Professional Home Inspection Checklist For the Home Buyer

*From **Foundations** to **Roofs** and*
In Between the Walls

***Who** to Inspect*

***When** to Inspect*

***Why** to Inspect*

***What** to Inspect*

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*Use the **Inspection Checklist** and the*
Glossary of Terms to Increase your
Knowledge and feel most Confident in the
Biggest Decision your Budget will Make

***DFW CARPENTRY** proudly presents this publication for the betterment of the consumers searching for information to assist them buying and selling their homes now and in the future.*

1.877.748.1414

Who to Inspect?

A 'Licensed Professional Inspector' will be able to provide you an inspection report document acceptable for closing with the Title Company. Some items on the report may not be covered for one reason or another and the Inspector will need to advise you of which items are not covered and why he was unable to inspect them. Items not covered may have to be inspected by an engineer or a licensed professional in the field as to complete the inspection required or to at least convince you the process is as complete as needed.

The report given by the 'Licensed Professional Inspector' can and should be compared with the 'Inspection Checklist' offered in this guide. The Inspector, in most cases, will not be held liable for any item on his report not covered. Thus it is important to talk with him in detail after he completes his inspection to inform you of all the incomplete items on his report. This is also a good time to go over the 'Inspection Checklist' with him to cover any other items needed to satisfy you with receiving a report complete with regard to the status of the home.

A self-Inspection of the home by yourself using the 'Inspection Checklist' will increase your knowledge of the home and may potentially solve some or all of the questions you may have about the condition of the home. This will also prepare you for the professional inspection and the ability to read the report produced by the 'Licensed Professional Inspector'. It would be wise to check the Inspector's references of prior clients before accepting his offer to work for you based on the reference of the seller/buyer and/or his agent.

When to Inspect?

If you are not a professional in the field of home building or a residential construction consultant, there is a need to have the home inspected by a 'Licensed Professional Inspector' before you purchase. This publication is put forth to give the potential homebuyer or seller a better understanding of the inspection process and to insure the performance of the Inspector who will be hired by you or the owner. His performance is gauged in how accurate an assessment of the status of the home is revealed.

The "Inspection Report" will be central in the decision process you make about whether or not to buy the house in the condition as is or if improvements are needed to address any or all inspection faults. Having a third party inspect the house or give an assessment of the "Inspection Report" may be advised if the potential buyer cannot interview the Inspector in person. If you are unable to attend in person and have the inspection performed on your behalf, the "Inspection Report" should have inspection photos of all sides of the home and surrounding buildings to insure all structural elements evident from the outside should be visible.

The Inspector should note if a 'Disclosure Statement' has been provided by the homeowner, and will accompany his report. A complete set of blueprints might also be made available to assist the Inspector as to note any or all changes made to the original structure. If a separate room addition or remodel is evident, then a set of drawings should be on file at the local code enforcement office of the city in which the home resides.

Why to Inspect?

Unless you have a prior knowledge of the house you are intending to purchase, then an inspection by a 'Licensed Professional Inspector' may be the only way to have an accurate depiction of the value of the property as it pertains to the price. The inspection is intended to point out the condition of the home in all its parts. Whether you are inspecting a new or existing home, it is important to have a thorough inspection to insure your liability with the home and it's condition is covered for the life of the home and to protect you from any unseen or unreported potentially damaging situations which may occur. The inspection should point out deficiencies, which may lessen the value of the house. The 'Inspection Checklist' should offer a chance for the seller to prioritize his repairs and improvements leaving some finishes in their present state thus making consideration in his sale price.

During the inspection, you should become aware of elements in the home, which add value to the home such as fresh air intake/transfer or foam filled insulation, both of which will be required in future new housing. A poor foundation should be noted and may be in need of repair. Repairs to the foundation can cause additional damage to interior finishes whereas a stable foundation may not need to be repaired although some movement may have taken place. A pier and beam raised first floor foundation, as opposed to a solid concrete slab, may offer better insulation properties, and the ability to remove ground moisture before it enters the home, thus reducing or eliminating mold growth.

