



HOME INSPECTION HANDOUT FOR HOME BUYERS

1. How do I select a reputable home inspector?

The Inspection Contingency in the residential offer to purchase calls for a Wisconsin registered home inspector. Ask your REALTOR® for a list of competent area home inspectors or look in the yellow pages. You can confirm the home inspector's registration with the Department of Regulation and Licensing online at <http://drl.wi.gov/drl/drlookup/LicenseLookupServlet>.

2. Will the home inspector inspect every feature of the house?

No, the home inspector must inspect certain features required by state law and may inspect additional components and features in his or her discretion or by agreement between the home inspector and his or her client.

3. Can I ask the home inspector to look at specific components and items?

Yes, as the home inspector's client you may request that the home inspector inspect specific components and items, as long as they are readily accessible. It may be best to make these requests in writing to avoid confusion.

4. May all of the problem areas mentioned in the home inspector's report be listed in a notice of defects for the offer to purchase?

No, the home inspection report will look at property conditions in a general fashion and may list many property conditions that are not serious enough to fit the definition of a defect in the inspection contingency.

5. What does the home inspector include in the home inspection report?

The home inspector gives a comprehensive report that includes comments—good, bad and neutral--on all of the different components, systems and items the home inspector is required to inspect. The home inspector does report on the condition of any building component, improvement or item that if not repaired, will have significant adverse effect on the useful life of the item. The home inspector also notes any conditions that may significantly reduce the functionality or structural integrity of property components or systems, or that may pose a significant health or safety risk to building occupants.

6. How does the inspection contingency in the offer to purchase work?

In the offer to purchase, a buyer must evaluate whether there are any defects listed in the home inspection report to which the buyer objects and which the buyer wants the seller to fix before the buyer will purchase the property. A defect is a structural, mechanical or other condition that would have a significant adverse effect on the value of the property, significantly impair the health or safety of future occupants, or, if not repaired, removed or replaced, significantly shorten or have a significant adverse effect on the expected normal life of the entire property.

7. Should I always give a notice of defects?

This decision is made on a case-by-case basis, depending upon the circumstances and what is best for you. Your REALTOR® and your attorney can help explain the pros and cons of giving a notice of defects.

8. If the seller discloses a problem on the Real Estate Condition Report, may I include that on the notice of defects?

If a defect has been previously disclosed in sufficient detail so that you are aware of the nature and extent, then you generally cannot list the problem as a defect if you give a notice of defects under the inspection contingency.

MANDATORY & OPTIONAL HOME INSPECTION SERVICES

Wisconsin registered home inspectors must provide a minimum level of service. State standards require a home inspector to inspect those components, systems and items appearing in the second column below, provided that they are readily accessible. A home inspector also may, but is not required to, inspect the items appearing in the optional column. Parties who want to have certain components, features or items appearing in the optional column included in an inspection should specifically confirm this with the home inspector in writing.

