LOCKBOX INSIGHTS

Buyer Pre-Inspection Checklist

Most buyers spend the inspection walking room to room. The buyers who get the most out of it spend it differently.

What the Inspection Really Is

Your home inspection is one of the few points in the purchase process where you have real leverage — and a narrow window to use it.

The report tells you what's there. But what you get out of the inspection depends on how you go into it, what access you confirmed, and whether you're present for the right part.

Buyers who treat the inspection as a formality get a report. Buyers who treat it as a working session get a report — and the knowledge to use it.

Before the Inspection — Confirm Access

The inspection is only as complete as what the inspector can reach. Access issues create notations that become question marks in negotiation. Confirm these before inspection day.

- Confirm inspection date, time, and address with your agent.
- Verify all utilities are on — gas, electric, and water must be active. Inspectors cannot test appliances, HVAC, or plumbing without live utilities.
- Confirm the property will be accessible — lockbox code or agent present.
- Request that the seller leave all keys on-site — mailbox, outbuildings, gates.
- Ask the seller to clear access to the attic hatch, electrical panel, and water heater.
- Confirm pool equipment is accessible if a pool/spa inspection is included.
- Make sure pilot lights are lit on gas appliances — inspectors will not re-light them.

What to Bring

- A notepad or phone for your own notes.
- Your purchase contract — know what personal property conveys. Everything included in the sale should be tested.
- A list of any concerns or questions you already have about the property. Share these with the inspector at the start — they can give those areas extra focus.
- Comfortable clothes — you may be in the attic, crawlspace, or on the roof.
- A tape measure if you plan to measure rooms during the visit.

During the Inspection

Here's where most buyers get it wrong: they arrive at the start, follow the inspector from room to room, and leave with a vague sense of what was found.

The walkthrough — when the inspector summarizes and shows you findings in person — is the most valuable part. It happens at the end. Plan around that.

Arrive for the walkthrough — last 45 to 60 minutes

Let the inspector work uninterrupted. Arrive at the end when there's something to show you.

Ask the inspector to show you each major finding in person

Seeing it yourself is worth more than reading about it. A condition you've seen is one you understand.

Ask: 'Is this a safety issue, a repair, or something to monitor?'

Every finding falls into one of these categories. Knowing which one tells you how to prioritize.

Ask: 'How urgent is this and what contractor handles it?'

The report lists findings. The inspector can tell you how to act on them.

Note where shutoff valves are

Water main, gas main, individual fixture valves. Knowing these locations is useful from day one of ownership.

Ask the inspector to identify the age of major systems

HVAC, water heater, and roof age directly affect your budget planning. A water heater at year 11 of a 12-year rated life is a known expense. Know it before you close.

After the Inspection — Using the Report

Read the full report before your repair request deadline

Reports are typically delivered within 24 hours. Review immediately — not two days before your deadline.

Identify safety items first

Carbon monoxide risks, electrical hazards, active leaks, and structural concerns come first. These are not credit items. They require resolution.

Separate repair items from maintenance items

Repairs are defects. Maintenance is deferred upkeep. The distinction matters in negotiation — don't lump them together.

Get contractor estimates for major items before submitting a repair request

'Significant electrical work' is not a number. A $4,200 panel replacement is. Negotiate from specific figures.

Ask your inspector to clarify anything you don't understand

Lockbox Insights offers a post-inspection consultation. Use it. A misunderstood finding is a missed negotiating opportunity.

Keep your report permanently

It is part of your home's history. Future buyers, insurers, or contractors may ask to see it.

Follow up on specialist referrals

When the inspector recommends a structural engineer, electrician, or plumber — that's not optional. It means a finding warrants deeper expertise than a general inspection provides.

Ready to take the next step?

Questions about your report after the inspection? Lockbox Insights offers post-inspection consultations to help you understand findings, prioritize repairs, and prepare your negotiation strategy — so you get full use out of the inspection you already paid for.

Call 951-445-6524 · lockboxinsights.com

This checklist is provided as general buyer guidance and does not constitute legal or contractual advice. © 2026 Lockbox Insights. All rights reserved.