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**Realtor Considerations in Regards to Home Inspections**

**Should the buyer’s agent attend an inspection? YEEEESSS!**

Do you want the inspector in control of your real estate deal? Do you want your buyer clients to hear just the inspector’s verbiage and opinion with no input at the time of the inspection from you their advocate?

**Why should I waste my time going to an Inspection?** It is an opportunity to grow your knowledge and experience in home construction & maintenance! As a professional advocate when you attend your buyers inspection, and you listen to the conversation between the inspector and your clients (buyers). Over time you will develop a very strong understanding of the inspection process and you will be better prepared to serve your clients and also set your clients expectations in future transactions before an inspection. Never as a REALTOR make an opinion about the condition of a system and/or component of a home.

Most experienced inspectors do not want the buyers following along while they inspect, it can be a huge distraction (might cause inspector to miss something). A quality inspector will take the time to explain important or serious issues after the inspection to you and your buyers. They should also explain how to maintain systems and components of the home to maximize the life of the systems. Take a measuring tape or digital tape and suggest buyers measure windows, verify room sizes, refrigerator opening, etc… It is a great time to really look the property over and the buyer can make notes of questions to ask the inspector.

**Should I recommend an inspector?** Great Question! Recommend a list of at least three to five inspectors that you have experience with or that another experienced REALTOR recommends on your inspectors list. You can also furnish a list of all TREC active licensed inspectors. Buyer home inspections are a general inspection not an exhaustive inspection!

**ALWAYS RECOMMEND A LIST OF INSPECTORS -** As professional advocates, we are suppose to serve our clients best interest by helping them find the best home, best lender, best home insurance, best home warranty company, best title company etc…. BUT, many brokers are scared to allow their agents to recommend the best inspectors they have personal experience with because of potential law suits? TRUTH - If a buyer sues an inspector, almost every time, the attorney is going file against the agent, and the broker, whether you recommended the inspector or not!

**Make A Seller Accessibility List**

*Listing Agents SHOULD educate and prepare sellers to have the house ready to be inspected. This list will help your clients have a smoother inspection and better report.*

**Very Common Seller Mistakes**

1. Vehicles are in the garage
2. Attic ladder & access is not blocked or in-accessible
3. The electrical sub panel (usually in garage) is accessible, nothing in front of it.
4. The garage GFCI’s are not blocked by shelving, boxes, etc…
5. The air filters are clean or new before inspection
6. Make sure pets are in crates or secured in dog run in yard.
7. Make sure water heater was accessible.
8. Make sure No items stored in bathtubs, showers, bathroom sinks, garages over stuffed, etc…

*Items or systems that cannot be inspected must be reported as not inspected. Inspectors can’t move boxes, furniture or anything at inspection by TREC rules.*

**PROACTIVE PREPERATION LIST FOR SELLERS**

The items below make for a proactive inspection preparation list

1. It is great to have a recent invoice showing that the HVAC has been serviced. HW require within 90 days
2. Make sure all windows can be opened and closed
3. Test all smoke detectors, replace batteries and if are 10 years or older, replace the smoke detector.
4. Make sure all light bulbs are working.
5. Make sure all exterior doors have good seals at door frame and threshold.
6. Make sure all garage, attic, and closets light bulbs have safety covers.
7. Make sure all exterior water spigots have AVB devices.
8. Make sure all exterior wood trim transitions, light fixtures and electrical panels are caulked and sealed.
9. Make sure all HVAC condenser large copper lines are insulated
10. Make sure primary condensation line if draining to exterior drains 5 feet away from the foundation
11. Make sure all shrubs have at least a 12” air gap from the house exterior cladding.
12. Make sure all trees have a 5 foot air gap from the roof or house siding.
13. Make sure all bathroom and kitchen drains and water supply lines are not leaking.
14. Have a Insurance adjuster or reputable roofer give seller a free roof inspection and disclose the inspection.

**A proactive seller will keep the negotiating power and not transfer it to the buyer because of an un-needed lengthy inspection report. The more proactive the seller is**

* The cleaner the inspection report
* The smoother the transaction
* The more money the seller keeps at closing
* Many times the faster the option period ends!

**A PRE-LISTING INSPECTION IS GREAT**, BUT ONLY IF THE SELLER IS GOING TO MAKE THE REPAIRS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE PROPERTY! A PRE-LISTING INSPECTION REPORT IS A POWERFUL TOOL WHEN MOST DEFICIENCIES HAVE BEEN CORRECTED AND MARKED ON THE REPORT AS PART OF THE SELLERS DISCLOSURE!

**Big Inspection Considerations**

\*The foundation - All foundations move to some degree and all concrete cracks. As concrete dries and moisture is pulled out of the concrete, it cracks. Usually on the South or West corners. Cracks in walls are not always foundation problems. Normal settlement and movement from soil contracting and expanding along with the wood in the walls and attic structure are drying out and shrinking and can cause cracks.

Homes in Texas are almost all expansive soil conditions. Expect excessive foundation conditions.

A good inspector knows where to look in the attic, at window trim, frieze boards, doors, exterior items, and other indicators to make an opinion of excessive movement. The location of the house and its soil conditions make a huge difference. Check out the other houses in the neighborhood when you drive through the neighborhood. Ask some neighbors, they will tell you if their subdivision has expansive soil and if any neighbors have had their foundation issues or corrections.

A properly repaired foundation is usually NOT an issue, depending on the contractor, type of warranty and reputation of the company, a repaired foundation is better than an un-repaired foundations in expansive soil conditions. ALL REPAIRED FOUNDATIONS SHOULD HAVE A ENGINEERS CERTIFICATION & STATIC DRAIN TEST PERFORMED, VERIFY IT.

**Cost of Ownership for your client** – It is a great price on the home?

* What is the cost in future ownership expenses on major systems or components?The major components and systems age and condition are huge considerations in cost of ownership.
* How insulated is the attic? Does the roof decking have radiant barrier?
* How old, what condition, what type of refrigerant, what SEER is the roof
* How old and what condition is the HVAC, Water Heater, etc…?
* All these items determine what the monthly cost of utilities will cost the buyers for years to come!

**Trees & Shrubs** - Shrubs and trees to close to the house are unnecessary issues that can cause serious issues with a home. Plant roots go under the foundation and pull moisture out of the gravel supporting the concrete foundation footers, causing the foundation to DROP. Plants and trees touching the house are super highways for (WDI’s) termites and carpenter ants. Tree limbs can damage roof covering and make for easy access for raccoons, rats, squirrels, and possums. I always recommend 12” air gap on shrubs to exterior walls and a 5’ air gap on tree limbs.

**Water Control** - A lack of water shed control from the roof causes serious foundation issues! All homes in Texas should have gutters and down spouts that drain water at least 5’ away from the foundation.

**Cosmetic Issues** – Don’t let your clients get caught up in cosmetic issues (paint color, wall paper, cabinet hardware, etc..) these can all be changed pretty easily and at a reasonable cost.

**Help your clients find an inspector with experience and the heart of a teacher!**