

Real Estate Today

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The Smart Seller Thinks Ahead To the Inspection by the Buyer

By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

About a week after your house goes under contract, that contract could well terminate if the inspection goes poorly. I always advise my sellers to think ahead so that easily identified and easily fixed problems aren't there to act as red flags for the buyer and his/her inspector.



For starters, if you have a forced air heating system, **put in a clean filter!** If you don't have your furnace serviced annually, have it serviced now, because if the furnace is dirty, you can expect the buyer to demand not only that it be cleaned and serviced, but that it also be "certified," which adds another \$100 to the cost. If it doesn't need to be cleaned, the inspector is unlikely to suggest that it be certified.

If you don't have downspout extenders to divert rain water away from your foundation, buy and install them. If you have them but they're not down, put them down. Your foundation and slab floor are more likely to shift in the future if you're allowing the ground next to the foundation to get saturated with water.

A related problem which is **always** identified by the inspector is if your ground is sloping toward the foundation

instead of away from it. A little shovel work can remove that red flag.

Tree branches should never be allowed to touch or overhang a roof. Trim them back and remove leaves and other debris from your gutters. If the gutters are holding water because they are hung improperly, you can be guaranteed that the inspector will identify that, so go ahead and adjust them to drain completely.

If you have a wood deck, replace rotted joists and railings. I guarantee these will be an inspection issue. If your railing is wobbly, fix it. Often this is easily done by tightening or adding some screws or lag bolts at the bottom of the posts.

If you have a wood shake roof and it's nearing the end of its useful life, have the worst shakes replaced by a qualified roofer. (Roof brokers, 303-750-1900, will give you three free estimates from good companies.) Those lighter colored replacement shingles stand out and tell the inspector it has been professionally serviced. As with the furnace, he is less likely to recommend the extra expense of 5-year certification when he sees them.

Finally, look for other obvious and easily fixed items, such as missing drywall tape on the firewall between your garage and home, missing outlet covers or other exposed wiring, broken glass and damaged screens. If you need vendors for any these issues, I can suggest some for you.

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