

Noreene and Dave McMillin

Jim Maloof / Realtor®, Germantown Hills, IL
Noreene: 309-264-2971 / Dave: 309-264-7264

Hidden Home Defects to Watch For

No home is flawless, but certain physical problems can be expensive. Watch for:

1. **Water leaks.** Look for stains on ceilings and near the baseboards, especially in basements or attics.
2. **Shifting foundations.** Look for large cracks along the home's foundation.
3. **Drainage.** Look for standing water, either around the foundation of the home or in the yard.
4. **Termites.** Look for weakened or grooved wood, especially near ground level.
5. **Worn roofs.** Look for broken or missing copings and buckled shingles as well as water spots on ceilings.
6. **Inadequate wiring.** Look for antiquated fuse boxes, extension cords (indicating insufficient outlets), and outlets without a place to plug in the grounding prong.
7. **Plumbing problems.** Very low water pressure, banging in pipes.



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10 Questions to Ask a Home Inspector

1. What are your qualifications? Are you a member of the American Association of Home Inspectors?
2. Do you have a current license? Inspectors are not required to be licensed in every state.
3. How many inspections of properties such as this do you do each year?
4. Do you have a list of past clients I can contact?
5. Do you carry professional errors and omission insurance? May I have a copy of the policy?
6. Do you provide any guarantees of your work?
7. What specifically will the inspection cover?
8. What type of report will I receive after the inspection?
9. How long will the inspection take and how long will it take to receive the report?
10. How much will the inspection cost?

Portions adapted from Real Estate Checklists and Systems and used with permission (www.realestatechecklists.com).



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What Your Home Inspection Should Cover

- 1 Siding: Look for dents or buckling
- 2 Foundations: Look for cracks or water seepage
- 3 Exterior Brick: Look for cracked bricks or mortar pulling away from bricks
- 4 Insulation: Look for condition, adequate rating for climate
- 5 Doors and Windows: Look for loose or tight fits, condition of locks, condition of weatherstripping
- 6 Roof: Look for age, conditions of flashing, pooling water, buckled shingles, or loose gutters and downspouts
- 7 Ceilings, walls, and moldings: Look for loose pieces, drywall that is pulling away
- 8 Porch/Deck: Loose railings or step, rot
- 9 Electrical: Look for condition of fuse box/circuit breakers, number of outlets in each room
- 10 Plumbing: Look for poor water pressure, banging pipes, rust spots or corrosion that indicate leaks, sufficient insulation
- 11 Water Heater: Look for age, size adequate for house, speed of recovery, energy rating
- 12 Furnace/Air Conditioning: Look for age, energy rating; Furnaces are rated by annual fuel utilization efficiency; the higher the rating, the lower your fuel costs. However, other factors such as payback period and other operating costs, such as electricity to operate motors.
- 13 Garage: Look for exterior in good repair; condition of floor—cracks, stains, etc.; condition of door mechanism
- 14 Basement: Look for water leakage, musty smell
- 15 Attic: Look for adequate ventilation, water leaks from roof
- 16 Septic Tanks (if applicable): Adequate absorption field capacity for the percolation rate in your area and the size of your family
- 17 Driveways/Sidewalks: Look for cracks, heaving pavement, crumbling near edges, stains



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