

QUESTIONS TO ASK

When Choosing a Home Inspector

Do you belong to a professional association?

There are many associations for home inspectors, but some groups confer questionable credentials or certifications in return for nothing more than a fee. Make sure the association your home inspector names is a reputable, nonprofit trade organization.

Will your report meet all state requirements?

Also, make sure the organization complies with a well-recognized standard of practice and code of ethics, such as those adopted by the American Society of Home Inspectors or the National Association of Home Inspectors.

How experienced are you?

Ask inspectors how long they've been working in the field and how many inspections they've completed. Also ask for customer referrals. New inspectors may be highly qualified, but they should describe their training and indicate whether they work with a more experienced partner.

How do you keep your expertise up to date?

Inspectors' commitment to continuing training is a good measure of their professionalism and service. Advanced knowledge is especially important with older homes or those with unique elements requiring additional or updated training.

Do you focus on residential inspection?

Home inspection is very different from inspecting commercial buildings or a construction site. Ask whether the inspector has experience with your type of property or feature. The inspector should be able to provide sample inspection reports for a similar property. If they recommend further evaluation from outside contractors on multiple issues, it may indicate they're not comfortable with their own knowledge level.

Do you offer to do repairs or improvements?

Some state laws and trade associations allow the inspector to provide repair work on problems uncovered during the inspection. However, other states and associations forbid it as a conflict of interest.

How long will the inspection take?

On average, an inspector working alone inspects a typical single-family house in two to three hours; anything less may not be thorough.

How much?

Costs range from \$300 to \$500 but can vary dramatically depending on your region, the size and age of the house, and the scope of services. Be wary of deals that seem too good to be true.

Will I be able to attend the inspection?

The answer should be yes. A home inspection is a valuable educational opportunity for the buyer and a refusal should raise a red flag.