

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR BUILDING INSPECTIONS - CHECKLIST

The Problem:

So you are ready to put your property on the market.

Before you put your property on the market it is highly recommended you check your property for defects and any item that could be a potential turn off to a buyer. You don't want a buyer finding problems in a Pre-purchase Inspection or for the potential buyer to be turned off the property in the first place.

Vendor Inspections are a good way to prepare for putting your property on the market.

However a typical industry Vendor Inspection will only identify the following:

- Major defects;
- A general impression regarding the extent of minor defects;
- Any major defect that is an urgent and serious safety hazard;

You should also ask that your Vendor Inspection identifies any minor building related matter that has the potential to be a buyer turn off.

The Checklist:

To get an initial overview of your property's condition use the following checklist to gain a sense of your properties state of readiness for going on the market:

1.0 INTERIOR OF BUILDING:

Ceilings:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Sagging, nails popping, defective lining, damage, cracking, dampness / damp damage, paint condition

Walls:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
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Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Bulging, Sagging, nails popping, defective lining, damage, cracking, dampness / damp damage, drummy render, paint condition

Timber floors:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Damage, decay, out of level, dampness spring/bounce, condition of finish

Concrete floors:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Cracking, surface damage, out of level, dampness

Windows:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	<i>Note: Glazing in older properties (built before 1978) may not necessarily comply with current glass safety standards. In the interests of safety, glass panels in doors and windows should be replaced with glass that meets current standards.</i>
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Proper operation Timber windows: putty, broken glass, sash operation, sash fittings, water staining, decaying frames Metal windows: items above plus glazing seals

Doors & frames:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
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Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Proper operation, binding doors, defective door hardware, damaged doors, paint to top & bottom edge, wood decay

Kitchen:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Damage to joinery, leaking, drummy tiles, check taps, proper operation of appliances, wood decay

Bathroom, WC, ensuite

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Cracking, leaking, signs of dampness, joinery, drummy tiles, check taps, & flushing, grouting / sealant, bath recessed at wall, broken shower screen glass, mirrors, water hammer, exhaust fans properly terminate outside with a duct, visual signs of leaking shower (incl on ceiling below), presence of floor waste, wood decay

Laundry:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Cracking, leaking, signs of dampness, joinery, drummy tiles, check taps, & flushing, grouting / sealant, mirrors, water hammer, floor waste, wood decay

Stairs:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	Note: Stairs & balustrades built before 1996 may not comply with current standards. Whilst there may be no statutory obligation to upgrade upgrading should be considered in the interests of safety.
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Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Balustrade strength & measurements, squeaks

2.0 EXTERIOR OF BUILDING:

Walls:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wall integrity, paint, evidence of missing DPC, flashing, mouldings, sills, weep holes unblocked & present, render not bridging DPC, Cracks to sealant ○ Any part of the building below ground level is subject to dampness & water penetration. Damp problems may not have been evident however these areas should be closely monitored; ○ Older properties near the coast can experience failure of brick ties which hold the external brick skin to the structure;

Timber or steel frames and structures:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Structure integrity, looseness, safety issues, wood decay

Chimneys:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Verticality, flashing, brickwork deterioration

Stairs:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	<i>Note: Stairs & balustrades built before 1996 may not comply with current standards. Whilst there may be no statutory obligation to upgrade upgrading should be considered in the interests of safety.</i>
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Looseness, measurements, structure integrity, non slip treads, wood decay

Balconies, verandas, patios, decks, suspended concrete floors, balustrades:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Structure integrity, looseness, safety issues, wood decay ○ Attachments such as decks, steps need to be separated from building by 25mm to allow access to inspection zone (if there is a termite management system) ○ Timber framed or concrete balconies require annual inspections by a structural engineer to verify their safety;

3.0 ROOF EXTERIOR:

Roof:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Cracked tiles, loose & broken tiles, flashings, rust, screws/nails popping, vent pipes within 2m of fresh air intake, condition of colorbond finish, evidence of leaking, mould

Skylights, vents and flues:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	

Check:	Flashing, leaks, seals
Guttering, Downpipes & Valleys:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Flashing, leaks, gutter falls, corrosion, signs of gutter overflowing into eaves
Eaves, fascias and barges:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Timber decay, paint condition, mould, popping nails
4.0 ROOF SPACE:	
Roof covering:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Roof framing:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Dust from tiles indicating deterioration of tiles
Sarking:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall	

condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	

Party walls:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Fire & acoustic details

