

## Basic Info

This is a form designed to help agents and buyers look at homes for sale. There are a lot of questions, but this shouldn't take you hours and hours. Take a look at the form before you arrive at the house. It's designed to help you think of things to look at when you walk through an open house that is crowded with other buyers, and to let you take some quick notes during and after your visit. Don't get hung up on filling out every single entry. If you spend 30-60 minutes in a home, you should be able to answer the majority of these questions.

Bring a flashlight, tape measure, and multi-tool. This form assumes you've already looked at pictures and have the MLS info about the parking, bedroom/bath count, and other general details.

Remember that perhaps 80% of issues in a home are related to water - leaks, mold, rot, staining, ice dams, floods, and damp conditions that foster many insects. Keep an eye out for signs of water being where it shouldn't.

Look for deferred maintenance items like yardwork, burned out bulbs, and peeling paint. These may indicate that more substantial items have been ignored.

I specifically do not address lead paint issues in this form. Those should be dealt with using the Mass Lead Paint disclosure form.

This form is not intended to replace an inspection by a licensed home inspector.

This form was prepared by Jason Turgeon of the Virtual Realty Group in Boston, MA. If you need an agent in metro Boston, please get in touch at [jason.turgeon@gmail.com](mailto:jason.turgeon@gmail.com) or (617) 934-6650.

I have borrowed liberally from this article for some items: <https://www.realtor.com/advice/buy/things-to-look-for-when-buying-a-home/>

### 1. Property address

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### 2. Email address

Only used to send you the completed form.

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### 3. Date viewed

*Example: December 15, 2012*

## Exterior

Before you go inside, walk around the outside. If possible, always look at a home in daylight!

**4. Curb appeal and general neighborhood**

Think about the proximity to neighbors, whether or not it's on a busy street, walkability, access to public transit, schools, etc., etc. Also take a minute to stand on the sidewalk and look at the house and how it fits on the lot and relates to the neighboring buildings.

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**5. Flood risk**

You should check a flood map and ask if the sellers have had any issues. But also consider proximity to nearby waterbodies or low-lying areas, even if the area is not technically in a flood zone and there is no past history of issues. Floods and heavy rains are increasing in frequency and intensity.

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**6. Yard condition**

Any landscaping issues? Retaining walls that need work? Adequate space for kids/pets/bbqs? Sunlight for gardening? Privacy? Grading/slopes/etc.? Trees that need pruning or dead trees that need to be removed? Fruit trees that may drop fruit and attract insects/animals?

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**7. Driveway**

Is there enough space for the desired number of cars? Is there a clear path to park? Any unusual obstructions? Is the driveway surface in good repair? Will it be easy to shovel/snowblow? Is it shared with neighbors or other condo owners? Is it easy to get in and out safely?

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**8. Roof Material(s)**

*Check all that apply.*

- Asphalt Shingles
- Slate
- Metal
- Rubber
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Roof condition**

Is the age of the roof known? Is there a warranty of any kind? Any known leaks? Any visible missing/damaged shingles, moss, discoloration, obvious DIY fixes, roofing tar on slate, etc.? Any visible rot or other damage to fascia boards? Does the seller know how many layers of shingles are there (1 is preferred, 2 is acceptable, more than 2 is problematic). Are there chimneys? If so, are there any obvious problems (leaning, missing bricks, etc.)? Are there any satellite dishes or antennas that need to be removed?

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**10. Drainage**

Are there gutters and downspouts all around the house? Do downspouts drain away from foundation? Are there downspouts that might be connected to the sanitary sewer? Any areas where water will be directed towards the foundation, evidence of pooling, etc.?

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**11. Siding type**

*Check all that apply.*

- Brick
- Vinyl
- Aluminum
- Wood clapboard
- Wood shingle
- Cementboard clapboard (Hardie Board)
- Asphalt shingle
- Asbestos shingle
- Stucco
- Brownstone
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Siding condition**

Is there any visible damage to the siding - dents, missing pieces, cracks, rot, peeling paint, etc.? Do you like the color? Is the trim in good condition? If brick or stone, are there any obvious visible defects to the mortar, loose or missing bricks, walls that are bowing or pulling away from the building, etc.?

