

# Texas Agricultural Extension Service

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## HOME INSPECTION CHECKLIST

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### Why A Home Inspection?

If you're looking for a "perfect" house, you won't find it. Every house has its strengths and weaknesses. Some flaws can be corrected easily, but others will require expensive repairs.

Selecting your new home will affect your family's financial security and satisfaction in years to come. So it's important to gather as much information as possible and to avoid decisions based purely on first impressions and the subjective opinions of friends or relatives.

If you discover problems before closing the sale, you can negotiate to have them corrected or have the price reduced.

The checklist included in this publication is designed to help you be systematic and thorough in your decision-making. It allows you to evaluate and compare the quality of homes before you decide which one to buy.

### Doing The Home Inspection

Your home inspection will only be as thorough as you make it. Dress casually for the occasion so you will feel comfortable about getting into the attic, under the crawl space or up on a ladder to look at the roof.

Read over the checklist in advance so you will know what you need to inspect at each home. In addition to the checklist, bring the tools to do the job. These include a clip board, paper, pencil, pocket knife, flashlight, tape measure, screwdriver, electrical circuit tester and binoculars.

### Consider a Professional Inspection

If you have satisfied your own general expectations and are planning on buying a particular home, consider having a professional inspection.

As you choose a professional inspector for the job, consider his qualifications: (a) Is he licensed? (b) Can he give references? (c) What is his background or specialty? (d) Are there items that he will not inspect? (e) How complete is his report? (f) How much does he charge?

The inspection should take place prior to or immediately following the signing of the contract. However, some buyers wait until after loan approval. You should be present for the inspection. Review the inspection report with the inspector. Remember that the inspector only gives his opinion of the home; he may not find everything that is wrong. **Read the Inspection Form or Contract** to determine the scope of the inspection.

Whether you do your own inspection, have a professional conduct it, or both, plan to do a final walk-through prior to closing the sale. Look for physical changes in the house that may have occurred between contract and closing. If any repairs are required, keep copies of the invoices.

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## CHECKLIST

The following checklist will help you evaluate and compare the quality of houses that you are considering for purchase.

OK	NEEDS ATTENTION	LOCATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carefully evaluate the community and neighborhood. If possible, visit the site both during the day and at night.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What is the age, condition and value of the house compared to others in the neighborhood?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the house conveniently located near schools, shopping, church, employment, recreational and health facilities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the site free from threat of flooding?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are local zoning laws compatible with your plans for use of the home?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are paved streets, water, sewer and public walkways provided?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are local property taxes consistent with the quality of services provided?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are adequate police and fire protection services provided?

### HOUSE - INTERIOR

#### Floor Plan

Evaluate the floor plan by walking through the house as though you were going about your daily routine. Look at the "liveability value" by checking:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	adequate storage space
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	room sizes
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	versatility of floor plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	serviceability

#### General Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the placement of windows and doors allow for a variety of furniture arrangements?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are walls insulated? (Use your screwdriver to remove an electrical faceplate and look for evidence of insulation.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are walls and ceilings free from water marks?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do walls show possible structural problems by large cracks at corners and along ceiling?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there indications of improperly sealed windows or condensation problems?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the windows provide good cross ventilation and adequate natural illumination?

OK	NEEDS ATTENTION	LOCATION
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### General Checklist (continued)

[ ]	[ ]	Are floors level and free from buckling and squeaking?
[ ]	[ ]	Are hard-surface floors free of worn spots, stains, cracks and scratches?
[ ]	[ ]	Will floors be easy to maintain?
[ ]	[ ]	Is adequate general lighting provided throughout the house?
[ ]	[ ]	Does the house have adequate storage for lawn equipment, tools, luggage and other items?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the house equipped with UL-approved smoke detectors?

### Heating and Air Conditioning

[ ]	[ ]	What is the age of the furnace and air conditioning system?
[ ]	[ ]	Has the heating/air conditioning system been serviced annually?
[ ]	[ ]	Can filters be changed or cleaned easily?
[ ]	[ ]	Is flue pipe attached to the furnace?
[ ]	[ ]	Is furnace free from rust and deterioration?
[ ]	[ ]	Are ducts insulated?
[ ]	[ ]	Is ductwork taped securely to prevent air loss?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the inside unit free from corrosion resulting from condensation overflow?
[ ]	[ ]	Does condensation drain away from the house?
[ ]	[ ]	Is there excessive dirt around ceiling vents? (This results from dirty air filters.)
[ ]	[ ]	Is there frost on the freon line at outside air conditioning unit or compressor?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the compressor coil clean and free from debris?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the compressor level?

