

19. Testing methods and further evaluation

I have certain steps that I go through, my inspection protocol, to test and evaluate appliances (heating and cooling, dishwasher, etc.) and systems (showers, sinks, toilets, etc.) in your new home, and I perform these steps in a certain order to ensure three things: (1) the unit is properly tested, inspected and evaluated (2) without causing any property damage and (3) without causing personal injury to anyone near the appliance (that includes me!).

Step one typically is a "yes" or "no" to this question: "Does it look like it will work properly?" If yes, I proceed to step two. If no, I quit evaluating that appliance or system and state the reason why it did not look like it would work properly. In my report, I might state, "Unit not tested. Recommend further evaluation before close of escrow." This does not mean that you can simply move in and start using the appliance or the system. It means that further evaluation must be completed before the appliance or system is used. I recommend that further evaluation be completed by qualified personnel, usually licensed in their profession under State of Ohio laws (plumbers, electricians, etc.). Such professionals typically will evaluate the complete appliance or system during their evaluation to make sure that it is fully functional.

When further evaluation is performed, that licensed professional will have their own inspection protocol, again, designed specifically to do determine what the problem is without causing property damage or personal injury. They should at least begin the evaluation process all over again and should not start in the middle of anyone else's evaluation, including mine. Additionally, that licensed professional should not rely on any statements by an individual not licensed in that profession, such as me. Keep in mind that home inspectors are not licensed in any profession, even including home inspecting since the State of Ohio does not license home inspectors. Relying on statements of others without verifying them can result in property damage, personal injury, or death, especially since no one except the person currently inspecting the appliance can possibly know what might have happened to anything since the last time someone (me!) inspected, tested, or evaluated the appliance.

In some instances, depending on the initial problem, evaluation by the licensed professional might be much more extensive than a home inspector's evaluation. That's why they charge more, and that's why I only recommend them when absolutely necessary. It's kind of like your family doctor, also called a "General Practitioner." If you have a chest pain, you'd make an appointment with your family doctor. You've done the initial evaluation ("I have a chest pain.") Upon "further evaluation" by the family doctor, he says you need some x-rays or an MRI. He'll send you for "further evaluation" to the laboratory. Once you get that done, you'll go back to him for more "further evaluation." Let's say that the x-rays or MRI indicate that you have some blocked heart arteries and need surgery. Who do you think will do the surgery? Not the family doctor! He'll send you for "further evaluation" to the heart surgeon. When you get to the heart surgeon, he'll read the family doctor's report, look at the x-rays or MRI, and then do his own evaluation, perhaps even having some more x-rays or MRI taken. In every case, the family doctor is far less expensive than the heart surgeon.

Home inspectors are like your family doctor. We're inexpensive because we're "General Practitioners." We know something about everything, but everything about nothing. So if I find something wrong with the electric panel, I'll recommend "further evaluation" by a licensed electrician, equivalent to the heart surgeon. That licensed electrician, due to his licensing and expertise, is considered by the State of Ohio to be more knowledgeable about electricity than an unlicensed home inspector.

I'm looking for the big problems that can cost you a significant amount of money, are extremely dangerous, or, if not corrected soon, can causes significant property damage. If I find the big problem, and then there is no reason for me to try to document any other problems. The simple fact is that it doesn't look like it's going to work. Many times a problem can only be detected when something is being used, so if it doesn't look like one can use it safely and for the purpose for which it was intended, I don't go any further.

If I did try to document all the other problems, your home inspection would have lasted many more hours and cost substantially more than what you paid, and Your Home Inspection Report might have become unwieldy, unreadable, and/or undecipherable. So, again, I'm looking for the biggest problems first and then the more minor or cosmetic problems.

Many home issues can be interpreted and acted on in different ways depending on your needs and any advice that you might solicit from third parties, especially those who were not at the property at the time of the inspection and don't know what the conditions of the property were at the time of the inspection. Additionally, your intended use of a property might result in varying opinions about what you should do about some of my recommendations in **Your Home Inspection Report**. Therefore, if you have any questions about anything, please contact me. With that said, I highly recommend that you do not summarily dismiss my recommendations in Your Home Inspection Report, and do not let anyone else convince you to summarily dismiss my recommendations. If you have any questions about my recommendations, you should contact the source of the recommendations: me! Please feel free to contact me at any time. I am happy to talk with you and your representatives to explain my recommendations in further detail if necessary.

We are available, seven days a week by phone and e-mail. So if you get voice mail, simply leave a message, and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.