What to Inspect?

Any inspection performed may not cover all items in the home due to limitations in the inspection process. The 'Inspection Checklist' is offered as an aid to help you in understanding the 'Licensed Professional Inspectors' inspection report.

It is all-important to inspect the items where security and health issues are the greatest. Areas of concern include doors and windows, which operate properly, without fear of getting stuck preventing escape during a fire. Doors and windows are also penetrations of the home and therefore may be places where wood rot might have set in. Other wood rot areas may be found in wet areas of the home. The utility room is subject to water damage at the sill plates. The utility room should contain an exhaust vent for the clothes dryer to release the moisture and unsafe lint out of the living area of the home and vent to the outside of the home. Venting to the attic cavity is not recommended. Cabinets below sink basins are areas to be checked for moisture and wood rot and noted on the report as to be in dry condition free from mold and mildew. Wood destroying insects are attracted to areas of high moisture and can be seen by detecting mud trails leading from the ground up and into the brickwork or siding.

If the house has gas fueled appliances such as the clothes dryer, water heater or furnace, then the proper venting of exhaust gases to the outside of the home is required. Rain hoods and wind deflectors are needed items over the vent stacks on the roof or outside an exterior wall to prevent exhaust gases from venting back into the living areas of the home. CO2 detection along with smoke alarms should be in good condition and working.

Where to Inspect?

The home has many places where problems may occur. It is the 'Licensed Professional Inspector's' performance in giving you a quality report with all items covered and noted to insure you the home is safe and/or habitable. The entire house needs a thorough inspection in order for a complete report to be given. As the Inspector starts his inspection, he will look to the outside of the house and note the finishes as brick or siding, stucco and the condition which may indicate any structural problems which may be current or previously repaired. The level of the soil around the house and on the lot, which the house sits, is important with respect to rainwater flowing away from the foundation.

The condition of the roof and inspecting all penetrations through the roof for water leaks and wood rot may save time and money in repairs. Wood rot is susceptible around windows, chimneys and fascia at roof edge. The exterior doors and especially the frames at the ground need to be inspected for wood rot. The perimeter of the foundation should be inspected for mud trails or dirt above the level of the lowest brick veneer which may suggest insect intrusion into the home.

The interior of the home can show signs of foundation movement or of foundation repairs made to make believe the home is stable. The inside of the home should not have loose stair newel posts or tile flooring coming up which are hazards.

The condition of all appliances should be checked for operating properly. Any gas appliance will need to be checked for proper ventilation to the outside and/or an adjacent window for fresh combustion air transfer.

How to Inspect?

The best method for inspecting the home is to have a 'Licensed Professional Inspector' inspect your home and for you to use the 'Inspection Checklist' to insure his performance. Using the 'Inspection Checklist' to self inspect the home is recommended to educate yourself about the home and the process the 'Licensed Professional Inspector' will perform.

Great care should be taken in inspecting the home and surrounding property. The Inspector will carry with him many tools to help him in his inspection. You should have a flashlight, prodding tool for wood rot, a ladder and insulated screwdrivers for removing the electrical panel cover. 'NOTE' the electricity should be turned off when inspecting the electrical panel for proper use of wiring, load requirements, or double lugging of breakers. A keen eye is used to look for cracks in the brick veneer or the exposed concrete foundation of the home. Cracks may also appear in Sheetrock inside above doors or in corners. Sags in the roof alert to broken framing or lack of adequate bracing.

Be sure to check the 'Disclosure Document' for any repairs to the foundation, which previously may have been performed. When inspecting the attic cavity for cracks in rafters of joists, be sure to step only on the structural members and not onto the underside of the ceiling Sheetrock. A hole put through the ceiling may cost more to repair than the Inspector's fee, which may be based on his time, the square footage under roof or a percentage of the appraised value of the property being inspected.

