

How to Choose a Home Inspector

A guide for home buyers and sellers

A home inspection is a visual examination of the physical condition and major systems of a house. It can help you identify any potential problems, defects, or safety issues before you buy or sell a home. A home inspector is a trained and certified professional who performs the inspection and provides you with a written report of the findings.

Choosing a home inspector is an important decision that can affect your satisfaction and confidence in your home purchase or sale. Here are some tips on how to choose a home inspector that meets your needs and expectations.

Ask for recommendations

One of the best ways to find a reliable home inspector is to ask for referrals from people you trust, such as your real estate agent, friends, family, or neighbors who have recently bought or sold a home. You can also check online reviews, testimonials, or ratings of home inspectors on websites like Yelp, Angie's List, or HomeAdvisor. However, keep in mind that not all reviews are accurate or unbiased, so you should always verify the credentials and reputation of the home inspector yourself.

Check the qualifications

Not all states require home inspectors to be licensed or certified, so you should check the requirements and standards in your area before hiring one. You should also look for a home inspector who has relevant education, training, and experience in the field of home inspection. A good home inspector should be familiar with the local building codes, regulations, and best practices. You can also ask if the home inspector belongs to any professional associations, such as the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors (InterNACHI), or the National Association of Home Inspectors (NAHI). These organizations have strict codes of ethics and standards of practice that their members must follow.

Compare the services and fees

Home inspection services and fees can vary widely depending on the scope, quality, and duration of the inspection. You should compare the services and fees of at least three different home inspectors before making a decision. You should ask for a written contract or agreement that clearly outlines what the inspection will cover, how long it will take, how much it will cost, and how you will receive the report. You should also ask if the home inspector offers any additional services, such as radon testing, mold testing, termite inspection, or energy audit, and how much they charge for them. You should also ask if the home inspector carries any insurance, such as errors and omissions or general liability, in case of any mistakes or damages during the inspection.

Review the sample report

A home inspection report is the final product of the inspection and the most valuable tool for you as a home buyer or seller. It should provide you with a detailed and objective assessment of the condition and performance of the house, as well as any recommendations for repairs, maintenance, or improvements. You should review a sample report from each home inspector you are considering and evaluate the quality, clarity, and comprehensiveness of the report. A good report should be easy to read and understand, include clear and relevant photos, diagrams, or videos, and highlight any major or minor issues or defects. You should also ask how soon you will receive the report after the inspection and in what format (paper, email, online, etc.).

Ask questions and communicate your expectations

The last tip on how to choose a home inspector is to ask questions and communicate your expectations. You should feel comfortable and confident with the home inspector you choose and be able to trust their judgment and expertise. You should ask any questions you have about the inspection process, the report, or the house itself, and expect honest and professional answers. You should also communicate your expectations and goals for the inspection, such as what areas or systems you are most concerned about, what level of detail you want, or what type of feedback you prefer. A good home inspector should listen to your needs and preferences and tailor their service accordingly.