MoveConnected

PRE-LISTING CHECKLIST FOR SELLERS

What inspectors flag that you can fix this weekend

Your buyer's inspector will write down everything, big and small. A long list of small items can make a well-kept home look neglected, and every line is something the buyer can bring up in negotiation.

Most of what's below takes a screwdriver, a caulk gun or a trip to the hardware store. Work through it before you list, and tick each box as you go.

The 3 most common findings in a review of 50,000 inspection reports

~55%	Doors that needed adjusting
54%	Missing exterior caulk and sealant
~48%	Missing GFCI protection

Repair Pricer, reported by GAAR, 2019. All three are on this list.

1 Doors and windows

- [ ] **Every door closes and latches.** No rubbing, latches on the first try. Tighten loose hinge screws; move the strike plate if the latch misses.
- [ ] **Exterior door seals.** Replace torn or missing weatherstripping and door sweeps. Daylight around a closed door gets noted.
- [ ] **Windows open, close and lock.** Free up stuck sashes. Replace broken locks and cranks.
- [ ] **Screens.** Patch or replace torn screens, and put missing ones back in.

2 Outside: seal it and send water away

Poor grading and drainage was the most common problem in an InterNACHI survey of inspectors.

- [ ] **Re-caulk the gaps.** Around window and door trim, at siding corners, and where pipes, wires and vents go through the wall. Use exterior-grade caulk.
- [ ] **Paint bare wood.** Scrape and paint peeling trim, fascia and sills. Bare wood invites rot.
- [ ] **Clean the gutters.** Clear them out and reattach loose sections and downspouts.
- [ ] **Point downspouts away.** Add extensions so roof water lands well away from the foundation.
- [ ] **Slope soil and mulch away.** Pull mulch, soil and stored things back from the siding so the ground falls away from the house.
- [ ] **Trim plants back.** Cut shrubs and branches off the siding and roof.

3 Plumbing

- [ ] **Under every sink.** Run the water and look for drips. Tighten or replace leaking connections, then dry the cabinet floor.
- [ ] **Toilets.** Fix one that keeps running. One that rocks can mean a failed seal at the floor, so have it checked.
- [ ] **Tub, shower and sink caulk.** Cut out cracked or moldy caulk and re-caulk.
- [ ] **Faucets and drains.** Fix dripping faucets and clear slow drains.

4 Electrical: test, don't take apart

- [ ] **GFCI outlets.** Press TEST, then RESET, on each GFCI outlet in the kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, garage and outside. If one won't trip or reset, or a wet-area outlet has no GFCI, call a licensed electrician.
- [ ] **Dead bulbs.** Replace burned-out bulbs, so a dead bulb isn't written up as a light that doesn't work.
- [ ] **Cover plates.** Replace missing or cracked switch and outlet covers.
- [ ] **The panel.** Leave the cover on and move stored things away from it. Anything inside the panel is an electrician's job.

5 Safety

- [ ] **Smoke alarms.** Have one inside and outside each bedroom, and on every level. Test each one. Replace any alarm 10 years past the manufacture date on its back.
- [ ] **Carbon monoxide alarms.** Have one on each level of the home and outside sleeping areas.
- [ ] **Handrails.** Tighten loose stair rails and handrails.
- [ ] **Trip hazards.** Re-secure loose carpet, thresholds and stair treads.

6 Heating and cooling

- [ ] **New filter.** Replace the furnace or AC filter and write the date on it.
- [ ] **Clear the outdoor unit.** Pull plants and debris back from the condenser.
- [ ] **Service records.** Leave out the last service receipt.

7 Before inspection day

- [ ] **Clear the way.** Make room to reach the electrical panel, water heater, furnace, attic hatch and crawlspace.
- [ ] **Utilities on.** Keep water, power and gas on, so every system can be run.
- [ ] **Unlocked.** Unlock gates, sheds and the garage.
- [ ] **Paperwork out.** Leave out receipts and warranties for recent repairs.

Leave these to a licensed pro

Active leaks or water stains, roof damage, foundation or structural cracks, anything inside the electrical panel, gas lines and gas appliances, and water heater valve or venting problems. A pre-listing inspection tells you which of these you have.

Already have a pre-listing inspection?

Upload the report and MoveConnected pulls out what a buyer's inspector would flag, so you can decide what to fix, disclose, or price in, and find local contractors for the work.

moveconnected.com/sell-a-home

General information, not professional advice. Follow your local codes, and hire a licensed professional for electrical, gas, roof and structural work. Fixing an item doesn't change what you may need to disclose; ask your agent what your state requires.

Sources: Repair Pricer review of 50,000 inspection reports, reported by GAAR (Feb. 20, 2019), gaar.com/blog/article/the-10-most-common-defects-found-in-home-inspections; InterNACHI, "Ten Most Common House Problems", nachi.org/ten-problems-hhenews.htm; U.S. Fire Administration, "Smoke alarms", usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires/prepare-for-fire/smoke-alarms/; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, "CO Alarms", cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/Carbon-Monoxide-Information-Center/CO-Alarms.