

Inspection Myths: What You Don't Know Could Affect Your Deals

Every real estate professional knows that a home inspection can make or break a final deal. It's that last, nail-biting step toward your client's confidence in the sale or purchase — hopefully paving the way to a smooth, final sale.

Yet even though more than 70 percent of U.S. homes sold each year receive a home inspection, according to the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), several misconceptions about home inspections still persist. Are your deals — and your clients' peace of mind — at risk?

Put yourself to the test below to make sure *you* can debunk the top seven most common myths about home inspection (as released by ASHI).

- 1. It's okay for a home inspector, hired by a potential buyer, to talk with the home seller about concerns that have been uncovered.**

False. According to ASHI, a home inspector's main focus should be educating the person who is paying for the inspection — in this case, the potential buyer. An inspector should offer the buyer information on the physical condition of the home and provide suggestions for repair or maintenance. An inspector should *not* address any issues with the home seller. Plus, an inspector should never play a role in actual repair work.
- 2. If a home inspector is licensed by a state, you know that he/she has agreed to abide by industry ethics and standards.**

False. Less than 35 states have inspector regulations, ASHI reports, and requirements for licensing vary. That's why ASHI recommends that buyers always verify an inspector's experience, credentials and adherence to professional standards, even in a state that licenses inspectors.
- 3. Both new and existing homes should be inspected.**

True. New construction is just as important to inspect as an existing home, ASHI says. You might even suggest to your clients that they arrange for "phased" inspections at various stages of construction.
- 4. If a home has had a property appraisal, government code inspection, and termite or other hazard inspection, there's little need for a separate home inspection.**

False. Other kinds of inspections or appraisals can certainly be worthwhile, but they should not replace a thorough home inspection, according to ASHI and other industry experts. A home inspection will provide information on areas not covered by other assessments. Likewise, a home inspection should not take the place of other prescribed inspections, since each is designed to review specific concerns.
- 5. Home inspections are good only for a home buyer.**

False. ASHI recommends that home sellers consider a prelisting inspection to uncover any issues well before a sale is pending. (In fact, the number of sellers arranging for pre-listing inspections has increased in the past four years, ASHI reports.) A professional inspector can also help the seller, and you as the seller's agent, pinpoint any necessary disclosures. Many sellers find the value well worth the extra cost of a home inspection, which hovers around \$300 as a national average, according to ASHI.
- 6. Home inspectors should point out every small problem, including cosmetic flaws and minor defects in a home.**

False. According to ASHI, a professional home inspection should be an objective review of the overall condition of the visible and accessible parts of a home on the day of inspection. An inspection is not designed to point out minor defects or cosmetic flaws but to concentrate on major issues of interest.
- 7. Credentials matter when it comes to home inspection.**

True. There are many types of home inspection certification programs, and not all are created equal. Before hiring an inspector, be sure to ask for his or her credentials and certification details. In the certifying organization, look for indications of both online and hands-on training and note the types of exams required (and if they are proctored). Ask around about the organization's history and reputation.

So, how did you rate? If you could use a refresher in general home inspection knowledge, check out the "Virtual Home Inspection Tour" on the [ASHI Web site](#)* for a detailed illustration of what goes into an ASHI-approved inspection, room-by-room.

Remember, knowing all you can about the ins and outs of home inspections makes you more valuable to your clients — and helps you better guide them through every step of the sale or purchase process.

From Countrywide Home Loans, Trends Online, September 2006