

HOME INSPECTION GUIDE

What Does a Home Inspection Actually Cover? Everything You Need to Know

A clear-eyed look at what happens during a standard home inspection—and why it might be the most valuable hour you spend in any real estate deal.

WILSON HOME INSPECTIONS · GREATER MEMPHIS AREA · **INTERNACHI CERTIFIED**

If you've ever been caught off guard by a home inspection report—or worse, skipped one entirely—you're not alone. For many buyers and sellers, the inspection process remains one of the most misunderstood steps in any real estate transaction. But according to Colin Wilson, an InterNACHI Certified Professional Inspector and founder of Wilson Home Inspections in the Greater Memphis area, that confusion is completely avoidable.

With over 13 years of construction experience and a background as a firefighter, Colin brings a uniquely hands-on perspective to every property he evaluates. His approach isn't just about finding problems—it's about making sure every client leaves the inspection knowing exactly what they've gotten themselves into.

More Than a Checklist: What a Home Inspection Really Covers

At its core, a standard home inspection is a systematic, visual evaluation of a home's major systems and structural components. This includes the roof, foundation, structural framing, electrical system, plumbing, and HVAC—but the scope goes well beyond those broad categories.

During a thorough inspection, a qualified inspector will examine things like attic insulation and ventilation, signs of moisture intrusion, grading and drainage around the foundation, visible evidence of pest activity, the condition of windows and doors, and the operational status of built-in appliances. In short, if it's part of the physical property, it falls within the inspector's purview.

That said, a home inspection is not an appraisal, a code compliance review, or a structural engineering assessment. It's a professional, non-invasive evaluation designed to give buyers and sellers a clear, honest picture of the home's current condition.



A THOROUGH INSPECTION COVERS EVERYTHING FROM THE ROOFLINE TO THE FOUNDATION

Why the Education Matters as Much as the Report

Colin's philosophy sets his inspections apart from the standard walk-through-and-hand-over-a-PDF approach. For him, every inspection is also a teaching moment.

"No two homes are built the same, and no two homeowners come in with the same level of knowledge. My job is to meet people where they are, walk them through what I'm seeing in real time, and make sure they understand what it means for them—not just what it says on paper."

— COLIN WILSON, WILSON HOME INSPECTIONS

This live, in-person education component is what transforms a routine inspection into something genuinely valuable. Rather than sorting through a 40-page report alone after the fact, clients get the chance to ask questions, see issues firsthand, and develop a real understanding of how the home's systems function—and where they might need attention.



Common Misconceptions Home Buyers Bring to the Table

One of the biggest challenges in the inspection industry is managing expectations. Many first-time buyers assume a home inspection will either pass or fail a property, similar to a car inspection. That's not how it works.

A home inspection produces a condition report, not a verdict. Every home—new construction included—will have some items on an inspector's list. The goal isn't a clean bill of health; it's a realistic assessment of what you're buying and what it might cost you down the road.

Sellers sometimes make the opposite mistake, assuming a recent renovation or cosmetic upgrade means there's nothing significant to find. But structural issues, aging mechanical systems, and concealed moisture damage don't disappear behind fresh paint or new flooring. A trained eye will find them.



FIRST-TIME BUYERS OFTEN ARRIVE WITH MISCONCEPTIONS A GOOD INSPECTOR CAN QUICKLY CLEAR UP

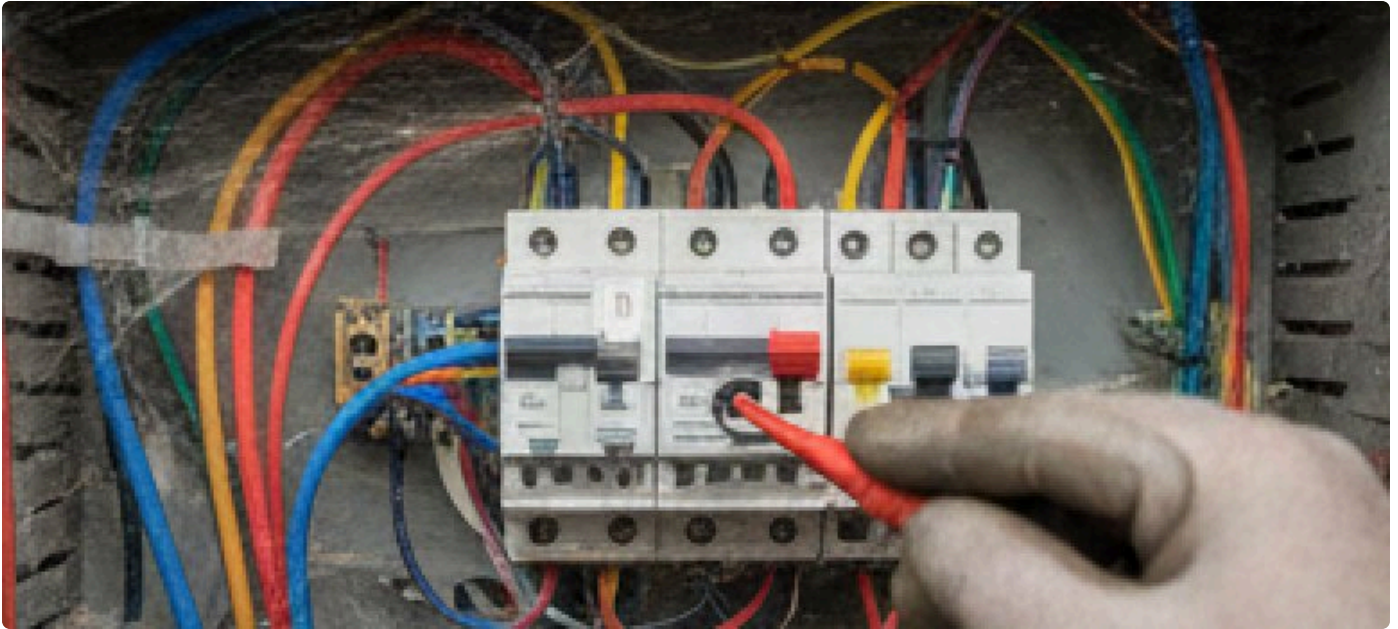
How Inspectors Catch What Most People Miss

