

When Buying a New or Resale Home Know This . . .



7 things to know when buying a new or resale home. Things often not thought of until it's too late . . . or they are learned through bad, uncomfortable and often expensive experiences.

1) General purpose home inspectors do not typically thoroughly inspect and test heating and cooling systems. This is due to their lack of knowledge, lack of testing equipment, and/or not getting paid enough to do an adequate job.

2) If you really want to know the condition of the house you propose to purchase have licensed contractors inspect it for you. Hire a NATE certified heating & cooling contractor, a licensed electrician, plumber and/or other specialists. Be cautious when REALTORS suggest specific inspectors as there may be a conflict of interest involved.

3) Unless there is a lender requirement to do so **THE SELLER SHOULD NEVER** be the party to replace or add a heating and/or air conditioning system due to their condition. The buyer or new owner should be the one who adds to or replaces any significant part of the heating, cooling and/or indoor air quality system(s). Selecting a new or replacement system is not simple and should be selected by the family moving into the house. It's the buyer's family who will be living in the house after the seller moves out thus leaving any problems behind. The buyer should develop a relationship with a heating and/or cooling contractor as the buyer will need maintenance and service help during future years.

4) When owners/sellers sell their homes they very seldom educate the new owner regarding the heating and cooling systems. The sellers just want to get away leaving any problems and knowledge for the buyers to discover on their own. This is tragic! Buyers should insert language in their offer to purchase which requires the seller to educate the buyer regarding all heating and cooling, electrical and plumbing systems. This should include turning over all documentation which goes with the heating, cooling and hot water systems etc. A list of all contractors who have worked on these

systems over the last five years should be provided. A certification that the proper building permits have been obtained for the replacement of any of these systems should be provided.

5) When basements are finished there should be enough room left around the heating, cooling and water heater systems to permit easy access for maintenance. For example, by code, there must be at least 30 inches (more is better) of clear access in front of any furnace etc. Much additional space will be needed for the future additions of high efficiency air cleaners, humidifiers, zoning, heat recovery ventilators and/or another water heater etc. Stay away from homes with furnaces/heaters in crawl spaces or roof truss type attics. Heating/cooling equipment in crawl spaces or attics is usually very difficult or impossible to properly maintain. See the "NO-NO Locations for Mechanical Equipment" list.

6) After you move in don't wait until you have a problem with your heating, cooling, hot water or electrical systems to call for help. If you have not already done so develop a relationship with reliable contractors **BEFORE** you need help. Have those contractors inspect and service your systems soon after you move in. Then they will be familiar with your systems so as to be able to give you outstanding service when needed. The worst way to have to find help is by looking in the yellow pages when you have an emergency.

7) Houses and their internal systems are much more complicated than they used to be. Therefore; all of the technicians working on these systems need to be better educated and smarter than ever. Look for experience and NATE certification in heating and air conditioning professionals to get competent service and help when you need it. **AND** expect to pay between \$225.00 and \$450.00 or more per hour for competent contractor help in your home. The average high quality home service call may be in the \$500.00+ range in the Denver area.



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