

# Upon further inspection

What you don't know about real estate inspections and inspectors.

by David Selman



**I**nspectors and real estate agents are alike in many ways—and not just because we're respected community members who provide services that require a high degree of expertise.

### **We're like you**

Our marketing strategy is similar to yours. Referrals from past clients and real estate professionals are important, so we have to foster good relationships. We also put our names on our vehicles, pass business cards to anyone we meet, and know the importance of a strong Web presence and online strategy, including blogs and online social media outlets.

### **Getting started is tough**

Just like a real estate salesperson's license, a Texas real estate inspector license is difficult to attain. Inspectors are licensed by TREC and must undergo training and mentoring, pass a challenging state examination, and meet continuing education requirements comparable to those required of salesperson licensees.

### **Despite what you may think ...**

A home inspection is not a pass/fail report. It's an evaluation of a property's condition at the time of the report. A home is graded against perfect standards—and no house is perfect.

Many people think inspectors want to either kill deals or write soft reports to generate referrals. Neither is true. Our purpose is the same as yours: client protection. We do this by providing a thorough home inspection to identify deficiencies with respect to Texas Standards of Practice and local building codes and writing a concise, easy-to-read home inspection report based on the findings.

### **You should be there**

As a personal business practice, I encourage agents to attend at least part

of the home inspection, with or without clients. Your presence shows your professionalism and demonstrates your concern for your clients' interests. Also, should the transaction end up in court, your interests may be better served if you were at the inspection.

### **Time spent**

In my experience, an average home inspection runs about four hours at the home site. We cover everything from crawl spaces to the roof, identifying potential hazards and problems based on current building codes. After that, we compile and produce a legal, state-certified home inspection report based on the findings. It's technical, and it's hard work.

### **Inspections aren't just for buyers anymore**

You want your clients to feel like you leave nothing to chance. A good way to do that is by encouraging your sellers to get a home inspection. Here are some reasons you may want to do so:

- As a business tool: A home inspection gives sellers a professional opinion from a neutral party, helping listing agents and sellers agree on an asking price.

An inspection can also provide a marketing advantage. The International Association of Certified Home Inspectors offers a Move-in Certified designation for homes that undergo an inspection and meet certain criteria. This certification signals that a home has no known safety hazards or major systems in need of immediate repair or replacement.

Additionally, repairs made ahead of time may mean fewer transaction stumbling blocks and 11th-hour negotiations.

- Good-faith gesture: A seller inspection shows forthrightness and can relieve buyer concerns.
- Reduced risk with documentation: A pre-sale inspection reduces the seller's and agent's liability by adding professional support documentation to disclosure statements.
- Help with home improvement: Not only will it alert your sellers to areas of immediate concern, such as safety issues, but if they do decide to make repairs, they can use a well-written inspection report to communicate the nature of defects to contractors. ★

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