



Julia Boynton's

REAL ESTATE UPDATE

714/665-7147

Home Inspections — Myths vs. Realities

During the course of closing escrow on a home, most buyers (and some sellers) will use the services of an independent home inspection service to ascertain the overall condition of a property and to uncover any conditions that may adversely affect the value or livability of the home. A professional home inspection will address the functionality of the major systems and some safety aspects of a home and its various components. The purpose of this process is to ensure that a buyer has a better understanding of what is being purchased, prior to completing the transaction.

There is presently no licensing of home inspectors in California. As a result, buyers are often confused about the right person to hire, what to expect from a home inspection and what repair responsibilities the seller has. The California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA), a trade organization for home inspectors, addresses some common misconceptions about home inspections in the following.

MYTH: You only need a general contractor to do a home inspection.

REALITY: While having been a general contractor may be useful, a professional home inspector must possess an intricate combination of disciplines, skills and learning, of which general construction is only one part. In addition to common construction knowledge, an inspector must recognize and evaluate various patterns of deterioration and wear affecting building structures and mechanics, conditions that would not be familiar to persons who deal primarily with new structures. An inspector must also maintain an applied knowledge of building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical and fire safety, typically more familiar to specialty tradesmen such as electricians, plumbers, roofers, heating contractors, etc. This knowledge cannot be

confined to current building requirements only. An inspector deals with structures of all ages and must have a general idea of which standards were in effect when a particular home was built.

MYTH: A termite inspection is all you need to know about a home you are buying.

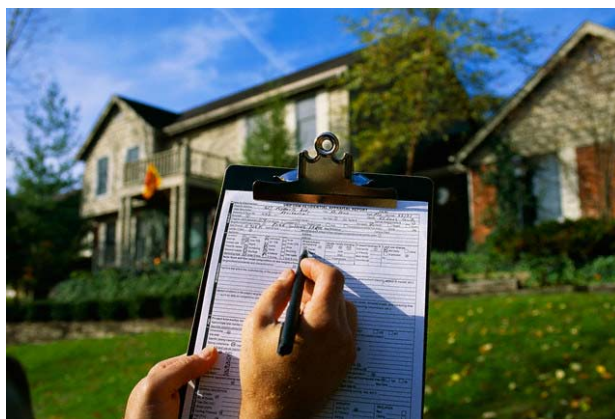
REALITY: Although inspecting for termites is an important aspect of the home buying process, buyers and sellers should not confuse a termite inspection with a home inspection performed by a professional inspector. In California, a termite

or other wood destroying organism inspection can only be performed by a properly licensed Structural Pest Control Operator. The California Structural Pest Control Board oversees the licensing of the profession. Unless licensed to do so, a professional home inspector may not issue a report on termites or other wood destroying organisms; however if they find evidence of same, they will usually recommend that a qualified termite inspector be consulted. By consulting with both a termite inspector and a professional home

inspector, a consumer will receive valuable information on structural and operational conditions within the property.

MYTH: An inspection report isn't needed as long as a qualified person just tells you about the property.

REALITY: A qualified professional inspector will report findings in a written document. Although an inspector may provide insight into his or her report language with verbal onsite comments or follow-up explanations, one should only rely on the language and findings of the written report. There are several variations of reports used in California which include a field-generated checklist style of report (with



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Home Inspections continued

follow-up typed compilation or action list); a checklist corresponding to items in a reference book; a written narrative report; or a combination of any of the above. Many inspectors also use digital photographs to illustrate their findings.

MYTH: The inspection report is a seller’s repair list.

REALITY: The purpose of a home inspection is not to serve the seller with an itemized repair list. All homes have defects; it’s not possible to find one that is perfect. As the buyer, what you want is a working knowledge of significant defects before you close escrow. It is not the seller’s obligation to repair any problems discovered by the home inspector. Most repairs are subject to negotiation between the parties of a sale. Sellers maintain the legal right to refuse repair demands, except where requirements are set forth by state law, local ordinance or by the real estate contract.

MYTH: A home for sale “As-Is” does not need an inspection.

REALITY: There are some misconceptions regarding the so-called “As-Is” sale of real estate. When a seller states they are selling the property “As-Is”, it does not relieve them of certain responsibilities under California state laws relating to the sale or transfer of ownership of real property. The seller is still required to disclose all known material facts to a buyer by completing a “Real Estate Transfer Disclosure Statement”. A property being sold “As-Is” is really being sold “As-Is” AS DISCLOSED. In any case, a buyer should always obtain an independent professional property inspection to be fully informed about the current condition of the property.

Source: CREIA

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