

Hire A Good Home Inspector

By ALEX MASON | Green Shoot Media

Buying a home may be the biggest purchase of your life, so you want to ensure your investment is worthy of its price tag.

Hiring a qualified home inspector can save you thousands of dollars in unseen repairs and hidden expenses not visible when you do your walk through the property.

PURPOSE

A home inspector goes under the house to check the plumbing and verifies that the house meets your county and city safety code requirements.

He will also check for faulty electrical wiring, look for proper insulation and ventilation, check the roof for any leakage or weakened surfaces in need of repair, ensure that the home's structural system is safe, sound and built according to code, and inspect the interior and exterior of the property for damage.

Although the home may appear to be in mint condition, unseen factors can rack up a hefty repair bill and often take a bite out of any discount or bargain deal on a property.

CERTIFICATION

A certified home inspector is a licensed professional who will evaluate a property without bias toward the seller or buyer. You may investigate the credentials of your proposed home inspection company through the American Society of Home Inspectors to ensure its license is current and there are no disciplinary actions taken against the company.

In addition, your local Chamber of Commerce and the Better Business Bureau online are excellent resources to put you in touch with a qualified inspector. Shop



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When buying or selling real estate, hiring a good agent and educating yourself will keep you from running into deal breakers at closing.

around and get referrals if you feel a bit cagey about an inspection company, and never settle for an unlicensed inspection service.

INSPECTION COST

The cost of a certified inspection service will vary only slightly from one company to the next and should be in a reasonable price range for an average-size home. In most cases, payment is required up

front, whether you opt to purchase the home or not.

If your home inspector has provided you with a clear and concise report, you may wish to keep that company on file and use its services again. The home inspection process should be reserved for only that property that you fully intend to buy and consider the inspection service as reassurance that the property is move-in ready and does not need costly repairs.

If your desired property is lacking in the essential functions of the home, your home inspector may give you an estimate for the repairs and better equip you to make a decision as to whether the property is worth the asking price.

WHY HIRE AN INSPECTOR?

There is no law that says you

REAL ESTATE 101

Find an Inspector Online

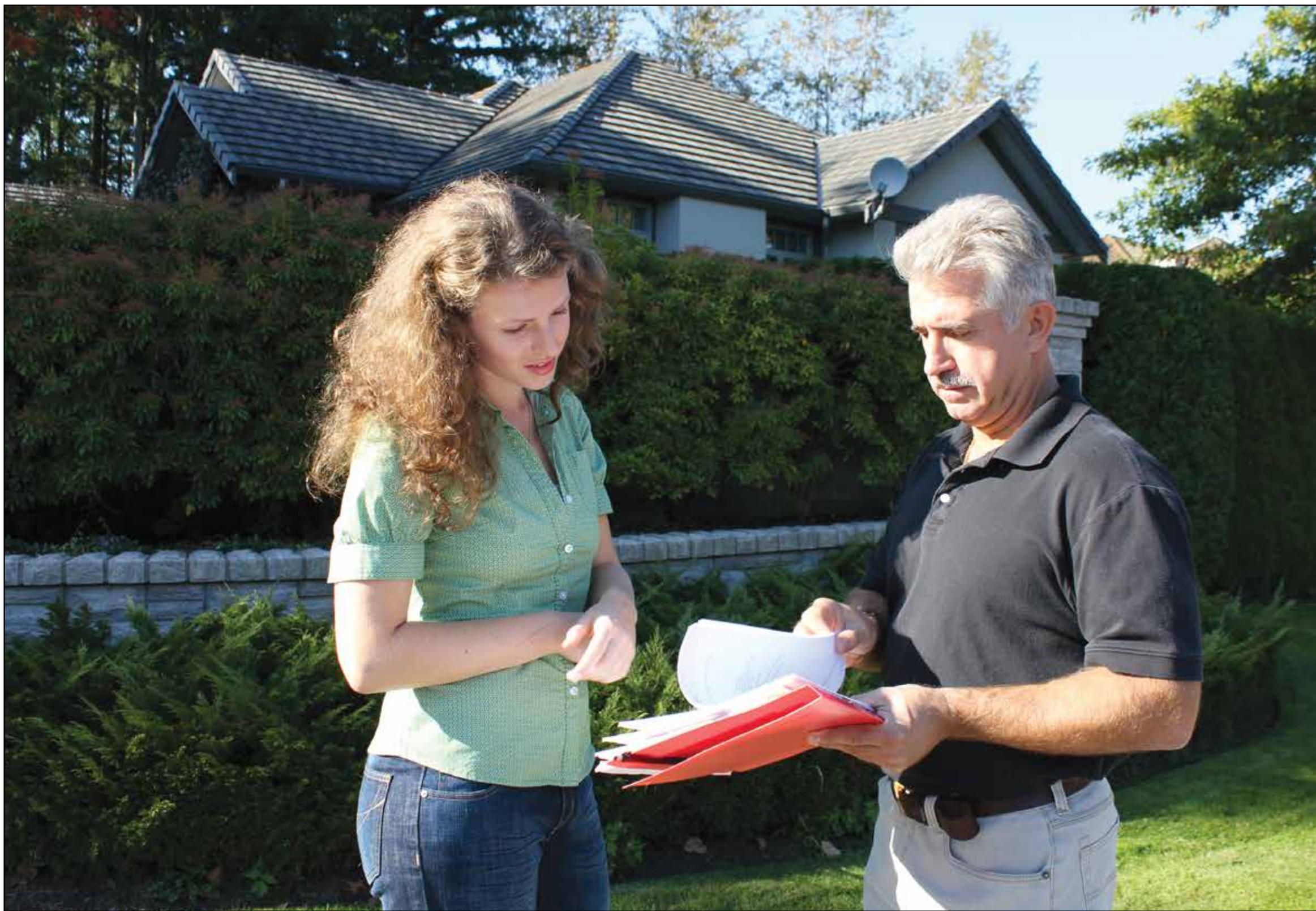
The Federal Housing Administration offers a tool on its website to help home buyers find certified home inspectors in their area. Visit <https://entp.hud.gov/idapp/html/insplook.cfm> to search by state and receive a list of inspectors and contact information.

must hire a home inspector before you purchase a property, but statistically you are financially safer if you do. Shelling out a few hundred dollars for your peace of mind and full assurance that the needed repairs are affordable is smart business sense for the big-ticket item you are about to buy.

Bypassing a home inspection will give you little to no recourse when contesting the seller about the representation of the property should a lawsuit arise. Also, your safety is on the line when it comes to flipping a light switch or settling in under a roof.

Skimp if you want to, but the savvy home buyer knows the value of the home inspector's professional opinion and takes to heart all the sound advice he or she can get before signing on the dotted line.

Alex Mason is a former real estate agent and mortgage broker living in Los Angeles.



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A good home inspector can help alert you to any costly repairs that the home may need, so you can consider these expenses when making an offer.

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WHY HIRE AN INSPECTOR?

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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Home inspection: an inspection of the property conducted by a certified member of the American Society of Home Inspectors to determine the interior and exterior condition of the property.

Principal: a person or entity with critical influence on or substantive control over the origination or Servicing of a Mortgage or any function related to the origination or servicing of a mortgage, including loan officers, underwriters, appraisers, inspectors, developers, real estate agents, brokers, sellers and buyers.

SOURCE: Freddie Mac

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