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**13. Foundation and basement (exterior)**

Any obvious foundation cracks or other issues? Is the sill plate visible or buried under leaves, etc.? Is there exterior access to the basement?

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**14. Porches, entry steps, and decks**

Note the materials and general condition. Are the deck supports solid? Any missing or loose boards/bricks? Is the porch/deck large enough to enjoy using the space? Is the main entry covered? Is there an out-of-sight place for package deliveries? Are the railings sturdy, high enough, etc.?

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**15. Lighting (exterior)**

Is there lighting for the porch/entries/driveway? Is there a big streetlight or any unwanted exterior light that might disturb you inside?

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**16. Garage/outbuildings**

Any roof/flooring/foundation/structural issues? Is the garage big enough to park a car/truck in and open the doors? Is there electricity to the structure? Do the doors open and close smoothly?

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**Interior**

Look for water damage like stained ceilings, signs of structural issues like sticking doors or cracks in the wall, and think about the general condition of the interior. Pay attention to tile work. Poorly done tile is a great sign that other work in house might not be done well, either.

**17. Odors**

Are there any unusual smells? Is the agent trying to cover something up with an unusually large number of scented candles or potpourri? One candle is fine, 10 candles should raise suspicions.

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**18. Room size and flow**

This is subjective, but think about the sizes of the rooms, the flow of the house, interior sightlines, whether or not you can get furniture into the rooms easily, whether the house has an entry area for coats and shoes, where you might store a stroller or carseat, etc. Do the number of rooms match the listing description? Are there enough closets and storage areas?

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**19. Ceilings and walls**

Look at the ceilings. Do they show signs of water damage, like staining, sagging, or bubbling? After that, are they high enough? Is the material something you can live with? Similarly for the walls, is there any obvious damage? Are there cracks that might indicate foundation issues? Does the house need to be painted? Is the trim in good condition? If there are crown moldings, are they in good repair and installed well? Are there any signs of new improvements that might indicate a hidden problem, like an oddly painted wall?

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**20. Flooring materials**

*Check all that apply.*

- Hardwood
- Softwood (pine, usually in very old homes)
- Tile
- Carpet
- Vinyl
- Linoleum
- Polished concrete
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**21. Flooring condition**

If they're wood, do they need to be refinished? Are they thick enough to allow refinishing? If carpet, is it stained, ripped, worn, etc.?

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**22. Windows**

Look at all the windows. Open and close several of them, remembering to relock them when you are done. Are they original or replacement? If original, are they in good repair, or in good enough shape for homeowner repairs? If original, do they have storm windows, and are the storms in good shape? Do they open, close, and lock smoothly? If replacement, do they tilt-in for cleaning? Are the screens intact? Are there any obvious gaps or signs of poor installation? Any signs of leaking? Are window treatments (shades/curtains) included? If so, are they in good repair?

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**23. Doors**

Do the doors open and close smoothly and quietly? Do the latches work? Do exterior doors have weatherstripping, storms, etc.? Are interior doors solid wood or hollow? If they're old doors, is the hardware in good condition?

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**24. Lighting**

Are the fixtures attractive and in good repair? Is there enough light in each room? Do the switches work?

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**25. Kitchen**

Spend a lot of time in the kitchen. Open the cabinets and check the interiors. Are they clean? Do they have soft-close features? Check the condition of all the appliances, opening all the doors. Consider whether there is enough counter and cabinet space in the existing layout. Is there a pantry? Look under the sink cabinet for plumbing issues. Remember that some changes are easy and cheap, like new paint on the walls or replacing a faucet. Some are easy but not cheap, like upgrading appliances or having the counters upgraded. Some are difficult but not expensive, like doing a deep cleaning or painting cabinet doors. And some are difficult and expensive, like changing layouts and replacing cabinets.

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**26. Appliances**

Does it include appliances? If so, are they in usable condition? Does the seller know how old they are? Is there a dishwasher or space for one? Is there a washer/dryer connection in the living area or basement? Is the dryer properly vented? Open the doors to all the appliances and take a quick look to make sure there is nothing obviously wrong.

