- Skylight(s)
- Chimney(s)


Plumbing: The inspector should examine the water supply and drainage systems, water heating equipment, and fuel storage systems. Drainage pumps and sump pumps also fall under this category. Poor water pressure, banging pipes, rust spots, or corrosion can indicate problems.

Electrical: Safe electrical wiring is essential. Inspectors should look for the condition of service entrance wires, service panels, breakers and fuses, and disconnects. Also taking note of the number of outlets in each room and testing those on switches.

Heating: The home's heating system, vent system, flues, and chimneys should be inspected. The inspector will look for the age of water heater, whether the size is adequate for the house, speed of recovery, and energy rating.

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Air Conditioning: Your inspector should describe your home cooling system, its energy source, and inspect the central and through-wall cooling equipment. The inspector should be able to determine the age and energy rating of the system.

Interiors: An inspection of the inside of the home can reveal plumbing leaks, insect damage, rot, construction defects, and other issues. An inspector should take a close look at:

- Walls, ceilings and floors
- Steps, stairways, and railings
- Countertops and cabinets
- Garage doors and garage door systems

Ventilation/insulation: To prevent energy loss, the inspector should check for adequate insulation and ventilation in the attic and in unfinished areas such as crawlspaces. Also they will look for proper, secured insulation in walls. Insulation should be appropriate for the climate. Excess moisture in the home can lead to mold and water damage.



Fireplaces: They're charming, but they could be dangerous if not properly installed. Inspectors should examine the system, including the vent and flue, and describe solid fuel burning appliances.


The elements listed above provide a comprehensive overview of what a typical Whole House Inspection should cover, ensuring that you are well-informed about the condition of the property that you are considering. It's important to recognize that while these inspections encompass a wide range of home components, the scope of a Whole House Inspection will not cover specialized systems or features.

For properties that include unique amenities such as pools, spas, solar panel systems, security systems, landscape watering systems, water wells, septic tanks, outdoor kitchens or have potential concerns like mold or radon, it's advisable to seek additional inspections. These specialized areas require expertise beyond the scope of a general home inspection and should be evaluated by professionals who have the necessary skills and tools to assess their conditions accurately.

Furthermore, in Arizona, particularly within older neighborhoods, conducting a Sewer Scope Inspection is recommended. This inspection aims to assess the underground piping that supplies fresh water to the house, examining the pipe material, and checking for damage, blockages or tree root intrusions.

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