Directions for Inspection Checklist

It is recommended to read the entire Checklist before starting the inspection. The 'Inspection Checklist' contains specific information about a home and its parts. The order in which you inspect will not likely be the order you find them on the Checklist. The list of inspection components is in alphabetical order for ease in recalling when needed to answer questions with the 'Licensed Professional Inspector'. Beside each numbered component to inspect are selections to choose from to accurately represent such component. Each inspection component should have at least one entry selected to best represent that component.

As you inspect the home, place a mark next to the item, which most accurately represents the component. Many of the components on the Checklist are left for 'yes' or 'no' answers. Some follow up with a little more detail. Circle the number to any component question you wish the Inspector to help you understand.

It will take several hours to perform the inspection by the 'Licensed Professional Inspector'. Expect at least this long or longer for you to finish your inspection. Do not get discouraged by the time it takes to complete the inspection. All the hard work you put in will only make your decision about the home more valuable, and it is a good time to envision your plans for the future of your home with regards to improvements you may choose to make. As the Seller, you will have the added opportunity to prioritize any repairs or improvements you would like to make. For additional inspections, use additional worksheets.

Inspection Checklist

Name of Inspector: **Time of Appointment:**
Arrival time: **Departure time:**
Residence Address:

(F) Indicates Fault
(P) Preferred Item
(S) Added Safety

01. **Air filtration**: at unit _____ at return vent _____
other _____
02. **Attic access:** Pull down Stairs _____ Location _____
Staircase _____ by door _____
by ladder only _____ Attic light at access _____
03. **Attic Insulation:** Height over joist _____
Batten _____ blown fiberglass _____
Cellulose _____
04. **Bathrooms:** Toilets flush _____ Electrical GFI _(P)_____
Exhaust fan working _____
05. **Cabinets below sink basins:** dry _____ Mildewed _____
06. **Ceiling fans in good condition:** # of interior _____
# of exterior _____
07. **Electrical Double Lugging in Panel**: Y_ (F) _____ N _____
Of Breakers _____
08. **Electrical Grounded Outlets:** Y_(P)_____ N _____
Non-grounded Outlets Y _____ N_____
09. **Electrical Service in total Amps:** _____
Amount of breakers in amp _____
10. **Electrical supply**: Location _____
from pole above _____ without drip loop __ (F) _____
From below ground _____
11. **Electrical Wiring Type:** Aluminum _____
Copper wiring _(P) _____
12. **Elevation:** House square footage _____
Two story _____ Three-story _____
13. **Environmental Alarms:** CO detectors # of _____
Smoke detectors # of _____
14. **Exterior Wall Construction:** 2 x 4 _____ 2 x 6-_(P) _____
15. **Exterior Doors:** # of _____ Deadbolts _____
Operating properly _____
Double Cylinders _ (f) _____
Wood rot at sill plate __(F)_____
16. **Exterior Wall Finishes:** Brick _____ % of _____
Wood siding _____% of _____
Stucco _____ % of _____
Rock/stone _____ % of _____
Vinyl/metal siding _____ % of _____

INSPECTION CHECKLIST cont.

