

What to check before you buy a home

Take this list to showings and work through it room by room. It will not replace an inspection, but it helps you spot the homes worth a closer look. Anything you are unsure about is a good question for the inspector.

Outside and grading

- ☐ Does the ground slope away from the house on every side?
- ☐ Do downspouts drain at least a couple of metres away from the foundation?
- ☐ Are window wells clear, with covers or drainage where needed?
- ☐ Any cracks, gaps or peeling around siding, trim and windows?
- ☐ Are decks, steps and railings solid?

Roof and attic

- ☐ Any missing, curling or granule-free shingles you can see from the ground?
- ☐ Are gutters attached, clean and sloped toward downspouts?
- ☐ Any ice-damming stains or rot along the eaves?
- ☐ In winter, are there large icicles or bare patches in fresh snow on the roof (signs of heat loss)?

Basement and foundation

- ☐ Any musty smell, damp spots or white powdery residue on the walls?
- ☐ Cracks in the foundation: note where they are and whether they are wider at one end.
- ☐ Is there a sump pit, and does it have a working pump?
- ☐ Any water stains on the floor near walls, the water heater or the furnace?

Heating and mechanical

- ☐ How old is the furnace, and is there a service record?
- ☐ How old is the water heater, and is it owned or rented?
- ☐ Is there a heat recovery ventilator (HRV) or other fresh air supply in newer homes?
- ☐ Does every room feel warm enough on a cold day?

Plumbing

- ☐ Look under sinks for leaks, stains or soft cabinet floors.
- ☐ Run taps and flush toilets: is water pressure good, and do drains empty quickly?
- ☐ Note the pipe type you can see. Grey plastic pipe with a "PB" stamp is Poly-B, which some insurers ask about.

Electrical

- ☐ How many amps is the main panel, and is there space for new circuits?
- ☐ Are there GFCI outlets near sinks, in bathrooms and outside?
- ☐ Any two-prong outlets, warm switch plates or flickering lights?

Inside the home

- ☐ Water stains on ceilings, especially under bathrooms and near exterior walls.
- ☐ Do doors and windows open, close and lock easily? Any fogging between panes?
- ☐ Sloping floors or large cracks over doors and windows can be worth asking about.
- ☐ Is there a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm on each level?

If it is a condo

- ☐ Ask for the reserve fund study, financial statements, recent board minutes and bylaws.
- ☐ Are there special assessments, planned repairs or insurance claims?
- ☐ What do condo fees include, and how have they changed over the last few years?
- ☐ Check the balcony, windows and any signs of leaks from the unit above.

Questions for the seller

- ☐ How old are the roof, furnace, water heater and windows?
- ☐ Has the basement ever had water in it? Any insurance claims?
- ☐ Were renovations or a basement suite done with permits?
- ☐ Are there any known issues listed on the property disclosure?

Questions about a home you are looking at? Visit edmontonhomeinspector.com. Read this list online at edmontonhomeinspector.com/resources/home-inspection-checklist.