COMPONENT	HOME INSPECTOR MUST:	OPTIONAL
<i>ROOF</i>	Inspect roof coverings, gutters, downspouts, leaders, splashblocks and similar components carrying water off the roof and away from the building, flashings, skylights, roof penetrations, chimneys. Look for leaks or abnormal condensation on building components. Describe roof inspection methods.	Walking on the roof; inspection of attached accessories such as solar systems, antennae, and lightning arrestors; observation of internal gutter and downspout systems and related underground drainage piping
<i>EXTERIOR</i>	Inspect wall claddings, flashings, trim, decks, balconies, stoops, steps and porches including railings, eaves, soffits, fascias, grading, drainage, driveways, patios, walkways, retaining walls abutting the dwelling, and garage door operators. Determine if garage door operator automatically reverses or stops upon reasonable resistance when closing. Inspect and operate all entryway doors, garage doors, and at least one window per side of dwelling.	Inspection of storm windows, storm doors, screening, shutters, awnings, locks, latches, other security systems, intercom systems, fences, privacy walls, insulation or vapor barriers in exterior walls, safety glazing; garage door operator remote control transmitters, geological or soil conditions, spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, other exercise, entertainment, or athletic facilities, out-buildings other than garages, trees, shrubs and other vegetation.
<i>INTERIOR</i>	Inspect walls, ceilings, floors, steps, stairways, balconies, railings, counters and all sink base cabinets, a random sample of doors and windows, separation walls, ceilings and doors between a dwelling and an attached garage or another dwelling. Look for signs of water penetration into the building or abnormal or harmful condensation on building components.	Inspection of paint, wallpaper, other cosmetic finish treatments carpeting, draperies, blinds or other window treatments, washers, dryers, refrigerators, freezers, stoves, ovens, room air conditioners, spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, other exercise, entertainment or athletic facilities observe recreational facilities or another dwelling unit.
<i>PLUMBING SYSTEM</i>	Inspect interior water supply and distribution system including piping materials, supports, fixtures, faucets, functional flow and drainage, leaks and cross connections; interior drain, waste and vent system including traps, drain, waste, and vent piping, piping supports and leaks; hot water systems, including water heating equipment, normal operating controls, automatic safety controls, and exterior surfaces of chimneys, flues, and vents; fuel storage and distribution systems, including interior fuel storage equipment, supply piping, venting, supports and leaks; and sump pumps. Operate all plumbing fixtures, including faucets and accessible exterior faucets	Inspection of water conditioning systems, fire and lawn sprinkler systems, on-site water supply quantity and quality, on-site disposal systems, foundation drainage systems, spas, interior of flues, chimneys and vents, solar water heating systems, exterior plumbing components such as water mains or swimming pools. Operation of automatic safety controls or sump pumps with internal or water dependent switches, any valve except water closet flush valves, fixture and hose faucets. Determine water temperature, sizing, design or use of plumbing materials, if the water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private. Report on effectiveness of anti-siphon devices.

COMPONENT	HOME INSPECTOR MUST:	OPTIONAL
<i>ELECTRICAL SYSTEM</i>	Determine if electric service is overhead or underground, functionality of the power sources for smoke detectors. Operate representative number of lighting fixtures, switches and receptacles inside house, garage and any exterior walls. Inspect service entrance conductors, service equipment, grounding equipment, main over current device, main and distribution panels, amperage and voltage ratings, branch circuit conductors, their over current devices and compatibility of their ampacities and voltages, any aluminum branch circuit wiring. Observe polarity and grounding of all receptacles within 6 feet of interior plumbing fixtures, in garage and on structure exteriors, and operation of ground fault circuit interrupters.	Inspection of low voltage systems, telephones, security systems, cable TV, intercoms or other ancillary wiring. Measure amperage, voltage or impedance. Insertion of any tool, probe or testing device inside panels. Testing or operation of over current device except ground fault circuit interrupters. Dismantling of any electrical device or control other than to remove the covers of main and auxiliary distribution panels.
<i>HEATING SYSTEM</i>	Determine presence of installed heat source in each room. Operate heating systems using normal operating controls. Open readily accessible access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance. Observe the condition of all heating equipment and distribution systems, normal operating controls and energy source, automatic safety controls, exterior surfaces of chimneys, flues and vents, solid fuel heating devices, observable and accessible heat exchanger.	Determination of uniformity or adequacy of heat supply to various rooms. Operation of heating systems when weather or other circumstances may cause equipment damage, automatic safety controls. Ignition or extinguishing of fuel fires. Inspection of flue interior, fireplace insert flue connectors, humidifiers, electronic air filters, heat exchangers that are difficult to access.
<i>CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING</i>	Operate central air conditioning systems, using normal operating controls. Determine presence of installed cooling source in each room. Determine type and energy source and inspect condition of cooling and air handling equipment. Inspect operating controls. Open accessible access panels provided for routine homeowner maintenance.	Determination of uniformity or adequacy of cool-air supply to various rooms, pressure of the system coolant, presence of leakage. Operation of cooling systems when weather or other circumstances may cause equipment damage, electronic air filters. Inspection of non-central air conditioners. Testing of electrical current drawn by unit.
<i>INSULATION AND VENTILATION</i>	Evaluate insulation in unfinished spaces, Determine ventilation of attics and foundation areas, and condition of kitchen, bathroom and laundry venting systems.	Inspection of concealed insulation, and venting equipment that is integrated with household appliances
<i>FOUNDATION</i>	Inspect the type and condition of foundation	
<i>FLOORING SYSTEM</i>	Inspect the type and condition of the flooring	
<i>COLUMNS</i>	Inspect the type and condition of columns	