17. **EXTERIOR WALL INSULATION:** FIBERGLASS _____
CELLULOSE _____ WET BLOWN Y_____ / N _____
FOAM FILLED Y _(P) _____ / N _____
POLYURETHANE _____ POLYISONINE _____
18. **FIREPLACE:** WOOD BURNING _____ GAS ONLY_____
GAS START _____ COAL/PELLET _____
DAMPER WORKING _____
HEARTH _____ FLOOR FIREBOX _____
19. **FLOORING FINISHES:** BEDROOMS _____ LIVING _____
BATHROOM _____ MASTER BATH _____ KITCHEN _____
20. **FLOORING FINISHES CONDITION:** NEW _____ GOOD _____
FAIR _____ NEEDS REPLACEMENT _____
21. **FOUNDATION**: CONCRETE SLAB _____
PIER AND BEAM _(P)_____ CRAWLSPACE IN INCHES _____
OF ENTRANCES _____VENTILATION _____
OF VENTS _____
22. **FOUNDATION INSPECTION:** VISIBLE CRACKS IN BRICKWORK _ (F) _____
CRACKS INTERIOR SHEETROCK _____
CRACKS IN FLOOR _____
23. **FOUNDATION REPORT**: AVAILABLE _____ N/A _____
24. **FRESH AIR TRANSFER**: Y _(P)_____ N _____ LOCATION _____
ATTIC FAN _____ TYPE: _____
25. **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:** # OF _____
SPRINKLER SYSTEM FOR FIRE _____
26. **GARAGE**: ATTACHED _____ DETACHED _____
FLOOR SLOPED TOWARD OUTSIDE _(S)_____
OF CARS AVAILABLE _____ CARPORT _____
27. **HVAC:** SIZE OF UNIT _____
OF SUPPLY VENTS _____ # OF RETURN VENTS _____
GAS HEAT _____ ELECTRIC HEAT _____
DRYER VENT _____ VENTED TO OUTSIDE __(P)_____
VENTED INTO ATTIC _(F)_____
28. **HEATING SUPPLY:** ELECTRIC _____ NATURAL GAS _____
PROPANE/BUTANE _____ HEATING OIL _____
29. **INSULATION IN:** CEILING _____ WALLS _____ FLOOR _____
30. **INSULATION TYPE:** BATTEN _____
BLOWN FIBERGLASS _____ CELLULOSE _____
31. **INTERIOR DOORS:** # OF _____ HANDLESETS _____
PRIVACY LOCKS _____
32. **INTERIOR WALL CONSTRUCTION:** 2 x 4 _____ 2 x 6 _____
33. **KITCHEN**: ALL ELECTRIC _____ GAS RANGE _____
GAS OVEN _____ EXHAUST FAN _____
34. **LAWN SPRINKLER SYSTEM**: INSTALLED _____
OPERATING NORMAL _____
35. **PORCHES OVER EXTERIOR DOORS:** FRONT _(P)_____ BACK _(P)_____
SIDE _(P)_____ BREEZEWAY _(P)_____

INSPECTION CHECKLIST cont.

36. **Retaining Walls:** stone _____ RR Tie _____ Block _____
Signs of Deterioration (F)(Y) _____ (N) _____
37. **Room Schedule**: Bedrooms # of _____
Bathrooms # of _____ Dining room _____
Living room _____ Den _____ Basement _____
38. **Roof Appearance:** Gable _____ Hip and valley _____
Roof condition _____ Water leaks _(F) _____
39. **Roof Framing:** Broken Rafters _(!)_____
Missing Bracing _(F)_____ Good condition _____
Pitch _____
40. **Roof materials:** Composite shingle _____ Tar and Gravel _____
Clay tile _____ Slate _____ Cedar Shake _____
41. **Roof Ventilation Type**: Gable vents _ (P) _____
Soffit vent _(P)_____# of _____ Ridge vents _(P)_____ # of _____
Fan forced vent _____ # of _____ Turbine vent _____# of _____
42. **Sewer:** City sewer _____ septic _____
Size tanks _____ Drain sub-surface _____ aerobic _____
43. **Stairs:** Space between Balusters _____
Height of balustrade _____ Height of Risers _____
Loose railing _(F)_____ loose newels _(F) _____
44. **Soil Grade:** away from foundation _(P) _____
45. **Water filtration:** Y _____ N _____ Reverse osmosis _____
Membrane filtration _____ Carbon filtration _____
Water softener _____
46. **Water heater:** Electric _____ Gas _____
Proper exhaust venting to outside _(S) _____
With rain hood at roof vent _(S) _____
47. **Water meter:** Location _____
Shut-off _____
48. **Water supply:** City/treated _____
Well _____ on property _____ off property _____
49. **Water tubing type:** Copper _(P) _____ PVC _____
other _____
50. **Window in every bedroom:** Y (S)_____ / N _____
51. **Window Glass:** Single pane _____ Double pane _____
Tinted _____ Tempered glass at door _(S) _____
52. **Window Type:** Wood _____ Aluminum _____ Vinyl _____

Glossary of Terms

ACQ: Amine-Copper-Quaternary - The chemicals used to treat materials for the prevention of wood rot and bug infestation. ACQ is replacing CCA, which contains arsenic.

