

Interior Inspections

**By: Brian Daley -
Independent Home Inspector**

You love the colours. You love the rooms. You love the price. But have you really seen the house? The ambiance has been created with lighting, wonderful smells, and soft music, and you're reeled in. You may have visited the home several times before making an offer, but we are all guilty of being influenced by the cosmetics of an interior. People are even hiring professionals to stage their home prior to selling - getting rid of the clutter and arranging furniture to best present the house. Don't be fooled, you need to look closer.

An interior inspection begins on the upper level of a home by looking at the ceiling.

Problems with the roof can be detected if there are signs of staining, distortion, or discolouration. Special attention is paid to areas with skylights and other openings to the outside. A trained inspector recognizes patterns and locations of ceiling defects and will report on probable causes. In the event of ceiling staining or distortion, the information should be brought to the sellers' attention to query any known history of leaks or repairs.

Interior surface inspections include a thorough check of floors, windows, walls, doors, and stairs, to name a few. There are over 100 things an inspector will look for during an interior investigation to validate the installation, operation, and safety of these items.

Special attention is paid to areas of the floor that make excessive noise, or unusual movement when walked on. These problems are likely the result of loose, or missing, fasteners in the sub-floor below. Flooring surfaces will affect the cost of repairing sub-floor defects. Hardwood, ceramic and laminate would be more expensive than carpeting and underlay, which can be easily removed.

In a multi-storied home, stairs are one of the most important aspects. Over the years, high traffic results in wear and tear.

An inspector pays special attention to the installation of stairs, focusing on safety features like railings, treads, and headroom.

In homes less than five years old, the failed operation of doors and windows is common due to the movement within the building structure.

Doors tend to catch at the top or rub on the floor, and windows may not open as expected.

The surrounding walls and floors will help to determine if the problem is excessive. The problem is usually remedied in older homes by adjusting doors to fit. Window operation failure can be a more complex problem requiring further evaluation of the structure by a qualified professional.

As the interior inspection continues, the inspector will help you categorize the results to determine if each defect is typical, or not. Every home has defects or challenges, and it's important to keep an open mind when you review the final report. Most defects shouldn't be viewed as a deterrent for proceeding with your purchase. Determine which items you can deal with, and which are of greater concern that you may want to bring the seller's attention. This will help you decide the items that are priorities to you.

In subsequent columns we'll talk about the PDI and Warranty inspection on a brand new home. Send your comments and questions to: info@bookahomeinspection.com.

Our readers asked us...

Q... I read your article on exterior inspection and was wondering how to tell if the deck on our home is safe. We just purchased a house and had it inspected, but my husband has concerns about how the deck railing is made. We think it may be coming apart and could eventually break. Because of the height of the deck and our small children, we are very concerned. How should we proceed?

A... The first thing you should do before you use the deck is call your inspector back to look at your concerns and review that section of the report. The inspector should make recommendations based on the re-inspection that day. Deck safety at this time of year is important especially in older installations. If you need a contractor to fix the problem, you should check with your local building office to make sure a building permit was issued and approved for the deck addition before you proceed with any repairs or alterations.

Q... My wife and I are currently in the market for an older home. We have looked at a few with our agent but they all seem to have problems with old windows and creaking floors that aren't level. We are hesitant to make an offer and pay money for an inspector only to confirm what we already know. Are there special things we need to look for in a century home?

A.... Do you want character or do you want perfect? The charm of older homes is the character they have developed over time. Slopes in floor are only an issue if the structure underneath has failed. Often it is a sign of settling in stone or rubble foundations. Wood windows, doors, and floors need elbow grease to maintain their operation and extend their life. This shouldn't be viewed as a negative, but a reality. Century homes have challenges that newer homes don't, therefore the inspection needs to be approached from a different perspective. It is especially important to have this type of home inspected. You need to research and find an inspector that understands construction methods from the turn of the century, and is trained to spot defects that could affect your safety. Be prepared to spend more time investigating these homes, and be prepared for the challenges and rewards that come with preserving history.



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