



## Examining Homes – How To

You will probably look at many homes before choosing one to buy, but you will not hire an inspector for every home you consider – that would get very expensive! Therefore, you need to know how to shop for homes wisely and look at features with a critical eye. It's important to identify all the positives – but it's critical to be able to spot trouble, too!

### Be on the lookout for:

#### Water Issues

- Stains on basement walls
- Stains on ceilings
- Moss or mildew on siding near the ground or roof
- Mildew or stains on the underside of roof
- A soggy yard
- Erosion in the driveway or along walkway(s)

#### Building Lines

- Sagging roof or uneven roof lines
- Curves or bumps in the walls
- Door or windows that appear crooked
- Porches that are sagging or leaning to one side

#### Structural Issues

- Diagonal cracks, especially near doors or windows, if they are larger than one finger
- Floors that feel soft or uneven
- Doors or windows that do not fit into their frames

#### Utility Systems

- High heating or air-conditioning bills (you can ask to copies of utility bills)
- Leaky plumbing, especially along the main water line (turn the water on and check the pipes along the main line while the water is running)
- Insufficient electrical services (turn lights and appliances on to see if a fuse blows)
- Strange smells, such as gas or sewer
- Single pane windows (insulated windows are best!)
- Minimal insulation in attic

#### Serious Trouble

- Signs of termites, ants or other infestations
- Old, flakey paint on the window sills or exterior trim
- Floor coverings that are very worn
- Siding that is wavy, soft or detached
- Roofing with many layers



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### What to Bring:

When you look at homes, it is helpful to bring the following:

- ✓ **Flashlight** – You will want to get a good look at the less-lit areas of the home such as crawl spaces, attics, backs of closets, and cupboards
- ✓ **Outlet Tester** – Use an outlet tester to test each outlet and see whether it is functioning and wired properly. You can buy an outlet tester at home improvement stores such as Lowes or Home Depot.
- ✓ **Small Level** – Use a level to check for slopes in floors, walls, countertops, etc.
- ✓ **Tape Measure** – Record the size of certain living spaces as well as components, such as cupboard depth, closet space, distance between windows, etc. This is especially important if you have large pieces of furniture that need to fit up stairways and/or into certain rooms.
- ✓ **Binoculars** – It is difficult to see roofs from the ground. Binoculars will allow you to look more closely at the condition of roof tiles, flashing, soffits, etc.

Also, remember to wear comfortable clothing in case you need to go up and down steps and explore crawl spaces. Wear 'outdoor' shoes so you can take a full look at the yard and outbuildings and examine behind bushes that are along the wall(s) of the house.