Aggregate: Rock - Comes in various diameters for different uses.

Attic: The area inside the roof cavity under the rafters and above the ceiling joists.

Base Molding: Decorative finished wood strip attached to interior wall bottom to cover edge of floor finishes.

Batten: Long rolls or singular lengths of materials.

Beam: A horizontal structural member used to span joists or support additional weight above. Requires posting underneath.

Builder: The new home general contractor.

CCA: Copper-Chlorine-Arsenic - referring to the chemicals used to treat materials in a water based solution filled vacuum/saturation tank. The CCA treatment will be discontinued after year 2002.

Casing: Finished trim moldings around doorframes attaching jambs to walls.

Cellulose: Recycled paper fiber; some containing insect repellants; some using moisture to assist in blowing and retaining into wall and /or attic ceiling cavities.

CO: Carbon Monoxide

Code: A standard set by which materials and workmanship must adhere.

Column: A structural/architectural post supporting standing weight above.

Contractor: The person or business who provides the materials and workmanship to complete the product.

Convection: The transfer of heat from one area to another.

Deadbolt: A locking latch at exterior doors used for additional safety.

Deficiencies: Faults of problems

GLOSSARY OF TERMS cont.

DETACHED: Not connected by roof; Separate from main living quarters.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT: A list of all improvements to the home while you lived there and from the previous owner.

DOOR JAMB: The wood frame door hinges are screwed into. The opposite side is the striker jamb to which the door latches. The header jamb is over the top of the door and may contain catches for doors, which shut in the middle.

DOORSTOP: Refers to either the wood strip mounted to doorjamb to prohibit door from passing through the opening. A hardware item secured to base molding to prevent door handles from damaging walls.

DOUBLE CYLINDER: Exterior lockset keyed both sides.

DRIP LOOP: A lowering of the electrical feed just before entering the conduit above the house; used to prevent water from trailing into the conduit.

ELEVATION: A drawing to scale (accurate) of the exterior home finishes from different viewing positions relative to north, south, east, west.

FACADE: Referring to brick, meaning the brick is only for the face and not for the structure.

FASCIA: The finished board at the edge of the roof. The fascia will be horizontal unless it is attached to a gable rafter, then it will run uphill towards the peak/ ridge.

FOOTER: A concrete pour below grade substantial enough to support a heavy standing load from above. Footers and beams should be poured below the frost line.

GABLE: A type of roof design where the ridge is over the end wall making a triangle with the two rafters and the wall top plates.

GABLE VENT: A vent hole at or near the top of a gable. A triangle shaped vent with matching pitches for the gable allows the most air transfer to and from the attic cavity.

GRADE: The soil level.

HANDLESETS: The doorknobs, exterior and interior, levers or knobs.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS cont.

Heat Exchanger: Part of the heating system, which contains the fire exhaust from entering the inside air of the home.

Hips and Valleys: A type of roof design with the ridge set back from the end wall. The outside corner of house is tied to the ridge with hip. An inside corner of same type of roof will have a valley.

HVAC: Heating-Venting-Air Conditioning.

Joist: Ceiling members to carry the weight of interior finishes. A ceiling joist spans the distance form wall to wall, most times the shortest distance to provide the most strength. A floor joist will carry the load of flooring finishes and also disperse the weight of the walls and weight of overhead components.

Landmark: A point of origin.

Lockset: Handleset used for locking exterior doors.