### Appliances

Check the condition of appliances that are included in the sale prices:

Appliance	Average Lifespan	Actual Age	Color	Operation
Refrigerator	16 years	_____	_____	_____
Range/Oven	16 years	_____	_____	_____
Dishwasher	10 years	_____	_____	_____
Washer	11 years	_____	_____	_____
Dryer	14 years	_____	_____	_____



OK	NEEDS ATTENTION	LOCATION
<b>Electrical</b>		
<i>Does the house have:</i>		
[ ]	[ ]	At least 100 amp service?
[ ]	[ ]	At least 8 separate circuits?
[ ]	[ ]	At least two 15 or 20 amp circuits that serve the kitchen?
[ ]	[ ]	Is wiring for switches and outlets copper or aluminum? (Aluminum wiring is considered a potential fire hazard if not installed properly.)
[ ]	[ ]	Do light fixtures and electrical outlets operate properly? (Use circuit tester to check outlets.)
[ ]	[ ]	Are weatherproof electrical outlets available outside at front and rear of house?
[ ]	[ ]	Are adequate electrical outlets found in every room? (Any point along a wall should not be more than 6 feet from an outlet.)
[ ]	[ ]	Are light switches conveniently located at the entrance of each room, at both ends of hallways and at top and bottom of stairs?
<b>Plumbing</b>		
<i>Does the house have:</i>		
[ ]	[ ]	A main shut-off valve?
[ ]	[ ]	Shut-off valves on hot and cold water supply lines to all fixtures?
[ ]	[ ]	Are there leaks when fixtures are turned off? (Look at the water meter dial to see if there is movement.)
[ ]	[ ]	Is the water heater free from rust or leaks? (Open the small access door at heater bottom to check.)
[ ]	[ ]	How old is the water heater? (Average normal life of heater is 10-15 years; less with harder water.)
[ ]	[ ]	If the house has a private water system or well, has the water been tested?
[ ]	[ ]	If the house is served by a private sewage system, is the septic tank adequate for your family's needs? (Verify through county records.)
[ ]	[ ]	Does the house have a main sewer drain clean-out and/or drain clean-outs at plumbing fixtures?
[ ]	[ ]	Is there adequate water pressure? (To test for steady water flow, turn on all faucets in bathroom and flush toilet.)
[ ]	[ ]	Do the fixtures drain properly?
[ ]	[ ]	What is the distance from water heater to bathrooms and dishwasher? (Water temperature drops one degree per 12 inches.)

OK	NEEDS ATTENTION	LOCATION
<b>Plumbing (continued)</b>		
[ ]	[ ]	Are tiled walls and floors well sealed and free from cracks especially around toilet, tub, shower and sink?
[ ]	[ ]	Does the shower or tub leak at the floor? Check baseboards on other side of the wall and crawlspace if available.
<b>Fireplaces and Chimneys</b>		
[ ]	[ ]	Are masonry chimneys free from cracks and deterioration?
[ ]	[ ]	Are masonry chimneys lined with clay tile flues? If chimney uses gas-burning equipment, does it have glazed tile or stainless steel flues?
[ ]	[ ]	Do chimneys extend at least 2 feet above the ridge of a peaked roof or at least 3 feet above a flat roof?
[ ]	[ ]	Do fireplaces have functional dampers to reduce heat loss?
[ ]	[ ]	Do fireplaces draw properly?
[ ]	[ ]	Do fireplaces have an ash pit and a clean-out door at the base of the fireplace chimney?
[ ]	[ ]	Are any inside firebricks loose?
[ ]	[ ]	Is there a build-up of creosote in the flue?
<b>Basement or Crawlspace</b>		
A thorough check of the basement or crawl space will tell you a great deal about the structural quality of the house and the functioning of the utility systems.		
[ ]	[ ]	Is there evidence of water penetration?
[ ]	[ ]	Are basement or crawl space walls free from large cracks?
[ ]	[ ]	Are main beam, support columns and floor joists straight and free from warping or bowing?
[ ]	[ ]	Are beam, columns and joists solid and free from rotting? (Use your screwdriver or pocket knife to check.)
[ ]	[ ]	Has a vapor barrier been placed over the ground?
[ ]	[ ]	Has adequate ventilation been provided?
<b>Attic</b>		
[ ]	[ ]	Is there adequate attic insulation?
[ ]	[ ]	Is there adequate ventilation? Look for ridge vents or turbine vents as well as soffit and eave vents.
[ ]	[ ]	Look over all exposed components for obvious defects or improper workmanship.

