LOCKBOX INSIGHTS

11-Month Warranty Inspection Guide

Your builder's obligation expires at month 12. After that, repairs come out of your pocket.

What Most New Construction Buyers Don't Know

Most new construction buyers assume: if something were wrong, they'd know by now.

That's not how construction defects work.

The issues that show up at month 11 were there on day one. Improper flashing. Settled soil at the foundation. A blocked soffit vent. A drain line with inadequate slope.

They just hadn't been tested by time, weather, or use yet. The first rain season reveals what the pre-close inspection didn't catch.

Your builder's warranty covers defects in workmanship and materials for one year. At month 12, it expires — and the repairs become yours. At month 11, they're still the builder's legal obligation.

The question isn't whether there's anything to find. There almost always is. The question is whether you find it while someone else is required to fix it.

Why the 11-Month Window Matters

Scheduling at month 10 or 11 gives you time to:

- Receive the full written report
- Review it against your warranty terms
- Submit your claim with specific documented findings
- Allow the builder to schedule and complete repairs before the deadline

Waiting until month 12 means paying for repairs yourself. Builder warranty repairs frequently run into the thousands. The inspection is a fraction of that cost.

What the Inspection Covers

Roof & Flashings

Improper installation, lifted shingles, and flashing gaps are common in new construction. Often not visible until after the first rain season. One of the most-cited warranty categories.

Grading & Drainage

Settled soil around the foundation perimeter is one of the most consistently found issues. Improper slope that looked fine at final walkthrough directs water toward the structure after settlement.

Stucco & Exterior

Cracks at corners, window returns, and control joints that appeared since close of escrow. The inspection distinguishes normal shrinkage cracks from defective ones.

Attic & Ventilation

Blocked soffit vents, disconnected duct boots, and missing insulation coverage are common builder oversights. In hot inland climates, ventilation deficiencies accelerate roof deck deterioration.

Plumbing

Loose connections, improperly secured lines, and water heater installation details including seismic strapping — a California requirement on every installation.

Electrical

Panel labeling, missing knockout fillers, and AFCI/GFCI protection as required by code. Deficiencies here are clear warranty items.

HVAC

Filter access, duct connections in the attic, and thermostat calibration. Duct disconnections in new construction are more common than buyers expect.

Interior Finishes

Drywall cracks, door and window operation, stair handrail attachment, and flooring transitions. Some are aesthetic; others indicate structural settlement.

Foundation & Structure

Visible cracks in slab, garage floor, and block walls — distinguishing normal shrinkage from structural movement.

Before the Inspection — What to Prepare

Bring what you know. Your observations from living in the home add context the inspection alone can't provide.

Compile a list of issues you've noticed

Doors that stick, cracks that appeared, areas that feel soft underfoot. Share these with the inspector at the start.

Note areas that showed moisture after rain

Window returns, ceiling corners, and exterior walls are common locations. These are exactly the warranty items that only reveal themselves under conditions.

Photograph cracks or damage you've observed

Date-stamped photos support your warranty claim timeline and show when defects first appeared.

Locate your builder warranty documents

Know what is covered, what requires written notice, and the claim submission process before the inspection — not after.

Confirm your 12-month warranty date

Calculate backward. You need the inspection done and the claim submitted before the deadline.

- Clear access to attic, electrical panel, and mechanical equipment before the inspector arrives.

After the Inspection — Filing Your Warranty Claim

Speed matters. The report does no good sitting in your inbox.

- Review the full report within 24 hours of receipt.
- Submit a written warranty claim to your builder immediately. Email creates a timestamped record. Follow up with certified mail if no response in 5 business days.
- List each defect with the report reference number or page. Builders respond faster to organized, specific claims.
- Request written confirmation and a repair schedule. Do not accept verbal commitments.
- Do not make permanent repairs to warranty items before the builder responds — self-repair can void coverage.
- If the builder disputes findings, request an independent structural or trade evaluation.
- Document all builder repair work with photos before and after.

Ready to take the next step?

At month 11, your builder is still on the hook. A written inspection report gives you the documentation to hold them to it. Lockbox Insights delivers a full written report you can submit directly to your builder.

lockboxinsights.com · 951-445-6524 · Don't wait until month 12.

This guide is for general informational purposes. Warranty coverage terms vary by builder — consult your warranty documents and legal counsel for claim-specific guidance. © 2026 Lockbox Insights. All rights reserved.