

# Building Inspection Basics Checklist



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## BEFORE

- ☐ 1. Have a device to take good quality photos; usually a smart phone, but a digital or film camera will work just as well.
- ☐ 2. Have a way to store and send photos that memorializes the investigation and preserves the quality of the photos.
- ☐ 3. Have paper, pen and colored pens/markers.
- ☐ 4. Have a tape measure.
- ☐ 5. Have a pointer/gauge/small measuring device (see sample inspection photos).
- ☐ 6. Collect construction drawings, if available, to mark up during inspection to show where an issue is located.
- ☐ 7. Collect other graphic aids like site plans, floor plans, building elevations (if you don't know what these are, don't worry), or other documents like brochures from the time of sale, an appraisal report, etc. to mark up during inspection.
- ☐ 8. Collect and use images from tools like Google Maps and Google Earth. If possible, print these and mark locations on them. For example: If the problem is with the roof, driveway, or something in the backyard, an aerial image from Google or Bing with an indication of where the inspection is taking place can be an amazing aid in helping others understand the situation.
- ☐ 9. Collect the information necessary to make a list of people involved, a Timeline and/or a Service History, or collect the information so someone else can create these lists.
- ☐ 10. Make an "Issues List" (this includes problems, complaints, damages, etc.) and print for use during your inspection to guide your photographs and documentation. Be sure to organize this information in a sensible manner for later review.
- ☐ 11. Establish a pattern for how the residence will be inspected. When photos and notes are taken, they should follow a logical pattern that someone other than the inspector can understand. For example: front yard and elevation, the right side of the house, the back, the left side, etc. and then move to the interior. Begin with the foyer and move in a counter clock-wise direction throughout the house.
- ☐ 5. Include a measuring tape or gauge in photos to give an idea of the size of the issues being documented.
- ☐ 6. Take approximately 25-100 photos per hour. Anything less than 25 may not be enough. 1,000 is probably too many.
- ☐ 7. Photos should follow a sequence:
  - A. Site address and general area.
  - B. Issue specific photos (overall, semi-detailed, detailed).
  - C. Photos of notes, sketches, or marked up drawings.
- ☐ 8. Take notes for every area being inspected. Sometimes the issue is better explained by the notes than the picture. Also note dimensions and measurements when necessary or helpful.
- ☐ 9. Draw sketches and diagrams even if you're bad at it. A sketch is worth 1,000 words, and a diagram can be worth 1,000 pictures. Include dimensions of what is being diagrammed.
- ☐ 10. Make marks on any visual aides that were collected before the inspection (like google maps images) to identify where issues are occurring. Use colored pens or markers to make notes and mark ups easy to see.
- ☐ 11. Put a page number, date, and the inspector's name on every page, sketch, and diagram.
- ☐ 12. Inspect like you're the only one who will ever have access to the property. If you don't document an issue, it will be hard to prove to someone who wasn't there. Photos may not explain the whole issue, so add notes with the photos.
- ☐ 13. Interview anyone who knows about the situation being documented and take detailed notes including their name, contact information, and a chronological list of important information discussed during the interview.
- ☐ 14. At the end, look at your "Issues List" and use it as a checklist to make 100% sure you didn't miss anything.

## DURING

- ☐ 1. Begin your inspection notes by writing your name, the date, street address, city, state, and any other basic information on paper and take a photo of this piece of paper. Make this the first photo of your inspection. If multiple units are being inspected, make sheets for each unit and take a photo of each sheet at the beginning of each unit's inspection.
- ☐ 2. At the beginning, perform an initial walk-through of the property without taking any photos. Update your "Issues List" with any additional problems you notice.
- ☐ 3. Take photos of the building's exterior and surrounding area. It should be perfectly clear if it is out in the country, the city, or somewhere in between within the first few photos.
- ☐ 4. Take an overall photo, semi-detailed photo, and detailed photo of each issue (in general, at least 3 photos per issue). If some areas don't have issues, take one or two general orientation photos of those as well.
- ☐ 2. Suggested organizational scheme:
  - A. Photo of paper with your name, date, street address, city, state, and any other basic information.
  - B. General area photos (neighborhood, site/yard, outside of building).
  - C. Photos of issues (from general to detailed for each respective issue).
  - D. Photos of notes, diagrams, and sketches.
- ☐ 3. Take a photo of each page of inspection notes, sketches, diagrams, and marked-up visual aids.
- ☐ 4. Download the photographs from the camera or smart device into a file like Dropbox or Google Drive and number them in the order that they were taken.
- ☐ 5. Write a brief summary of what is happening with the residence. Keep this as fact oriented as possible. It could be as simple as a bullet list of what was observed during the inspection.
- ☐ 6. Update the original "Issues List" to make sure it includes everything you discovered during the inspection.