OK	NEEDS ATTENTION	LOCATION
<b>Attic (continued)</b>		
[ ]	[ ]	Is the attic easily accessible?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the underside of the roof free from water stains or spots?
[ ]	[ ]	Do the water-supply lines to sink, dishwasher and refrigerator ice maker have shut-off valves?
[ ]	[ ]	Does the kitchen exhaust fan vent into the room, into the attic or exterior?
[ ]	[ ]	Are both gas and electric hook-ups available for washer and dryer?
[ ]	[ ]	Are there optional items such as an intercom system, garage door opener, door bell, disposer, microwave, sprinkler system and pool?
[ ]	[ ]	Are there nicks, cracks or burns on surfaces including cabinets and countertops?

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## EXTERIOR

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### Lot

[ ]	[ ]	Does the ground around the foundation slope away from the house?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the home oriented for maximum benefit and protection from sunlight, wind, rain or snow?
[ ]	[ ]	Is adequate privacy provided in the yard?
[ ]	[ ]	Is shrubbery placed at least 3 to 4 feet from the foundation?

### General

[ ]	[ ]	Is adequate exterior lighting provided?
[ ]	[ ]	Are hose bibs conveniently located?
[ ]	[ ]	Are methods of trash collection and disposal available?
[ ]	[ ]	Is mail delivered to the house or to a neighborhood mail distribution center?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the home free of damage from wood-destroying insects?
[ ]	[ ]	Can you obtain copies of blueprints, signed permits and operating manuals of appliances?

### Roof

[ ]	[ ]	Is the age and condition of the roof comparable to others in the neighborhood?
[ ]	[ ]	Are gutters and downspouts in good condition and free from rust?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the ridge of the roof straight and free from bowing?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the flashing around chimneys and vent pipes in valleys of the roof in good condition and free from rust?



OK	NEEDS ATTENTION	LOCATION
<b>Roof (continued)</b>		
[ ]	[ ]	Is the roof free from warped, curled or missing shingles?
[ ]	[ ]	Are roof staples or nails sticking up through shingles?
[ ]	[ ]	Check roof overhang and trim for deterioration.
[ ]	[ ]	Is roofing felt exposed or torn?
[ ]	[ ]	Are the plumbing vents sealed?
<b>Siding</b>		
[ ]	[ ]	Is the siding or trim free from rotting, warping, cracking and excessive rusting from nailheads?
[ ]	[ ]	Is the paint free from blistering or peeling?
[ ]	[ ]	Are masonry or stucco walls free from cracks?
[ ]	[ ]	Are the walls straight and free from major bulges? (Sight down each wall.)
<b>Windows and Doors</b>		
[ ]	[ ]	Are tops of windows and doors covered with metal flashing?
[ ]	[ ]	Are window and door frames caulked and weatherstripped?
[ ]	[ ]	Are thermal windows free from moisture between the panes of glass?
[ ]	[ ]	Are screens in place and serviceable?
[ ]	[ ]	Are door locks and hardware in good operating condition?
[ ]	[ ]	Do all windows and doors open and close freely?

**COST AND TERMS OF THE SALE****COST**

What is the seller's asking price? \_\_\_\_\_

Are the following items included in the sale price?

If not, indicate what it will cost you if you want them.

Yes    No

_____	_____	range/oven	_____
_____	_____	refrigerator	_____
_____	_____	dishwasher	_____
_____	_____	washer/dryer	_____
_____	_____	television antenna	_____
_____	_____	A/C	_____
_____	_____	draperies	_____
_____	_____	floor coverings	_____
_____	_____	other	_____

What expense is anticipated for necessary repairs? \_\_\_\_\_

(Amount should be based on the inspector's report.)

TOTAL INITIAL COSTS (add the above items) \_\_\_\_\_

What is the appraised market value of the house? \_\_\_\_\_

A "Do-It-Yourself" inspection is a good basis for comparing several houses to make a final selection. It can also help you to feel more certain about the quality and condition of the house you choose.

The inspector provides you with a non-biased evaluation of the condition of the home. This evaluation combined with the information that the seller can supply and your own observations, helps you eliminate much of the guesswork in buying a home. Reassurance that you are buying a sound home will give you peace of mind.

### Acknowledgements

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### References

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