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**27. Baths**

Similar to the kitchen, spend some time in the bathroom(s) and ask yourself the same sets of questions about materials/finishes/general condition/layouts. Are there enough bathrooms for your family? Are they in the places you want them to be? If not, is it possible to add or expand one? Is there a working vent fan? Are there any signs of water issues (mold, bubbling paint, soft flooring, loose tiles, etc.)? Is the caulk around the tub in good repair? Look under the sink cabinet for issues.

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**28. Fireplaces and wood stoves**

If there are any, do they function? If so, are there signs of poor airflow (soot on bricks, etc.)? Does the seller know when the chimneys were last serviced? From the ground, do the chimneys appear to be leaning, missing bricks, missing mortar, etc.?

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**29. Attic**

Is there access to the attic? Is it a conditioned space? Are there signs of roof leaks? Is it adequately insulated? Are there signs of rodents (pellets, odors, shredded insulation)? Is there storage, and is it readily accessible? Are any of the building systems located in the attic? If the roof joists are visible, are there any signs of structural issues?

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**30. Basement**

Is any portion of the basement finished? What material is the foundation? Does the foundation need to be repointed or painted? Is the foundation cracked or bowing/leaning? Are there signs of structural issues like lally columns, cracked structural members, etc.? Are there signs of leaks or past flooding? Are boxes stored on the floor or up on pallets? Is there a sump pump? Is there a dehumidifier? Is there a smell of mold? Is there both interior and exterior access to the basement? Can larger items like bicycles and kayaks easily be brought downstairs? How high are the ceilings? If it is shared with other units, is there a deeded area for your unit, preferably lockable? Is the rim joist visible and in good condition? Is the first floor insulated underneath? Is there adequate air sealing and other insulation around the rim joist and other foundation penetrations? Are there signs of rodents, excessive spiderwebs, or unexplained smells? Is there any visible asbestos insulation? Any signs of wood-boring insects?

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**31. Structure**

Are the floors level? Are there large cracks in the walls or sticking doors/windows? Are there any additions, and if so are they properly tied into the main structure?

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**Systems**

**32. Electric**

Look at the electric meter, panel, outlets, and switches. How many amps are coming into the house? Are there fuses or circuit breakers? Are they labeled? Are there any obvious issues with the panel? In the basement and attic, is there any visible knob and tube wiring? Are the outlets in the kitchens and baths GFCI protected? Are there enough outlets in every room?

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**33. HVAC Type**

*Check all that apply.*

- Gas
- Oil
- Electric
- Wood
- Propane (tank)
- Forced hot air
- Forced hot water radiators/baseboard
- Steam radiator
- Radiant floor heating
- Ductless mini-split
- Central AC
- Passive house
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**34. HVAC condition**

Is the age of the equipment known? Any visible signs of leaking or other issues? Is it clean? Is there a maintenance tag showing regular inspections from a plumbing/HVAC firm? Is the piping or ductwork insulated? Are there multiple zones for heating and cooling? If there is a basement oil tank, are there signs of leaks or spills?

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**35. Plumbing**

What is the fuel type/size/age of the water heater? Is the unit big enough for the house? Is there a warranty? Are there any visible plumbing leaks in the house? Are there signs of rust or corrosion or leaks in the basement? Are kitchen and bathroom fixtures in good repair? Is there an external hose bib? If the water pipe to the street is visible, is it copper? Is there natural gas to the home?

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**36. Other**

Is there an alarm system? Wired sound, ethernet, cable, etc.?

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**Condo-specific questions**

If the answers to these questions aren't in the MLS, ask the selling agent at the open house

**37. Are there any deeded areas?**

Parking spots, basement areas, outdoor spaces, etc.

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**38. Are pets allowed?**

If so, restrictions on size, breed, or number of pets?

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**39. Is smoking allowed?**

With marijuana now legal, this question is increasingly important.

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**40. Are there any known upcoming special assessments or other repairs?**

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**41. If the unit is underneath another unit, is there any soundproofing between floors?**

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