

YOUR PERSONAL HOME EVALUATION PACKAGE



Offered by: **[PLACE YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION HERE]**

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Real Estate Agents: If you are interested in offering this guide as a "value-added" service/tool for your clients, please send inquiry to the above referenced email address.

HOME
EVALUATION
GUIDE

HOME EVALUATION GUIDE

Introduction

Tools for the Evaluation

Let's Get Started

- I. The Neighborhood
- II. Site and Location
- III. Foundation
- IV. Exterior Walls, Windows and Doors
- V. Roof, Gutters and Downspouts
- VI. Chimney and Fireplace
- VII. Plumbing and Water Heater
- VIII. Heating and Cooling System
- IX. Electrical System
- X. Interior Walls/Ceilings/Flooring
- XI. Miscellaneous Interior
- XII. Subjective Assessment

Evaluation Checklist

Summary Listing

HOME EVALUATION GUIDE

Introduction

For the vast majority of Americans the purchase of a home will be their biggest investment, an investment that should be taken with the utmost care. It is amazing though, that despite this reality, most are not equipped with the knowledge to perform even a basic assessment of the soundness of that investment. According to the Federal Trade Commission, 42% of home buyers have faced unexpected repairs costing an average of \$500 after moving into their home.

This guide and checklist will provide buyers with the necessary information to perform a good preliminary assessment of a house in less than one-hour (in most cases). It is intended to assist the home buyer in the home selection process. The evaluation steps are predominantly of an objective/measurable nature. Subjective judgments (i.e. general attractiveness, home layout), which will vary among individuals, are not included within the evaluation steps. We have included a document at the end of the package (Summary Listing) which allows the home buyer to summarize both the subjective as well as the objective (evaluation steps) elements of each home. This will help in that all-important decision making process. In addition, home sellers will find this as a useful guide in identifying potential problems that can be corrected before the dreaded surprise from the buyer's home inspection.

The guide is outlined in an easy to use format that will take you from the home lot then thoroughly through the home from outside to inside. For efficiency reasons, we suggest that the home checklist(s) be used after the initial home selection "narrowing" process has been completed. Typically, between three to five homes will involve the actual completion of the checklist. The checklist will offer suggestions in those situations where a noted potential problem should be thoroughly assessed by a skilled inspector. In all cases we strongly suggest the use of a qualified home inspector to perform a final assessment before the sale closes. A word of caution however, not all states require certification of home inspectors. To help avoid obtaining a less than qualified inspector, you should obtain solid references or utilize an inspector who is certified by a national home inspection association. Your real estate agent should be able to provide guidance. You are paying an inspector to perform a thorough assessment of the foundation and basement slab, walls, ceilings, floors, windows, doors and roofing. The professional inspector will determine if the main structure is sound, free of damage from insects or rot, and strong enough to support the house. In addition, the inspector will assess plumbing, heating and electrical soundness.

HOME EVALUATION GUIDE

Although they will look for termite damage, some are not licensed to evaluate the presence of termites. Also, most home inspections do not assess environmental hazards, including, but not limited to, water contamination, leaking underground storage tanks, lead paint, asbestos, and radon gas. An appropriately trained individual must make environmental assessments. This guide will not address environmental hazards since this assessment is beyond the ability of the typical home buyer. Your real estate agent can suggest which environmental hazard tests are recommended for a particular home and area.

As a prospective buyer, your preliminary evaluation checklist and/or the professional home inspection can be used as a negotiating tool. Another word of caution, do not use this as a club which may anger the seller. All reasonable people recognize that a used home does have some flaws (or what the seller may suggest are character traits), therefore, we suggest that you use this negotiating tool wisely. Many sellers are offering and many buyers are requesting home warranty protection. These home warranty protection plans cover repair and replacement costs on most major home systems and built-in appliances, such as electrical and plumbing systems, water heaters, heating and cooling systems and more. Generally, the seller purchases these plans. This is where your evaluation results could be used to encourage the seller to purchase a home warranty protection plan.

