



Pre-Inspection Checklist

Buying a home is the most important purchase you will ever make. It is where you will eat, sleep, and share precious time with your loved ones. Seeing the technical condition of your home and understanding the maintenance requirements before you buy will help you prioritize any required repairs and budget for future improvements. Please let Homestead help you learn what to look for at this exciting time in your life. Use the checklist below to pre-inspect various major systems of the home you are considering.

Content

1. Roof
2. Exterior drainage
3. Building envelope
4. Structure
5. Heating

Roof

The roof protects the structure, contents and occupants from the weather. A well-designed, well-maintained roof sheds water to the drainage system, so it can be carried away from the house.

Components of the roof system include;

- Roofing material (e.g., shingles or membrane)
- Sheathing (e.g., plywood or boards)
- Flashing (e.g., metal or asphalt)

What to look for	Visual clues	Notes (your house)
Shingle wear and ageing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cracking • Pitting • Degranulation 	
Note: Many shingles do not curl as they age; look for other signs.		
Sheathing deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sagging between rafters • Shingles lifting • Staining (in attic) 	
Ineffective flashing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrosion or pitting • Separation from surface • Missing pieces 	
Note: Binoculars may be required to see the roof safely.		

Exterior drainage

The exterior drainage system carries water way from the house before it can seep through the foundation wall. Often, improving the surface drainage system is the most cost-efficient approach to reducing basement dampness.

Components of the drainage system include;

- Eavestroughs
- Downspouts
- Grading
- Foundation drains
- Sump & pump

What to look for	Visual clues	Notes (your house)
Plugged & overflowing eavestroughs & downspouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trees overhanging roof• Drip line below eaves• Damage at seams	
Inadequate or adverse grading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ground sloping to house• Paved surfaces adjacent to foundation wall	
Water seepage into basement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efflorescence on interior foundation wall• Water staining on finished-basement walls	
Note: Components below grade cannot be viewed directly; their condition and performance must be inferred from related observations.		

Building envelope

The building envelope is the exterior “skin” that separates the controlled indoor environment from the outdoors. It provides comfort and security for the occupants. Being exposed to widely variable conditions of temperature, dampness, air pressure, and ultraviolet radiation, the envelope requires regular maintenance and careful inspection periodically. A failure in the envelope can lead to water penetration, structural damage, and interior environmental degradation.

Components of the building envelope include;

- Wall surfaces
 - Brick (solid or veneer)
 - Siding (metal, vinyl or wood)
 - Shingles (wood, asphalt, cement fibre)
- Openings (windows, doors and vents)
- Flashing & sealants

What to look for	Visual clues	Notes (your house)
Damage to the exterior surfaces that may allow water penetration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cracks or spalling• Tears or displacement• Peeling paint or rot	
Ineffective flashing or sealants around openings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cracks in caulking• Rot in window & door frames• Spalling & staining below openings.	
Note: Some envelope conditions are caused by leakage of <i>interior</i> air and moisture into the wall cavity.		

Structure

The structure transfers loads safely to the ground and holds everything together. Most of the structure is hidden behind finishes or below grade, so you must look for related clues and infer the condition of the structure.

Components of the structure include;

- Footings & foundation walls
- Columns & beams
- Joists & studs
- Rafters & trusses

What to look for	Visual clues	Notes (your house)
Differential settling of footings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Step cracking in brickwork• Noticeable lean to walls	
Excess pressure on foundation wall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horizontal cracks in wall• Bowing of wall	
Overloading of rafters and trusses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excess sagging in roof structure• Cracks or displacement in structural members (in attic)	

Note: A certain amount of settling and sagging is normal over time and many cracks are “non-structural” in nature. Experience and training help to distinguish between “normal” deformation and “excessive” displacement.

Heating

A central heating system produces heat in one location and distributes it throughout the house using either air blown through ducts or water circulated through pipes and radiators. Unitary heating systems have separate units for each room, such as electric baseboard heaters.

Components of heating systems include;

- Furnace or boiler
- Fuel source (gas, oil, electricity)
- Chimney and/or exhaust flue
- Air / water forcing unit (blower & motor, or circulation pump)
- Heat distribution system (ducts & registers or pipes & radiators)

What to look for	Visual clues	Notes (your house)
Age of furnace or boiler	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serial number• Pressure test tag• General Inspection tag	
Type of furnace (mid/high efficiency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Condensate line location• Flue type	
Temperature rise in design range	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Return-air temperature• Supply-air temperature	
Adequate combustion air supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Size of furnace room• Direct venting from exterior• Signs of backdrafting or flame rollout	
Note: A definitive assessment of the furnace or boiler requires an inspection by a licensed gas or oil-burner technician.		