

Top Five Problems Home Inspectors Most Frequently

Find In Homes Today



Patrick Casey, Owner



A survey conducted by the American Society of Home Inspectors® (ASHI) revealed the top 5 problems home inspectors are finding in homes today. The survey was conducted nationwide, and inspectors were asked to list the most common defects or problems they encountered:

- 1. Improper surface grading or drainage:** The most frequently found problem was inadequate drainage away from the home. Water is a home's worst enemy, especially in climates with freeze/thaw cycles such as ours. It can cause common and sometimes significant problems such as water collecting along the foundation, water leaking into the basement, or cracking/bowing foundation walls. In many cases, the drainage is easily corrected by simple measures such as cleaning and maintaining gutters and filling in low spots in the yard along the foundation where settling has occurred. Sometimes more extensive repairs such as installing a sump pump and a drain tile system are required.
- 2. Improper electrical wiring:** Home inspectors often find incorrect electrical wiring such as inadequate electrical services, improper connections inside the electrical panels (such as double-tapped circuits or oversized circuit breakers), and amateurish and often dangerous wiring installations. Problems can occur when the sub panels are improperly installed or improperly connected to the existing panel. Improper wiring is a safety concern, and a qualified electrical contractor should make repairs.
- 3. Roof Damage:** Roof damage was reported by ASHI® inspectors as the 3rd most frequent problem. Missing or damaged shingles, loose flashing, damaged chimneys, leaking skylights and inadequate roof ventilation were common items found. Often roof repairs can be made easily and inexpensively, but sometimes more extensive repairs are needed such as removing and replacing the existing shingles. Slate, tile and asbestos shingles require special attention since they are brittle and can crack when walked on. Typically, asphalt shingles last between 15 to 20 years, while wood shingles or wood shakes usually last 20 to 25 years in our climate.
- 4. Heating Systems:** Without regular maintenance, heating systems can become inefficient or even safety hazards. Chimney flues can become blocked, burners can malfunction, flue pipes can rust out or become disconnected, and operating controls can wear out. These were some of the items that were cited by inspectors.
- 5. Poor Overall Maintenance:** All homes require regular maintenance. Common deficiencies found by home inspectors due to a lack of maintenance were: exterior rot at windows and doors, deteriorating siding, concrete sidewalks and driveways that are crumbling or are incorrectly sloped, non-functional appliances, broken window panes, defective thermal panes, and leaking plumbing fixtures.

An inspection by a qualified home inspector can give buyers the information they need to make a confident, informed purchase decision. Sellers can also benefit by having a pre-listing inspection and using it as a selling tool. Pre-listing inspections are becoming more and more popular as the demand for an inspection continues to rise. Real Estate professionals benefit by recommending an inspection as well. It shows the buyers that the agent is looking out for their best interests by encouraging full disclosure of the property's condition.

Inspectors who are Certified Members of ASHI® have passed rigid examinations, agree to uphold the rigorous standards established by the Society, and must maintain continuing education.

Patrick Casey is the owner of The Home Buyers Protection Company, a local home inspection company. Mr. Casey is also past president of the American Society of Home Inspectors® and is co-founder of The Greater Omaha Building Inspectors Association.

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