



## New Homes Aren't Perfect: How to avoid buying a home with huge problems

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*Q: Is it really necessary to get my own inspection on a newly constructed home, or should the inspection by the City inspector be accepted as adequate?*

*A: Always get an independent inspection of your new home!*

Some may wonder why this subject comes up so often. It is because questions about “inspecting new homes” are vital to anyone who plans to buy a new home, with or without a warranty.

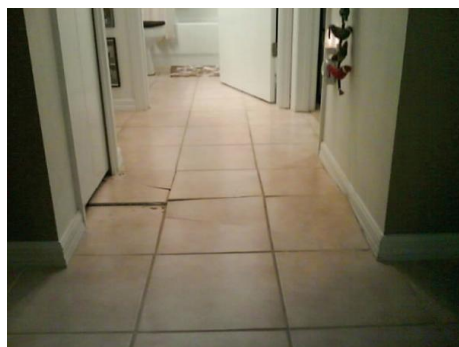
Experienced home inspectors know that all new homes have defects of one kind or another, regardless of the quality of construction or the integrity of the builder. This is because human error prevents anything as large and as complex as a home from being constructed flawlessly.

**Some believe all construction defects will be discovered by municipal building inspectors and will be automatically corrected.**

**They are mistaken!** This is not due to any shortcomings on the part of city inspectors. Their purpose, scope, time allotment and procedures are simply not geared toward being an advocate on the behalf of home buyers.

**Municipal inspectors inspect primarily for Code Compliance (the minimum standard) not for quality or workmanship.** They can cite a builder for improper structural framing, for non-complying drain connections or another unsafe situation; but a poorly fitted door, uneven tiles, a leaky roof, improper ventilation or slipshod finish work are not on their list of concerns.

Municipal inspectors come to the job site with a clipboard and a codebook, not with a ladder and overalls. So construction defects in difficult to see areas can easily escape discovery. (Municipal inspectors typically inspect a roof from the ground only. Some municipalities will not even look at Roofs and exteriors.)





**“Final Inspections” are often performed before the utilities are even turned on, so municipal inspectors cannot determine if the appliances and fixtures actually work.** So they cannot test outlets for grounding and proper polarity because this can be done only after the power is turned on. Nor, can they test the performance of GFCI or AFCI safety breakers. Because there is no water or gas service yet, municipal inspectors can't test plumbing fixtures or gas fixtures such as furnaces, fireplaces, boilers and water heaters.

#### **City Officials Will NOT Be Looking Out For Your Best Interest:**

Throughout the construction phase, the municipal inspector visits the site, on average, five to six times. This can be true for a building that takes up to a year to complete. The number and nature of building inspections will vary among municipalities, based on the direction provided by City Councils and the complexity of the project. However, in general, most municipalities carry out the following field inspections:

- **Formwork** -- to inspect the foundation formwork before any concrete is poured.
- **Sheathing** -- to inspect the exterior wood sheathing and window installation.
- **Framing** -- to inspect, as part of the framing, the application of building paper, flashing, stucco wire, and stucco stops.
- **Insulation** -- to inspect the insulation and vapour barrier.
- **Final** -- to inspect the finished building, including caulking and sealant.



It is apparent, from the numerous angry comments made to the Barrett Commission over the last 12 years, that the role of local government with respect to building inspections is widely misunderstood. Municipal inspectors are **ONLY** looking to enforce minimal standards for building codes. They are not a comprehensive inspection service for new home buyers...



**Therefore, buyers of new homes should indeed always get an independent inspection to ensure they are making a good investment in their home.** New home buyers should also consider a 12-15 month independent condition check by a Home Inspector, since they will be a need professional documentation to receive repair coverage from their home warranty program. As a Professional Certified Home Inspector of over 25 years, I have never seen a new home yet which is “100% perfect”.

***We strongly advise an independent and detailed “New Home Inspection” before ever considering buying ‘new’!***

