

Home Inspection Frequently Asked Questions

What is an inspection?

An inspection is an objective visual examination of the physical structure and systems of a building, from roof to foundation. If you are thinking of buying a home, condominium, mobile home, or commercial building, you should have it thoroughly inspected before the final purchase by an experienced and impartial professional ASHI® inspector. An inspection is similar to a physical examination from your doctor. When problems or symptoms of problems are found, we may recommend repairs, or we may refer you to a specialist for further evaluation and remedies.

What does an inspection include?

An inspection should include the building's heating and cooling systems, plumbing and electrical systems; roof, attic, and visible insulation; walls, ceilings, floors, windows and doors; foundation, basement, crawl space, and the visible structures of the building. Only those items that are visible and accessible by normal means are included in the inspection. Since there are no requirements in Idaho for what must be included in an inspection, other inspection providers may choose to exclude some systems or components. As ASHI Members, we inspect to the industry's highest standards. You may view the ASHI Standards of Practice for a complete list of what is included in your ASHI inspection.

Why do I need an inspection?

The purchase of a home or commercial building is likely one of the largest single investments you will ever make. You should know the condition of the building, both indoors and out, prior to making your final purchase decision. An ASHI inspection summarizes the condition of a property, points out the need for repairs, and identifies areas that may need attention in the near future. An inspection will also alert you to potential safety upgrades, as well as the type of maintenance needed to keep the building in good condition. You will want a thorough, accurate ASHI inspection to maximize your knowledge of the property in order to make an intelligent, informed decision before executing a purchase agreement.

For homeowners, an inspection may be used to identify problems in the making and to learn about preventive measures, which might avoid costly future repairs. If you are planning to sell your home, an ASHI inspection prior to placing your home on the market provides a better understanding of conditions which may be discovered by the buyer's inspection, and provides you an opportunity to make repairs that will make your home more desirable to potential buyers. By eliminating potential surprises in the buyer's inspection, a seller's inspection can help ensure a purchase offer results in a successful sale.

What does an inspection cost?

Inspection fees vary by size, age, features, and location of the property. Additionally, services such as water quality or radon testing may be desired. You should expect to pay at least \$300 for an average-sized home. Please call or email us for a specific price quote.

Do not let the cost deter you from having an inspection or selecting a qualified ASHI inspector. Knowledge gained from an inspection is well worth the time and expense, and the lowest-priced inspector is not necessarily a bargain. One defect missed by your inspector could cost 100 times what you save with a bargain inspection. The best method of price shopping is to shop for quality. Considering the high cost of real estate today, an inspection fee is a small price to pay. It can save thousands of dollars and years of regret. The inspector's qualifications, including experience, education, and professional affiliations, as well as the quality and readability of the inspection report should be among the most important considerations in your selection. Be sure to avoid the Seven Common Mistakes detailed on our website when selecting your inspector.



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Can I inspect the building myself?

Even the most experienced homeowner lacks the knowledge and expertise of a professional ASHI inspector. An ASHI inspector has the experience, depth of knowledge and training to make an unbiased and informed report of the condition of a property. We are familiar with the many elements of construction, their proper installation and maintenance. We understand how the building's systems and components are intended to function together, as well as how and why they fail and what to look for, and we are uniquely suited to interpret what the findings reveal about the condition of the property. Additionally, most buyers find it difficult to remain objective and unemotional about the house they really want, and this may affect their judgment. For the most accurate information about the condition of a building, always obtain an impartial third-party opinion by an ASHI Member.

Can my contractor friend/relative inspect the building for me?

Most contracting professionals are experienced in a few areas of construction, but not all. For example, many contractors lack experience with electrical systems, plumbing systems, and heating systems, especially when it comes to evaluating the condition of existing systems. Additionally, it requires a different skill set to inspect a home than to build one or fix one. Troubleshooting techniques and knowledge of previous construction practices and materials are essential for a quality inspection. An experienced inspector will also be familiar with regional trends and common material defects. You may have your contractor friend/relative review the home, but do not rely on him to replace a qualified, experienced inspector.

Should I attend the inspection?

It is not necessary for you to be present for the inspection, but it is a good idea. By following us through the inspection, observing and asking questions, you will learn about the property and get some tips on general maintenance. After you have seen the property with us, you will also find the written report easier to understand.

When do I call in the inspector?

Before you sign the contract or purchase agreement, make your purchase obligation contingent upon the findings of a professional inspection. This clause should specify the terms to which both the buyer and seller are obligated. Contact us immediately after the contract or purchase agreement has been signed. We are aware of the time constraints involved in purchase agreements and will be available to conduct the required inspection within a few days.

Can a building fail an inspection?

No. A professional inspection is an examination and evaluation of the current condition the building. It is not an appraisal or a municipal code inspection. We will not pass or fail a house, but we will describe its condition and indicate which items may need repair or replacement.

What if the report reveals problems?

No building is perfect. When the inspection identifies problems, it does not necessarily indicate you should not purchase the property. If major issues are discovered in the inspection, the seller may be willing to have repairs completed, or may adjust the purchase price or contract terms. If your budget is tight, or if you do not want to be involved in future repair work, this information will be extremely valuable.

If the report is favorable, did I really need an inspection?

Absolutely. If you have hired a qualified inspector, you can complete your purchase with peace of mind about the condition of the property and its equipment and systems. You will have learned many things about your property from the inspection report, and will want to keep that information for your future reference. Above all, you can rest assured that you are making a well-informed purchase.

Additional information, sample reports, client testimonials, and other consumer information are always available at our website: www.TrueNorthInspections.com.