One last point of discussion before we get started; the seller's disclosure statement. With the increase of buyer lawsuits against sellers over the past several years over undisclosed property defects, disclosure statements are becoming more common. In fact, most states now legally require the seller to complete a disclosure statement. The disclosure statement, as the name implies, is a statement that identifies known defects and is completed by the seller. For the buyer this provides an additional level of comfort. However, as a buyer who in most cases does not know the seller, there is always a doubt as to whether the seller is being completely honest. Also, in many cases the seller may not be aware of existing defects. Therefore, as a buyer, you should be careful not to place complete reliance on this statement to disclose defects.

HOME EVALUATION GUIDE

Let's get started

At this time, please refer to the "Evaluation Checklist" which includes all evaluation steps. As mentioned, we will take you first outside the home and then thoroughly through the inside of the home. It is a good idea to check with the property owner before you conduct any steps that could affect the property, such as turning on or off anything, moving items or poking at surfaces. As you perform each step, please check the appropriate box on the checklist and if you check no next to any step, include a clear and concise statement in the comments section identifying the suspected problem. In all cases we strongly recommend that any noted problems be brought to the attention of the paid inspector so that they may offer their professional opinion. Some of the checklist steps will have a "see guide" notation in parenthesis after the step. These are steps that may not be self-explanatory, therefore, a reference to this section (Home Evaluation Guide) has been included.

To simplify cross-referencing with the Summary Listing, you should input sequential numbers (starting with "1") for each assessed home on the top of the first page of the Evaluation Checklist. This numbering can also be placed on any pictures you take of the home. Interior and exterior pictures are strongly advised to help you remember characteristics of each assessed home, however you should receive approval from the homeowner before taking any pictures. You may want to purchase an inexpensive pocket folder to store pictures and other relevant documentation for each assessed home.

HOME EVALUATION GUIDE

[SECTION SAMPLE]

II. Site and Location

This section assesses the quality of the lot, including general layout and positioning, landscaping, driveway and walkways. Much of your assessment of the site and location will be of a subjective nature, which should be documented in Section XII (Subjective Assessment).

Step #	Evaluation
1.	Water drainage problems can spell disaster for homes over a period of time. Look to see that the home is not located in a depression. Also look to see if on any side of the home the surrounding land is higher than the home. If yes, this may present water run-off problems. A qualified inspector should provide further input on this potential problem.
3.	The quality of the landscaping is largely a subjective call on your part. You should be concerned, however, if you find large trees that are located too close to the home. This may cause problems with overhanging branches that may damage roofs or gutters or tree roots that may affect the foundation or driveways and walks.
4.	Look to see if the home has a southern exposure. Most people feel this is desirable, since the sun will hit the home directly, and most of the inclement weather probably will not (most weather patterns in the United States move from west to east).
5.	If you desire a home that affords privacy, you should critically evaluate the landscaping and other features (i.e. fencing). Check to see if the neighbors have easy view of your yard and interior of the home.
7.	Water drainage is your primary concern. The driveway should have at least a small grade slope away from the garage and home.
9.	For brick or concrete patios, look for proper slope away from home and check for cracks. For wooden decks, look for general signs of deterioration such as wood rot and insect damage.
10.	Look for a properly functioning filtration system. Visually check for cracks in pool wall and bottom. Ensure hardware fixtures (i.e. ladders, rails, diving board) are properly secured. If the water is not clean and clear, it may suggest that the pool was not properly cared for.

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

[SECTION SAMPLE]

Home # _____

Home Address: _____

II. Site and Location

#	Evaluation Step	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
1.	Does the site layout and topography allow for good drainage? (see guide)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.	Is the lot size and layout satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.	Is the landscaping satisfactory? (see guide)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.	Does the home afford your desired amount of privacy? (see guide)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

6.	Do trees and shrubbery appear healthy and properly positioned?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7.	Does the driveway slope away properly from the house? (see guide)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8.	Are the driveway and walkways in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9.	Is the patio/deck in good condition? (see guide)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10.	Is the swimming pool in good condition? (see guide)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11.	Other considerations?				

