

Ten Most Common Observations Found During an Inspection

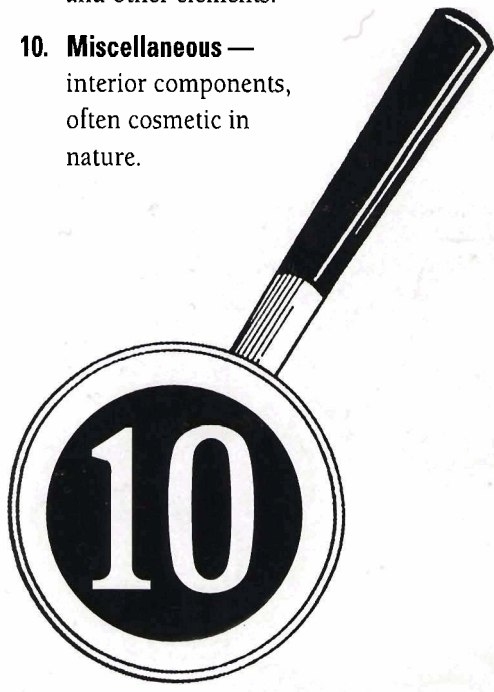
Every home inspection is a different experience and results in a different set of observations and recommendations. However, many surveys have shown common problems and issues. Here is a quick review of the most common problems found by home inspectors.

Armed with this information, you can now give constructive input to your client BEFORE the home is listed!

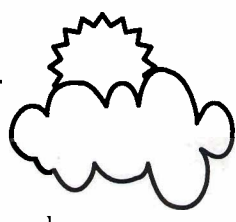
1. **Improper Surface Grading/Drainage** — this tops the list and is responsible for a diversity of other problems, including water in the basement.
2. **Improper Electrical Wiring** — Shocked? This includes insufficient electrical service to the home, inadequate overload protection, and unprofessional wiring connections.
3. **Roof Damage** — old shingles, improper flashing, too many layers.
4. **Heating Systems** — broken or malfunctioning operation controls, blocked chimneys, or unsafe exhaust disposals all cause a cold front in operations.
5. **Poor Overall Maintenance** — these are easy to detect, and include cracked, peeling or dirty paint, chipped masonry, and broken appliances.
6. **Structurally Related Problems** — these are important and often

overlooked. Foundation walls, floor joists, rafters, and headers should all be examined carefully.

7. **Plumbing** — check for the existence of old or incompatible piping materials, faulty fixtures and waste lines.
8. **Exteriors** — windows, doors, and wall surfaces can allow in water and air, but rarely have structural significance.
9. **Poor Ventilation** — older homes are often “over-sealed”, causing excessive interior moisture, rotting, and premature failure of structural and other elements.
10. **Miscellaneous** — interior components, often cosmetic in nature.



SkyLights



Homeowner Question: Can you give a perspective on the bad stories passed on about skylights?

Our Answer : Skylights can be a beautiful and enjoyable upgrade to any home — as long as they function properly. Unfortunately, if a skylight is improperly installed, it can leak and lead to damage to the area of installation as well as to the room.

A Common Question:

If it doesn't come complete with a manufactured or site-built curb, the skylight will probably cause headaches. The curb — which is an elevated frame for the light — should include proper step and counter flashings. Its size will depend upon the type and slope of the roof. For example, a flat roof will use an 8 inch curb, while a roof with a steep slope may require a 4 inch curb. Homeowners should determine the requirements of their own home before attempting to install skylights.



Home On The Web

Check out these two sites to give you insight into researching old homes.

➔ **Built In** America
memory.loc.gov/ammem/hhhtml/hhhome.html

➔ **World Of** Old Houses
www.oldhouses.com.au

Subject: How to Hire a Home Inspector

We all know a home inspection is important. However, the inspection is only as good as the inspector. Here are some questions that should be asked before hiring an inspector — and every inspector should be prepared to answer!

- What standards of practice do you follow?
- How much experience do you have as a home inspector? What is your construction-related experience?
- Are you specifically qualified to do residential inspections?
- Does your company offer to make repairs or improvements based on the inspection? (Careful! A “yes” answer here may indicate a conflict of interest.)
- How long will the inspection take? (This should depend on the size of the home. An average residential inspection should take two to three hours.)
- What is included in the inspection specifically? (Take note of what isn't included, too.)
- How much will the inspection cost? (The cheapest inspection is not necessarily the best!)
- Will you supply a written report? (If not, look elsewhere.)
- Do you recommend that the client attend the inspection? (This should be another “yes” answer. The whole point is learning as much as you can about your property, right?)
- Do you take classes and participate in other continuing learning programs to make sure your expertise is up to date?



Also, ask for references — and check them. The best way to learn about what an inspector will do for a customer is to talk to one — or more — of them.

Energy Saver?

Does a computer screen saver really save energy? No! The screen saver saves the computer screen! A computer left on all night for a year uses 300 kilowatt-hours of energy. Keep the monitor on, and the wasted energy goes up to 900 kwh - about \$90 a year at current rates.



Early Blooms

Bring spring inside. Cut early spring flowering shrubs to force indoors. The balmy weather makes it easier this year. Forsythia is a snap; other candidates include corylopsis (winterhazels), witch hazel, early-blooming little-leaf and deciduous rhododendrons, even early cherry trees. Select branches with buds that are already swelling. Split or crush the stem ends (for thick ones, use a hammer) and place in water in a cool room. When flowers begin to emerge, make arrangements.

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.(ISMA02)

Stoffer Inspections, L.C. Information

Dave Stoffer provides technically superior inspections and is able to explain them all to clients on the most common terms. Stoffer Inspections, L.C. provides 3-D computer-generated narrative reports, that are both quick and comprehensive. My service also provides digital photography services for complete record keeping. Each home inspection includes and evaluation of roofing, electrical, heating, air conditioning, built-in appliances that stay with the home, plumbing, and visual structure.

Dave is a certified member of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), the Great Plains Chapter of ASHI, and the Kansas City area Pro ASHI Chapter. To obtain certification, member must perform a minimum of 250 home inspections and pass a series of written tests that cover both mechanical and structural aspects of a home. Once certified, member must maintain at least 40 hours of continuing education every two years. All of these requirements ensure that your clients will receive a thorough, experienced, ethical, and knowledgeable home inspection.



Certified Member of the
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