What Buyers Need to Know About a Home Inspection

A home inspection is one of the most important steps in the homebuying process. It provides you with a clearer picture of the property's condition and can help you avoid unexpected repairs and costly surprises after closing.

1. What a Home Inspection Is

A home inspection is a visual evaluation of the property's structure, systems, and major components by a licensed or certified home inspector. This typically includes:

- Roof and attic
- Foundation and crawlspace
- Plumbing and electrical systems
- HVAC (heating and cooling)
- Windows and doors
- Appliances
- Overall safety and functionality

2. What a Home Inspection Is Not

- It's not a pass/fail test
- It's not an appraisal
- Inspectors do not open walls or move furniture
- They typically don't test for things like radon, mold, or pests unless requested separately

3. You Should Be Present

Buyers are encouraged to attend the inspection. This gives you a chance to:

- Ask questions in real time
- Get explanations directly from the inspector
- Learn about maintenance issues or upcoming repairs

4. Expect a Detailed Report

After the inspection, you'll receive a written report outlining all findings, including photos and recommendations. Focus on major issues, not every minor scratch or squeaky hinge.

5. Next Steps After the Inspection

Once you review the report, you have a few options:

- Move forward as-is

- Request repairs
- Ask for a price reduction
- Back out, if your offer included an inspection contingency

Your real estate agent will help you understand the report and negotiate with the seller if needed.

6. Additional Inspections May Be Needed

Depending on the results or the home's age and features, you may consider:

- Pest/termite inspection
- Radon testing
- Sewer scope
- Chimney inspection
- Structural engineer review

7. Be Realistic

No home is perfect, not even new builds. Focus on safety hazards, major systems, and costly repairs—not small cosmetic fixes.