

# Home Inspections

## A Buyer's Right to Peace of Mind

For most of us, buying a home is probably the largest and most important purchase we'll ever make. And unless you are an expert, it is highly unlikely that you will recognize a home's minor problems let alone a major structural flaw during a typical house viewing. Fortunately, as in automobile purchases, Buyer's have the right to "test drive" their prospective new home. Paragraph 12b of the North Carolina Association of Realtors Offer to Purchase and Contract specifically advises Buyers of this right, and it is our policy at Beach Realty & Construction to make sure all our Buyers have a home inspection performed. While the Buyer pays for the inspection, the Seller is required by the contract to convey the house with all specified items "performing the function for which intended, not in need of immediate repair."

A good home inspector will give you an unbiased assessment of the structural and mechanical well-being of the home. A home inspector will discover and identify any existing or potential problem areas and give an overview of the foundation, grading, drainage, basement, walls and floors, ceilings, doors and windows, roofs and roofing systems, plumbing and electrical and heating and cooling systems. Some home inspectors will offer suggestions and advice on how to solve the problems as well as list them in order of priority.

A home inspection usually costs between \$200 and \$500 depending on size and is priced according to square footage of the home. This could very well be the best money you ever spend. Your "Beach" Realtor can furnish you with a list of home inspectors in this area but you should make sure of the following:

- that they are well established and can offer references;
- that they are independent and unbiased - they have no affiliation with any real estate firms that might create a conflict of interest.
- that they will provide a thorough written report of their findings;
- that they are adequately licensed or members of ASHI (American Society of Home Inspectors) or NAHI(National Association of Home Inspectors).

Home buyers rely on the inspector to examine the home carefully. They've already seen the damaged drywall and the peeling paint, but when an inspection reveals an unexpected condition the buyer could be prevented from making a costly mistake.

When a satisfactory home inspection is included as a contingency in the Offer to Purchase and Contract, the Buyer specifies the date by which the inspection shall be completed and the written notice of necessary repairs shall be given to the Seller. "Necessary repairs" should refer to those items or systems listed in 12b which are not "performing the function for which intended" and are "in need of immediate repair." The home inspection should make a clear distinction between deficiencies that need immediate attention, and routine maintenance suggestions or opinions regarding the remaining life of various systems or equipment offered merely for the Buyer's information.

If any repairs are necessary, the Seller has the option of completing the repairs or refusing to complete them. If the Seller refuses to complete them, the Buyer has the option of accepting the property in its present condition or terminating the contract, in which case the earnest money will be refunded in full.

When the inspection is done in a timely manner, the Buyer and the Seller have the opportunity to negotiate the various items, get estimates for the cost of repairs, decide who shall complete the repairs, or even escrow the cost of the repairs at closing if they cannot be completed in time.

**Courtesy of Beach Realty & Construction**