

HOME EDITION

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No Skeletons Here

• **Costs:** A typical pre-sale inspection can cost from \$200 to \$500 and is based on a property's square footage. Costs, however, vary from area to area.

Resources

• To find out more about pre-sale inspections, visit:

American Society of Home Inspectors
(www.ashi.org).

California Real Estate Inspection Association (www.creia.org).

International Association of Certified Home Inspectors
(www.nachi.org).

Inspect, Then List Your Property

BY MICHELLE D. ALDERSON

Let's face facts: Today's real estate market isn't what it used to be. If you want to sell your house, you may be thinking of ways to set your home apart from others. How can you make the decision easier for the buyer and help yourself as well? One way is by doing a pre-sale inspection.

A pre-sale inspection can benefit both the seller and buyer. With a pre-sale inspection, you'll know what condition your house is in before it goes on the market. This information allows you to have a better idea of what your house's listing price should be, and it avoids surprises that might arise after it goes into escrow. "Discovering conditions early in the sales process," states Max Curtis, an American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) certified inspector, "allows the seller to decide how to handle the conditions when they aren't under the additional pressure of already being in contract." It also helps avoid a possible disclosure lawsuit. With a pre-sale inspection, the buyer also benefits by knowing the condition of the property before making an offer, which can mean a quicker and easier sale.

At a pre-sale inspection, an inspector will look at your home's structural, roof, plumbing, electrical, heating, and air conditioning systems; fireplace (if applicable); solid fuel-burning appliances; insu-

lation; and ventilation. Common maintenance concerns an inspector might find can range from a roofing defect to dirty filters in a gas furnace.

The costs of a typical pre-sale inspection should not differ from the costs of an inspection done by the buyer and should be based on the property's square footage. As with real estate prices, the fees vary nationwide, but can typically run about \$200 to \$500. If you want to do a pre-sale inspection, your real estate agent should be able to help you locate a reputable inspector.

As the real estate market changes, so does the approach toward selling. Pre-sale inspections are becoming more popular. Curtis' home inspection business has seen a rise in pre-sale inspections the past few years. "My business is now about 30 percent pre-sale inspections," he says. Pre-sale inspections allow you to know what your house is worth before an offer comes in and give a potential buyer the assurance that your house is worth that offer. ♦

Michelle D. Alderson is a freelance writer and creator of the blog eatdrinkbe.com.

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