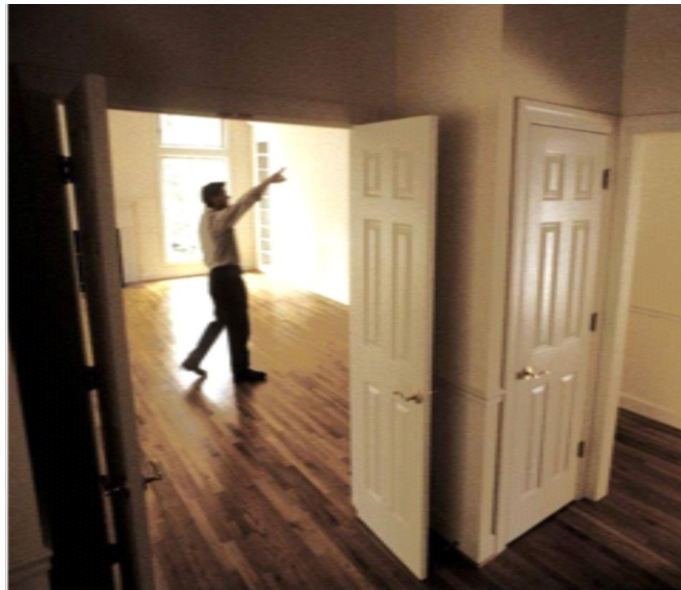




Information regarding
Home Inspections in Massachusetts



Created by
MassHousing
www.masshousing.com



Warren Reynolds, Esq.
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices
Commonwealth Real Estate
9 Main Street, Franklin, MA

Warren Reynolds ♦ 508-561-6259 ♦ Warren@02038.com

The Home Inspection

A satisfactory home inspection is a major component of purchasing a home. The buyer selects a licensed home inspector and pays for the inspection. The home inspection will be an additional cost of a few hundred dollars, but can give you the confidence that you know as much as possible about the property.

Do I need a home inspection?

Buyers should rely on an accurate home inspection to maximize their knowledge of the property in order to make intelligent decisions before entering a final agreement to purchase the property.

A home inspection, conducted by a licensed third party, is an objective visual examination of the physical structure and systems of a home, from roof to foundation. It is the equivalent of a physical from your doctor, and gives you a true understanding of a home's potential problems. An inspector can also recommend ways to address or more closely examine potential issues.

What is involved in a home inspection?

A standard home inspection summarizes findings from a visual inspection of the home's

- Heating system
- Central air conditioning system (temperature permitting)
- Plumbing
- Electrical systems
- Roof, attic, and visible insulation
- Walls
- Ceilings
- Floors
- Windows and doors
- Foundation, basement, and the visible structures of the home

A good inspector will provide you with a written report immediately following the inspection. A failed inspection allows you to withdraw from the transaction (provided this contingency is in your Offer to Purchase Real Estate or to renegotiate the sales price.

You may also have the property inspected for termites, radon, lead paint and asbestos.

Home Inspection FAQs

After your offer on a home is accepted, but before you close, you should have a home inspection by a qualified third party unrelated to you or the seller. The home inspection will examine the home and try to identify potential areas of concern. The following questions and answers provided by the American Society of Home Inspectors should help you better understand what a home inspection is and why it is an important part of the process.

How much will a home inspection cost?

Inspection fees for a typical single-family home vary by geography, size and features of the property, and age of the home. Additionally, services such as septic inspections and radon testing may be warranted, depending upon the property.

Don't let the cost deter you from having a home inspection or selecting an inspector with whom you are comfortable. Knowledge gained from an inspection is well worth the time and expense. The inspector's qualifications, including experience, training and professional affiliations, should be the most important consideration in making your selection.

Can't I do it myself?

Even the most experienced homeowner lacks the knowledge and expertise of a professional home inspector. A professional home inspector has the experience and training to make an unbiased and informed report of the condition of a property. An inspector is familiar with the many elements of home construction, their proper installation and maintenance, and understands how the home's systems and components are intended to function. They know what to look for and are uniquely suited to interpret what their findings reveal about the property's condition.

Most buyers find it difficult to remain objective and unemotional about the house they really want; this may affect their judgment. For the most accurate information about the condition of a home, always obtain an impartial third-party opinion by an expert in the field of home inspection.

Can a house fail a home inspection?

No. A professional home inspection is an examination of the current condition of your home. It is not an appraisal, which determines market value, or a municipal inspection, which verifies compliance to local codes and standards. A home inspector will not pass or fail a house. The inspection will describe the physical condition of a property and indicate what may need to be repaired or replaced.

How do I find a home inspector?

Word of mouth and referrals from friends and neighbors are some of the best ways to find a home inspector. In addition, names of inspectors in your area can be found by searching the ASHI's online database, or can be located in your area Yellow Pages under "Building Inspection Service" or "Home Inspection Service." Real estate professionals are generally familiar with the inspection services in your area, and can provide a list of qualified professionals.

When do I call in the home inspector?

Before you sign the contract or purchase agreement, make your purchase obligation contingent upon the findings of a professional home inspection. This clause should specify the terms to which both the buyer and seller are obligated. Contact a home inspector immediately after the contract or purchase agreement has been signed. Home inspectors are aware of the time constraints involved in purchase agreements; most are available to conduct the required inspection within a few days.

Do I have to be there?

While it is not technically necessary, it is worthwhile to attend the inspection. This allows you to observe the inspector, ask questions as you learn about the condition of the home, how its systems work, and how to maintain them. After you've seen the property with the inspector, you'll find the written report easier to understand.

What if the report reveals problems?

No home is perfect. When the inspector identifies problems, it does not necessarily mean you shouldn't buy the property. The inspector's findings educate you in advance of the purchase about the condition of the property. A seller may adjust the purchase price or contract terms if major problems are discovered during an inspection. If your budget is tight, or if you do not want to be involved in future repair work, this information will be extremely valuable.

If the house proves to be in good condition, did I really need an inspection?

Yes. Now you can complete your home purchase with confidence about the property's condition and all its equipment and systems. From the inspection, you will have learned many things about your new home, and will want to keep that information for future reference.