Colin's background in construction and firefighting gives him a working knowledge of how homes are built and how they fail—which means he knows exactly where to look when something isn't right. Water damage, for instance, rarely announces itself. It shows up as a stain on a ceiling joist in an attic corner, or a slight softness in subfloor material that most buyers would walk right over.

Electrical hazards can be even more discreet—outdated wiring, improper grounding, or double-tapped breakers in a panel might look fine to an untrained eye but represent a genuine fire risk. HVAC systems can be running in a technical sense while harboring inefficiencies or safety concerns that will only become apparent when a heating season or summer cooling demand hits.

"Most people buy a home and never really look at it—they look at what they imagine it could be. My role is to help them see the home they're actually buying, so there are no surprises six months down the road."

— COLIN WILSON, WILSON HOME INSPECTIONS



ELECTRICAL PANELS, ATTIC FRAMING, AND CRAWL SPACES HIDE ISSUES INVISIBLE TO THE UNTRAINED EYE

What Sellers Stand to Gain from a Pre-Listing Inspection

Home inspections aren't just for buyers. Sellers who commission an inspection before putting their property on the market gain a significant advantage: time to address issues on their own terms.

Discovering a problem during a buyer's inspection puts sellers in a reactive position—suddenly negotiating repair credits or price reductions under deadline pressure. A pre-listing inspection

flips that dynamic. Sellers can make strategic decisions about what to fix, what to disclose, and how to price their home accurately from the start.

It also builds credibility with buyers. A seller who already has a thorough inspection report ready to share signals transparency and confidence in the property—which can actually speed up the transaction and reduce the likelihood of deals falling apart.



PRE-LISTING INSPECTIONS GIVE SELLERS THE UPPER HAND BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS EVEN BEGIN

How to Get the Most Out of Your Inspection

The single most important thing a buyer can do is show up. Walking through the property with your inspector—rather than waiting in the car or showing up only at the end—gives you an entirely different experience. You'll see exactly what's being noted and why, you'll be able to ask questions in the moment, and you'll come away with a much clearer sense of the home's real condition.

Come prepared with your own questions, too. If you know the roof is older, ask about its estimated remaining life. If the area has drainage issues, ask specifically what the inspector sees around the foundation. Treat the inspection like an onboarding session for your future home—because that's exactly what it is.

Choosing an Inspector Who Works for You

Not all inspectors bring the same depth of knowledge or commitment to client communication to the job. Certifications matter—InterNACHI certification, for instance, requires ongoing education and adherence to a professional code of ethics—but so does experience and the ability to explain technical findings in plain language.

When vetting an inspector, ask how they handle communication during the inspection itself. Do they walk you through findings as they go, or simply compile a report afterward? Do they have relevant trade experience—construction, electrical, plumbing—that helps them identify and contextualize what they're seeing? And do they take the time to help you understand what their findings actually mean for you as a buyer or seller?

The Bottom Line

A home inspection is one of the best investments you can make in any real estate transaction. Not because it guarantees a perfect home, but because it replaces guesswork with knowledge—and allows you to move forward with confidence rather than crossed fingers.

Whether you're purchasing your first home, selling a property you've owned for years, or simply trying to stay ahead of maintenance on a home you already live in, a comprehensive inspection from a qualified professional gives you something that no listing description or showing ever can: an honest look at what's really there.

To schedule an inspection with Wilson Home Inspections in the Greater Memphis area, call 901-461-9417.



KNOWLEDGE REPLACES GUESSWORK—SO YOU CAN MOVE FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE

Ready to Schedule Your Inspection?

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