

# Make One Final Inspection

**By Mark S. Bourque**  
**Prudential Premier Properties**

In the sales contract, the sellers of your new home agreed to leave the custom blinds, refrigerator, built-in entertainment system and those fine cabinets and workbench in the garage. But when you show up on moving day, all of those amenities are long gone. Moreover, the lock on the back door is broken; there is a huge gouge in the drywall near the front bathroom.

Although these circumstances are extreme, they could happen, which is why it is important to have a final inspection of the home you are purchasing before the closing. A pre-closing inspection gives you, one last opportunity to verify that you are getting all that was promised in the sales contract. Although buyers still have legal recourse if they discover—even after closing—that the condition of the home is not as it should be. Of course, the best time to identify problems is *before* closing when the seller will be motivated to correct any deficiencies to close the transaction.


Typically, a buyer takes possession of a property one to three months after signing the sales agreement. And a lot can happen before the actual move-in. Appliances and fixtures can break, and walls, carpets and doors can be damaged during the seller's final weeks in the house, particularly during move-out. Sometimes the seller will simply have forgotten that he or she has agreed to leave the refrigerator or window coverings with the house. Whatever the reason, problems identified before the closing have the best chance of being remedied.

If possible, schedule the inspection right before the closing, such as the day before. Ask your real estate professional to attend the inspection with you. Here's what to do:

Using a copy of the sales contract as a checklist, first make sure that all items that should be in place (appliances, built-in furniture, window coverings, fixtures, etc.) are there.

Test each appliance to make sure they work properly. Bring along an electrical clock or radio to test each electrical outlet. Test all electrical switches and the garage door opener(s). Run the garbage disposal and turn on every water faucet, checking under the sinks for leaks. Flush the toilets. Inspect the floors, carpets, walls and doors for recent damage.

If you discover that something is damaged or missing, make a note of it and inform your real estate professional immediately. In most cases, the seller is usually able to take care of small problems immediately, either by making a needed repair or offering compensation to handle it. And, if there are major problems, the seller can even sign a statement acknowledging the deficiency and agree to correct it. Although pre-closing inspections take time and may be inconvenient, they are important and well worth the buyer's time.

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