

Ask your Home Inspector:

Selling Your Home Faster:

The New, National "Move-In Certified" Program

By Russ Spriggs

Idaho's Certified Master Inspector®

Today's slower housing market calls for some creative thinking, and the pre-inspected "Move In Certified" program instills buyer confidence. As a participant, you assure the potential buyer that your home is free from any major concerns regarding safety and function, and that a professional, independent Home Inspection report is available for viewing. Other advantages include:

- You choose a Certified Inspector rather than be subject to the buyer's choice of inspector.
- It will alert you of any immediate safety issues before other agents and potential buyers tour the home
- You can assist the inspector during the inspection, something normally not done during a buyer's inspection.
- The report can help you realistically price the home.
- The report can help you substantiate a higher asking price if problems don't exist or have been corrected.
- A **Move In Certified Inspection** reveals concerns ahead of time which:
 - gives you time to make repairs and shop for competitive contractors.
 - permits you to attach repair estimates or paid invoices to the inspection report.
 - removes over-inflated buyer estimates from the negotiation table
- Your inspection permits a clean home inspection report to be used as a **MARKETING TOOL**. Your home can be advertised as **pre-inspected with a home warranty**.
- The deal is less likely to fall apart the way they often do, when a buyer's inspection unexpectedly reveals a problem, last minute.
- Your report provides full-disclosure protection from future legal claims.



The National Association of Certified Home Inspectors (www.nachi.org) has designed this new yard sign, which is growing popular with both MLS and FSBO listings across the country.

The purpose of a home inspection is to document the overall condition of the property at the time of the inspection and to ensure that its major systems and components (water heater, heating and cooling, plumbing, electrical, etc.) are installed properly and working properly. While some items identified during the course of a home inspection might seem like minor items individually, collectively they could add up to major headaches involving both time and money. If sellers know what to look for, they can resolve many minor items before I come to do the inspection.

Let's work together to conclude the sale! Below is my "check" list of easily-resolved items commonly found during a home inspection. Completing these repairs before I show up helps ensure that escrow progresses more smoothly:

OUTSIDE

- Check that doorbells work.
- Check for missing roof shingles.
- Check for loose/damaged/clogged gutters/downspouts.
- Check to see if there is standing water, especially near the foundation, after irrigation or rainfall.
- Check exterior weatherproofing (stain, paint, etc.).
- Check for any wood in direct contact with soil, including fences and gates.
- Check for holes and damage to siding, doors, windows, and trim so that structure is weatherproof.
- Check for overgrown vegetation, especially in walkways; growing on siding, roof, chimney, fences, or in gutters; or too close to utility lines.
- Check for trip hazards in walkways, driveways, and stairways (deterioration, vegetation, etc.)
- Check for loose, missing, or rusted guardrails and handrails at stairways, decks, balconies, and porches.

INSIDE

- Check that carbon monoxide alarms work.

- Check that smoke alarms work, and that they are present on each floor of multi-story houses.
- Check for loose kitchen and bathroom countertops.
- Check for moisture stains on ceilings and walls; around doors and windows; near sinks, toilets, bathtubs, and showers; and near the dishwasher.
- Check for loose, missing, or damaged guardrails and handrails in stairways.
- Check for cracked tiles or deteriorated grouting in kitchen and bathrooms.
- Check that kitchen appliances work.

PLUMBING

- Check that stoppers work in bathtubs and sinks.
- Check for clogged drains.
- Check that toilet seat bolts and screws are tight.
- Check that faucets don't drip or leak around the base.
- Check condition of caulk/grout in bathtubs/showers.
- Check for loose toilets and loose toilet tanks.

ELECTRICAL

- Check for safe and easy access to electric panels and main circuit breaker.
- Check that ceiling fans work on all speeds.
- Check for burned out light bulbs, including ceiling fans.
- Check for damaged or loose outlets and light switches, including covers for outlets and switches.
- Check that outlets work.
- Check for properly working GFCI outlets in kitchen, bathrooms, garage, and exterior.
- Check that exhaust fans work in kitchen, bathrooms, and laundry area.
- Check that any electrical junction boxes have covers, especially in basements and garages.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Check that filters are clean (heating and cooling, kitchen range hood, bathroom exhaust fans, etc.)
- Check that dogs or cats are secured or vacationing for a few hours with a family member or friend.
- Certain items should be inspected annually due to their inherently dangerous nature. These include gas-using appliances, pool and spa equipment and utilities, roof, and the fireplace and chimney. If they have not been inspected within the last 12 months, having it done now can make escrow go more smoothly.
- Check that the fireplace damper opens/closes easily.
- The Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) recommends that the fireplace and chimney undergo a Level II inspection any time real estate ownership is transferred, and I recommend having that done prior to the buyer's inspection.
- Check for receipts and warranty papers for any work done on the property, particularly for inspections and work done to prepare the property for sale.
- Contact me for a pre-listing inspection to determine major defects. Identifying them now can make escrow go more smoothly.

NACHI, the nation's largest home inspection association, knows that pre-inspected homes sell faster, and at a higher price, than those that get traditionally inspected by buyers at the eleventh hour. Having the "Move In Certified" sign in your yard will help you sell your home more quickly and effectively!

Certified Master Inspector® Russ Spriggs is president of Idaho's chapter of the National Association of Certified Home Inspectors, and also the president of the Spirit Lake Chamber of Commerce. He maintains an informative and educational website at www.cdaInspector.com and is lab-certified to perform mold, radon, meth, lead, water and asbestos testing.

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