

# Property Inspection Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

- Property exterior - structural safety**
  - Foundation** If the foundation cracked or wet or the structure is leaning badly, serious foundation damage may have occurred. Have a foundation repair specialist check it out.
  - Roof** The roof should be in good repair, with flashing intact and no missing shingles. Have a roofer inspect it if there are signs of water damage or leaks.
  - Deck/porch** Inspect the supporting beams for sign of rot or insect damage. Flooring should be even and properly nailed or screwed down. Railing should be intact.
- Property exterior - maintenance**
  - Trees** All limbs should be trimmed away from power lines and away from structures. Limbs overhanging buildings may require the services of a professional tree trimmer.
  - Siding** If wooden, check for signs of damage or need for painting. If manufactured, check for cracks or missing pieces.
  - Doors and windows** These should be watertight, with weather-stripping and caulking redone within the last year. Broken glass should be replaced.
- Property exterior - appearance**
  - Lawn** If the lawn is unkempt or in poor condition, a landscaping or lawn care service may be required to get it back in shape.
  - Paint** If buildings show signs of severe weathering, a new coat of paint may be in order.
  - Fencing** Fencing should be intact and posts should be in firm footing. Missing slats or rotted posts should be replaced by a professional fencing company.
- Property interior - structural**
  - Ceiling** Any sagging sections should be checked out immediately. Water spots are a sign that integrity has been compromised.
  - Floors** Places that give way when you step on them indicate a professional flooring contractor be contacted to determine if the damage is foundation or insect related.
  - Support beams** Doorways should be square - sticking doors may indicate a foundation shift that should be looked into. Load-bearing walls should not be creaked or buckled.
  - Insulation** Ask for proof that the building contains no asbestos, and ensure that there is sufficient insulation to prevent undue energy loss.
- Property interior - maintenance**
  - Plumbing** Have a plumber do a quick check of all pipes to ensure they are up to code and that there are no leaks. Check water pressure and hot water heater.
  - Electrical** Watch out for outlets with signs of scorching. Locate the breaker box and determine which breakers control which rooms.
  - Floors** Carpets should be in good condition, call a professional cleaner if needed. Wood floors may require sanding and refinishing.
  - Windows** Blinds should be in working condition. Draped may require professional cleaning.

- Fixtures** Check all hanging and indirect lighting as well as ceiling fans.
- HVAC** Have heating and air conditioning units checked out and serviced by a professional.
- Fireplace** Call a chimney sweep if needed to clean the flue, remove creosote and ensure your fireplace is safe to use.
- Property interior - appearance**
  - Walls** Consider having professional house-painters spruce up walls in rooms that show signs of dinginess or stains.
  - Cabinets/counters** Rotted or outdated fixtures should be replaced. Cabinet doors can be sanded and repainted or stained.
  - Doors** Any peeling paint indicates a need to sand and repaint doors. Check doorknobs and replace if needed. Remember to check for deadbolts on the exterior doors.
  - Pests** Look in nooks and crannies checking for insects or vermin. Call a pest control company if needed to spray or place bait.