

Home Inspection Helps Ensure Dream Deals Don't Turn Into Nightmares after Purchase

When a buyer finds a foreclosed home, they can wonder if that great price tag comes with a different kind of higher cost. Sometimes a repossessed property, or a home offered at a bargain price, because of its condition, can mean hidden repair costs.

REO's and short sale homes are often abandoned and in disrepair, creating much more potential for possible unforeseen structural defects, plumbing, electrical, heating systems, environmental issues and many other problems. Repairs could cost much more than the savings. Health and safety issues could also affect your family adversely.

Today's prices are a rarity. Before putting your signature on a purchase agreement, be sure to have the house thoroughly inspected by an unbiased professional. Unlike a contractor or family member not trained in home inspections, a professional can offer detailed observations that are relied upon for all parties in the sale. The small investment allows buyers to know in advance what they are getting into -- and what they should walk away from.

Among several ways to find a home inspector, we recommend consulting your real estate or mortgage professional. Buyers can also find information on inspectors in the San Diego area at the California Real Estate Inspectors Association, online at www.creia.org

The seller can benefit equally from having their property inspected before it is listed. By being aware of potential issues, the seller may choose to reveal them or make the repairs to improve the value and tempt buyers that are looking for a turn-key ready home. Moreover, homeowners can benefit from maintenance inspections in advance of major repairs. Home inspections for seniors can help address future safety needs and help them stay in their home longer.

For those thinking of hiring a home inspector, CREIA offers a few tips on how to evaluate candidates:

- Visit the "Locate a CREIA Inspector" section of CREIA's Web site to find a qualified CREIA inspector in your area. Many inspectors also list their specialties and other distinguishing information, such as their experience, coverage area, prices and philosophy.
- Ask the inspector what format will the report be in. (Not all reports are equally thorough.) Ask for sample reports.
- Interview each candidate to determine the one that makes you feel most comfortable.
- Check all references.

- Don't automatically go with the lowest price. Remember, the old adage is often true - you get what you pay for.
- Attend the inspection to see and hear the issues that arise and so that you can ask questions. Some issues may require further evaluation.

A home inspector can be a buyer or a seller's best ally in ensuring a dream deal doesn't turn into a nightmare. Visit www.creia.org to learn more.

Important Links:

http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/safety_guide/safetyguide.aspx