

How to Avoid Choosing a Bad Home Inspector

You've found the house, your offer has been accepted, and funding is in place. But before you start packing, you need to hire a professional home inspector to make sure your house doesn't have any major defects that could cost you down the road.

How should you go about this process?

You must keep in mind that not all home inspectors are created equally! The abilities and knowledge of home inspectors vary widely; choose carefully to get the best home inspection possible. The key is to ask about the qualifications, background, experience, and tools of your inspector.

Oh yes, then there's the question of pricing... Remember the old adage, "You get what you pay for"?

Well, consider this statement instead:

*"You may get what you pay for, but you **Never** get what you **Don't** pay for!"*

When choosing a home inspection company, the cost of quality is soon forgotten, while the cost of a cheap choice may linger forever.



CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE CHOOSING YOUR HOME INSPECTOR:

- **Does the inspector come from a construction background?** It's great that your inspector is a nice person, but what did they do before inspecting homes? Do they bring a wealth of knowledge about the construction trades, building, or remodeling? **Your Frontline Property inspector has a strong background in construction, with an emphasis on residential construction. Your Frontline inspector has gone through an extensive training process, and must complete a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education each year.**
- **Is the inspector a member of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI)?** This is critical! ASHI is the oldest, largest, and most respected organization for home inspectors in the country. They also maintain the highest standards and ethics for home inspectors. If your inspector is ASHI Certified, you can be sure that they have passed rigorous testing (The National Home Inspectors Exam), and they have completed all training and administrative requirements for membership, which are extensive. You can even verify membership status at www.ASHI.org. The inspector may be a member of other organizations, but none have requirements as strict as ASHI. And don't be fooled by those companies who claim to inspect to "ASHI standards" - if they aren't a bona fide ASHI member, find another inspector. **Your Frontline inspector makes this one simple – he is a certified ASHI member!**
- **How long has the inspector been in the inspection business, and how many inspections has he performed during this time?** Longevity gives comfort that the inspector will be with you in the future as new needs and issues arise. But if he's only done 12 inspections during his several years in business, that's not good! Your home buying decision is far too important to be a practice place for a part-time inspector or contractor who does inspections on the side. **Your Frontline inspector has been serving and satisfying clients in the Greater Tampa Bay Area since 1998.**
- **Will your inspector walk on the roof, crawl in the crawlspace and climb into the attic space (if applicable)?** Your inspector should be capable of going and willing to go into the places that must be seen to best protect the client. There are times when those locations cannot be completely inspected due to physical risk to the inspector, risk to the equipment, or seasonal limitations. But for the inspector to not inspect those locations because he doesn't want to, is scared of the dark, or is not agile enough to access those spaces is unacceptable. **For our customers, your Frontline inspector will go places where others may not be willing or may not be physically able to navigate.**

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- **Does the inspector produce a written report that you can understand?** Some inspection reports are over 50 pages long and include trivial information that you do not need. Sifting through such a report can be cumbersome and frustrating. **Frontline inspection reports are custom designed to give you What You Need to Know, in a format that is clear and concise so that you can get the information you need to help make your overall decision about your purchase.**

- **Does the completed report include photographs?** Often, the report will contain descriptions of damage or defect in locations of the home that only the inspector was able to access, like roof-tops or crawl spaces. You will want pictures of these areas to make your understanding of the scope and location of the damage is clear. It also makes repairs simpler to get estimated when a photograph is available. **Frontline Property Inspections includes photographs as a standard part of each inspection.**

- **When will the completed report be delivered, and can it be emailed?** Often, the buying decision is time sensitive, you want to be sure you will receive your completed report in time to read, review, and respond. **Some inspection companies make you wait for days for your report, but Frontline Property Inspections will have a report emailed directly to you within a few hours of the actual home inspection.**

- **Will the inspector allow you as the client to attend the inspection?** There is no substitute for the **complete** inspection experience; the report generated is only a small piece of the inspection. When you attend the inspection, see the process, ask questions, and become educated about your home, you'll gain great comfort and confidence in your buying decision. This is a valuable educational opportunity for you to learn about how things work around what could be **your** house. The inspector may point out things that don't quite merit a mention in the report, but are things that you should keep an eye on. An inspector's refusal to allow you to be present should raise a red flag. **Frontline Property Inspections encourages all clients to attend the inspection, and to bring anyone else they choose. We'll go through the home with you, explaining everything in detail, answering all of your questions, and making sure you understand each item!**

- **Does your inspector have experience in homes similar to the home you are having inspected?** All homes have some systems and features in common, but a brand new home has risks and issues that differ from an historic beauty built in 1902. Only someone who has walked the walk and crawled the crawl numerous times in similar homes can sleuth out those important items that are specific to your age, size, and type of home. **Training and experience give the Frontline inspector insight about houses similar to yours, so they know what to look for and can readily compare your house and its systems with other houses of similar age and construction!**

- **Can the home inspector also be hired to do any repairs or improvements?** Under ASHI professional code of ethics, *professional* home inspectors are not allowed to be associated with any other construction or house related trade. **Frontline has NEVER and will NEVER conduct repairs or receive 'kickbacks' for referrals to other contractors.**

- **Can the home inspector provide three references?** Any qualified home inspector should gladly provide this information upon request. Call the people named as references and ask whether they were satisfied with the service they received from the inspector. **Frontline will gladly give you a long list of current referrals if you wish.**



Best Wishes from Frontline Property Inspections!