Insulation:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Gaps, separation from down lights, metal foil & some spray insulations should be replaced with new compliant insulation

5.0 SUBFLOOR SPACE:

Timber floor:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Deflection of bearers, cracking, spalling, ant capping, moisture, wood decay

Suspended concrete floors:

Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	

Check:	Cracking, surface damage, concrete cancer
6.0 THE SITE:	
Car accommodation and outbuildings:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Auto garage door mechanism
Retaining walls:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Important note:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Walls less than 700mm high are low risk; ○ The general adequacy of site drainage observed during heavy rain is required to identify any exiting problems; ○ Retaining walls are a structural element and potential problems can be very difficult to identify. It is recommended that a structural engineer be engaged to provide specialist advice on any retaining wall.
Paths & driveways:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Cracking, concrete cancer, colour deterioration, surface damage
Steps:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious	

safety hazards found:	
Fencing:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	50mm gap should be provided between fence palings & ground Self closing gate to pool, integrity of pool fencing
Surface water:	
Overall extent of minor defects and overall condition:	
Major defects and serious safety hazards found:	
Check:	Ponding of water against structures & falls of ground away from building
7.0. BUILDING SERVICES:	
Electrical:	
General checks:	Residual current device (RCD). Whilst not necessarily required at the time of construction it is recommended that an RCD is fitted. A licenced electrician should be contacted for further information.
If further advice is required it is recommended an electrical inspection be carried out to properly assess the condition of these services.	
Plumbing:	
General checks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sinks & taps in a serviceable condition and drains appears serviceable; ○ The cold water operating with good pressure; ○ Downpipes connected to the stormwater system however correct connection and operation of the stormwater system can only be confirmed with a smoke test or camera. A licenced plumber should be contacted for further information; ○ Hot water heater proper operation including pressure relief valve; ○ Septic tanks;

If further advice is required it is recommended a plumbing inspection be carried out to properly assess the condition of these services.

Smoke detectors:

General checks:

Smoke detectors - proper operation, position & quantity

If further advice is required it is recommended a specialist inspection be carried out to properly assess the condition of these services.

8.0 OTHER ITEMS:

The following items should also be checked for proper operation / defects:

- Air conditioning & mechanical ventilation;
- Fire protection systems;
- Alarm systems;
- Environmental matters (eg: BASIX compliance, water tanks, BCA Environmental provisions);
- TV, sound & communications and security systems;
- Ducted vacuum systems;
- Swimming pool filtration & similar equipment;
- Intercom systems;
- Other mechanical or electrical equipment such as gates, inclinators etc;
- Fireplaces & solid fuel heaters including chimneys & flues;
- Landscaping;

9.0. RECOMMENDED FOR SPECIALIST INSPECTION:

It is recommended that the following inspections also be carried out by specialist inspectors where required:

- Timber pest inspection (mandatory);
- Structural engineer in the event of structural issues. Eg:
 - Timber framed or concrete balconies require annual inspections to verify their safety;
 - Older properties near the coast can experience failure of brick ties which hold the external brick skin to the structure;
 - Retaining walls;
- Mould inspection;
- Swimming pool / spa and associated equipment inspection incl fencing;
- Asbestos & hazardous material inspection. Buildings built prior to 1982 may contain asbestos and potentially even as late as the early nineties. If concerned or if the building was built before 1990 you should seek advice from a qualified inspector who can advise on the presence of asbestos and the cost of removal or sealing.

10.0. CRACKING IN MASONRY:

The following summary and categorises cracking in masonry and is an extract from AS4349.1:

Description of typical damage and required repair	Width limit	Damage category
Hairline cracks	$\leq 0.1\text{mm}$	0 – negligible
Fine cracks that do not need repair	$\leq 1.0\text{mm}$	1 – very slight
Cracks noticeable but easily filled. Doors & windows stick slightly	$\leq 5.0\text{mm}$	2 – slight
Cracks can be repaired and possibly a small amount of wall will need to be replaced. Door & windows stick, service pipes can fracture. Weather tightness often impaired	$> 5.0\text{mm}, \leq 15.0\text{mm}$ (or a number of cracks 3.0mm or more in one group)	3 – moderate
Extensive repair work involving breaking out and replacing sections of walls, especially over doors and windows, Door frames distort. Walls lean or bulge noticeably, some loss of bearing in beams. Service pipes disrupted.	$> 15.0\text{mm}, \leq 25.0\text{mm}$ but also depends on number of cracks	4 - severe