Components, systems and items appearing in the second column listing must be included in a home inspection unless the home inspector's client requests that the inspector exclude any particular components, systems and items from an inspection. Parties should provide any exclusions to the home inspector in writing to avoid any miscommunications or misunderstandings.

HOME INSPECTION CONTRACT

Included/Excluded Home Inspection Services or Items

As part of the home inspection of the property located at _____, the following items shall be included or excluded, as specified below, in the home inspection and the home inspection report:

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS AND SERVICES SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE HOME INSPECTION:	
<i>-CHECK THE BOX PRECEDING ALL ITEMS THAT APPLY-</i>	
INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS -- ROOF	
Skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations	Roof flashings, if visible
Other:	Other:
INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS -- EXTERIOR	
All windows per each side of the dwelling	_____ windows per each side of the dwelling
Storm windows and doors	Window and door screens
Shutters	Awnings & other seasonal window accessories
Insulation presence and rating	Locks and latches
Fences and privacy walls	Safety glazing
Garage door openers	Swimming pool
Tennis courts	Playground equipment
Saunas, spas and steam baths	Outbuildings other than garages & carports
Visible insulation or vapor barriers in walls	Other:
Other:	Other:
INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS – PLUMBING SYSTEM	
Saunas, spas and steam baths	Swimming pool
Determine water temperature of:	Other:
INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS – ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	
Low voltage systems such as outside lighting	Operate all installed lighting fixtures
Intercoms	Cable TV
Other:	Other:
INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS – INTERIOR	
Paint, wallpaper, and other wall coverings	Woodwork
Carpeting	Washers, dryers, refrigerators, freezers
Stoves, ovens	Room air conditioners
Presence or absence of draperies or blinds	Presence or absence of other window treatments
Other:	Other:
INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS – HEATING SYSTEM	
Operate automatic safety controls	Ignite or extinguish pilot light
Electronic air filters	Uniformity & adequacy of heat supply to rooms
Other:	Other:
INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS – AIR CONDITIONING	
Non-central air conditioners	Electronic air filters
Uniformity & adequacy of cool air to rooms	Electrical current drawn by the unit
Other:	Other:

INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS – INSULATION & VENTILATION	
Insulation R rating	Integrated venting equipment
Other:	Other:
OTHER INCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS	

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS AND SERVICES SHALL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE HOME INSPECTION: -CHECK THE BOX PRECEDING ALL ITEMS THAT APPLY-	
EXCLUDED INSPECTION ITEMS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Furnace and all related components such as heating equipment and distribution systems; normal operating controls and energy source; automatic safety controls; exterior surfaces of chimneys, flues and vents; solid fuel heating devices; and the presence of an installed heat source in each room
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roof and all related components such as roof coverings, including type, roof drainage systems, flashings, skylights, roof penetrations, and signs of leaks or abnormal condensation on building components
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chimneys and all related components such as flues and vents, exterior and interior surfaces
<input type="checkbox"/>	Home energy audit items such as insulation ratings, window and door seals & tightness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Dated this ____ day of _____, _____.

(Signature of party)