Mantle: Ledge above fireplace for displaying. Formal mantle may include columns, headers, or many ornate applications.

Masonry: Brick, rock, stone, etc. Tradesman known as Mason.

Mastic: Glue.

Monolithic: Referring to slab poured all at one time.

Mortar: Masonry mix including sand and cement used to install brick or rock to veneer finishes.

Newel Post: The staring post where railings are attached.

Permit: Written approval from city for work to proceed.

Pitch: Referring to the roof and what angle above horizontal is the slope. Pitch is given as a ratio of rise over run. Thus a six and twelve pitch will travel up six inches for every twelve inches traveled in.

Plumb: 90 degrees from horizontal; vertical up and down.

Porch: An area, front or back of house at doors, usually covered.

Post: A vertical structural member used to support additional weight. Within a wall, two or more studs secured together supporting a beam.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS cont.

POLYURETHANE: Blown insulation; dense and very ridged; may not completely fill wall cavity between studs.

POLYISONINE: Blown insulation; less dense and fills the entire wall cavity between studs

POST TENSION: Referring to cables inside slab instead of rebar. The cables are brought to tension under a load, then secured at edge of slab resulting in a live load. Soil types and location of house may permit or deny this type of stabilization of the slab.

PRINTS: The blueprints of the home or addition.

PURLING: A type of roof bracing angled against rafter section.

RADIATION: The transfer of heat from one area to another through the air space between the two.

RAFTER: The wood member from the wall top plates to the ridge, hip, or valley. The rafter carries the weight of roof finishes. Heavier roof finishes will require more rafters and additional bracing.

REBAR: Metal bars used inside concrete to provide additional/required strength; comes in different sizes for different load requirements as per code compliance.

RETROFIT: Installation after home is completed.

RIDGE: The highest member of the roof running horizontal. The ridge is where the common rafters from the wall plates attach. Hips and Valleys most often are attached to the ridge.

SASH: Window frame containing glass.

SHEATHING: A rigid material such as plywood, exterior lap gypsum, foil foam board, deni board, etc. used to cover exterior wall framing from weather transfer to interior and to increase wall rack strength.

SHEETROCK: Gypsum board used to cover interior framing.

SIDING: Exterior finish material instead of masonry. Horizontal wood, plywood, composites including concrete encrusted vinyl. Usually requires painting to protect from the elements.

SILL PLATE: The bottom portion of exterior wall where doorjambs meet threshold.

SLAB FOUNDATION: The concrete poured for the first floor of the home including beams under grade.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS cont.

SOFFIT: The level ceilings under the roof overhang. Also referred to as the eaves.

SOFFIT VENTS: A metal screen over a hole penetration in the soffit allowing air intake into the attic cavity.

SOLAR: From the Sun's energy.

SQUARE FOOTAGE: The amount of living space under roof. Sometimes the square footage is measured without the area taken by the wall plates. A house 40' by 60' will have an area of 2400 square feet, the amount of the measurements multiplied together.

STUD: Refers to the upright wood member within the wall used to support the weight of the structure above. Typically the studs are spaced apart 16'' or 24''.

SUB-CONTRACTOR: Person or businesses that is contracted by the contractor to perform his portion of the contract.

THRESHOLD: The area between the exterior doorjambs at floor, usually containing a weather seal; wood or aluminum seal attached to floor

TRADES: Carpentry, Plumbing, Electrical, Mason, Paint, Landscape, Roofing, Concrete, etc.

UTILITIES: Sources of water, electricity, sewer, phone, cable, gas, etc.

VAPOR BARRIER: Sheet of heavy plastic attached to interior walls only before Sheetrock is applied. Used to prevent moisture from entering into the home through the walls.

WIND BRACE: A structural wall component, 1 x 4, run diagonally across from outside corner at bottom to location up and away, crossing multiple studs and ending attached at top plate. The wind brace is let into the studs and provides immediate and additional strength to wall from shifting due to extreme forces.

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