

Have your new home inspected

By ALEX MASON | Green Shoot Media

So, you've bought a plot of land and are ready to build your dream house.

It's exciting to watch your home grow from a speck of dust into a fabulous structure with all the bells and whistles at your command.

However, there's a thorn in every rose, and one way to avoid getting pricked is to have a licensed home inspector at your side.

When we hire a contractor, we tend to give a lot of gravity to what they say and assume that they always know what they are doing. However, unscrupulous behavior or momentary mistakes can come from almost any construction firm, and the homeowner is the one who will ultimately pay the price.

As a precaution, it is wise to invest in a licensed home inspector to ensure the home was constructed according to legal codes.

FUNCTION

Your home inspector will check the materials and installation of essential components of the home to ensure that they meet legal requirements. This will include the plumbing system, electrical wiring, sturdiness of the foundation, spacing from exterior wall to the fence or pool, satisfactory framing, and a myriad of other factors that need to be verified.

If a new construction home is built outside of city codes, the property will not be able to be re-sold until it gets the OK from the new buyer's inspector. In addition, faulty wiring or sewage systems can cost a homeowner thousands of dollars in repairs and higher insurance premiums.

To be safe and sane when venturing into a brand new construction, don't worry about offending your contractor. You have to take care of your own interests first and get an official opinion from the



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A contractor's word that your new home is up to code is not enough. You need a home inspector to give the OK on everything from plumbing to electrical systems.

inspector to ensure your new home is safe to live in and will meet the grade for re-sale.

RED FLAGS

Some contractors will communicate false and misleading information to the homeowner by giving vague and ambiguous answers to tough questions.

You may hear excuses such as they are building under industry

standard conditions without clearly defining what they mean. This is a red flag to the homeowner and should be cause for alarm.

In addition, watch out for rebuttals that the contractor will take care of shoddy work under the warranty, as this is no excuse to build outside of city codes in the first place.

Your best bet is to get a neutral home inspector who you

find yourself, and who has no ties with your contractor's company. Check the phone book or ask your real estate professional to recommend someone he knows and trusts.

Your new home is a significant investment, and you owe it to yourself to ensure everything is finished correctly. If your contractor is a seasoned professional and has nothing to hide, he or she will stand with you in agree-

REAL ESTATE 101

Does your home measure up?

The American Society of Home Inspectors operates an online home inspector search, where you can find home inspectors in your area. Visit ashi.org to conduct a search. According to its website, the ASHI was founded in 1976, aims to "build customer awareness of the importance of a quality home inspection and enhance the professionalism of home inspectors."

ment to bring in an outside party for inspection.

You also may check your contractor's references with online feedback forums listing the pros and cons from prior clients. These can steer you away from a questionable contractor that could turn your dream home into a nightmare.

Knowledge is power, so get all you can before you begin to build. Your contractor may work magic with bringing your house into being, but your home inspector is your watchdog to make sure you get everything you paid for, including safety and security.



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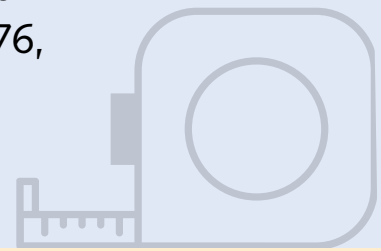
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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Home inspection: an examination of the structure and mechanical systems to determine a home's quality, soundness and safety; makes the potential homebuyer aware of any repairs that may be needed. The homebuyer generally pays inspection fees.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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