

Your New Home: Kick the Bricks!

As a professional house and building inspection company, one of our primary jobs is answering questions. One of the most common questions we get is "Should I have my brand new house inspected?" It's a fair and honest question. The short answer is YES. But you expected us to say that, right? Let me tell you why it's a fair and honest answer.

Risk Reduction

Let's take the emotion out of it. Let's not call it your home; let's say it's a house. A building with a roof, a structure, mechanical systems, and interior finishes. It requires a substantial investment for you to purchase this building. You are putting your money at risk. It makes sense for you to learn about the qualities of this investment before putting your money on the line.

"But what could be wrong? It's a new house?" Yes, the risk of problems is probably lower than if you bought an old building. It actually depends on the individual properties one is comparing. It boils down to illuminating the risk, rather than assuming there is none.

House vs. Home

But it is artificial to take emotion out of it, precisely because the building will be your home. So you have a financial and an emotional investment. Why is this important? Because even a small problem, like for example a leak at the kitchen sink, will elicit in you an emotional response. What happens when you notice the leak? You get an adrenaline rush, you turn off the tap or the dishwasher, you wipe up the water, you remove the soaking box of dishwasher detergent, you wonder what you should do next, you call someone you trust, you call the builder or a plumber, you wait to make dinner until the service-person arrives. A non-trivial emotional investment, for a minor problem.

For some people, that minor incident will bring on a not-so-minor bout of buyer's remorse, wherein they wonder, "What else will go wrong?" It is better for both you and your builder for the inspector to find the leak so it can be fixed immediately.

Helps the Builder

Your builder has worked hard to put your home together. It takes a phenomenal amount of coordination to turn an empty patch of ground into a dream house. With so many steps and so many hands, it is inevitable that some things will get missed. Sometimes we find electrical outlets that don't work. Sometimes we find un-insulated attics. These were not done on purpose, they just happen. If you hire an inspector to find the things that need attention, you can put the items on the PDI punch-list (the list of deficiencies generated at the pre-delivery inspection that the builder is contracted to fix), or you will have documentation of the issues and can bring them up later. This helps both you and the builder keep track of the final wrinkles to be ironed out. If there only a few wrinkles, you will gain an appreciation of how well the house has been built.

11-month Inspection

Many of our clients choose to hire us after they move in, but before the standard one-year builder's warranty coverage expires. This has proven to be a uniquely successful strategy. The waiting period allows the newly built house to "settle-in", making a performance-based inspection more valuable. No matter how you look at it, getting a professional building inspector to kick the bricks of your new home is a sound idea.

As seen in HOMES Magazine June/July/August 2003. Gerard Gransaull, P. Eng., Engineering Manager, [Carson Dunlop and Associates Ltd.](http://www.carsondunlop.com), [Consulting Engineers - Building Inspections](http://www.carsondunlop.com), www.carsondunlop.com

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