

## First Time Home Buyers Information

- **Things you can't change;** location, age, type of utilities (may not be permitted by HOA to add LP gas)
- **Not easily changed;** Foundation/condition, size, amenities, layout, neighborhood, type of utilities.
- **Things not to get held up on;** landscape, paint color, flooring, current décor.
- **Be sure you feel comfortable** with one of the largest investments you will, likely ever make.

### Things to consider;

#### **Location;**

- **Commute to work** – distances, traffic loads – 7am & 5pm, alternate routes.
- **Stores** – grocery, hardware, retail, hair dresser, restaurants, etc.
- **Neighbors** – well-kept landscapes, visit on weekends
- **HOA** – dues, parking, storing boats, trailers, etc.

#### **Overall Condition;**

- **Age and overall condition of home:** Older homes may be less expensive but may cost more to operate. More up-keep cost, energy cost, time investment and higher insurance cost.
- **How long to you plan on living there?** Older homes could be difficult to re-sale and insure.
- **Foundation;** questionable cracks, exposed steel, poor drainage, large trees, expansive soils.
- **Roof;** repairs made, damage, stains in ceiling.
- **Siding;** damaged, uneven, well maintained.
- **Windows;** damage, leaks, single pane, safety glass.
- **Electrical;** 100-amp panel minimum. Knob & Tube, Aluminum wire, old breaker panels, glass fuses, history of past repairs. (Check with insurance for any limitations for having old wiring).
- **Plumbing;** clay, cast iron, galvanized, polybutylene, poor flow?
- **Water heater;** leaks, corrosion, flue, updates.
- **HVAC;** Old are less efficient, rust corrosion, microbial/mold growth, Dirty air filter is a sign of poor maintenance. (Always Recommend servicing and cleaning if necessary).

#### **Age;**

- **Roof age;** Average life expectancy of typical roof shingles are 15 to 20 years. However, some insurance companies consider it a risk at 10 years and may not insure at 15 years.

**(NPI protects you with a FREE 5-Year roof leak Protection Coverage, no matter age of roof)**

- **Electrical;** Knob & Tube (1880-1930), Aluminum wire (1965-1973), glass fuses (started 1890 30amp – 1950-1965 60amp), (1960 and later were breakers).
- **Plumbing;** clay (1880-1900), cast iron (pre-1960), Steel galvanized (1950 - 1990), Black ABS (1975) polybutylene (1978-1995), Copper (from 1930).

**(NPI protects you with a FREE sewer and water line leak protection plan).**

- **Water heater;** Average life expectancy of typical water heaters are 10 to 15 years.
- **HVAC;** Average life expectancy of typical furnaces are 15 to 20 years.

**All HVAC equipment should be serviced annually** and is good to ask for seller to have system serviced.

**Low maintenance** = Electric or heat pump.

**Medium maintenance** = Gas under 5-years.

**High maintenance** = Gas over 5-years.

Many homeowners replace 10-15-years for better efficiency. However, it is not uncommon to see a 30-year-old (less efficient) heater that is still performing because they simply are not used very often in this part of the state.

**Good website to check date of water heaters and HVAC equipment;** <http://www.buildingcenter.org/>

## **When you have found the perfect home, and are ready to get it inspected:**

**Please refer to the separate flyer that explains the many benefits of hiring National Property Inspections to inspect your largest investment and provide you with the best protection in the inspection industry guaranteed.**

**Be sure the home is properly prepared for inspection:** As soon as you have scheduled the inspection ask your agent to please confirm with the listing agent, that the home is ready for inspection. This means ALL areas are readily accessible.

- Remove any storage obstructing access.
- Remove or lock-up any firearms priceless jewels, and generally declutter.
- Unlock interior doors and leave keys to any outbuildings, electrical panels, etc.
- Proper Access should be provided to Attic, Water heater, Furnace, Electrical panels.
- Pets should be removed, caged or otherwise secured.
- All gas pilots should be lit and operational.
- All operational appliances including irrigation system need to be plugged in.
- Leave a note for inspector if any items are not working and should not be operated.

**Be sure the seller's disclosure** is (completely) filled out. **If obvious repairs were made** to drywall or any other areas, were they disclosed? **Ask seller to disclose all past repair history.**

## **Reviewing the Inspection Report;**

While reading through the report, remember what the inspector said during the debriefing at the inspection. A good inspector will help you understand why an item is deficient and offer examples of what it may take to repair it. Many of the deficiencies are maintenance related that can be easily repaired and are not typical to ask of seller. A home inspection report is a tool used to gather more in-depth information about a given property. So, the buyer can make an informed decision. It is not intended to be used as a repair list for the seller. In fact, the seller is not legally obligated to repair anything. That is just one of the many reasons why you need to be working with a good Realtor that can help you negotiate with the seller. There are also some good reasons why you may want to ask for repair funds in lieu of having seller make repairs.

Example;

- How can you be sure a qualified contractor was hired and not just the cheapest bid for the job?
- If the repair contractor saw something else should be addressed during the repair, there is a good chance it did not get done nor will you be informed of it.
- how can you be sure it was repaired properly? (you have a better chance of verifying this if you hire the contractor).
- Is there a warranty on the repair? And if so, is it going to be transferred to you, the new owner?
- And there is a certain satisfaction in homeownership when making MINOR repairs yourself.

After you have finalized that stack of paperwork and have taken possession of the property, it is the best time to get the inspection report back out to handle those minor projects, before you completely move in. Once you are settled in and old routines are in place, you are less likely to pursue something that will disturb your daily flow, and some issues on the report may require immediate attention.

**Notice; The information on this sheet is provided as a courtesy of author that are the opinions based on experience and should not be relied upon as fact.**