



The Importance of New Home Inspections

by Walt Keaveny, Risk Manager, MS, PE, PG

Inspections are a vital component of the home building industry, as they are in almost all industries. We would not want to eat in restaurants or use elevators or fly in airplanes that were not inspected. We definitely would not want to make the largest purchase of our lives, a new home, if it wasn't inspected.

Home construction inspections are standard industry practice and required or strongly recommended by building departments, Federal Housing Administration (FHA)/Housing and Urban Development (HUD), construction codes, lenders, engineers and home warranty companies. Inspections assist home builders to ensure that homes are constructed in accordance with plans and specifications, building codes and construction performance standards. Documented inspections may also be important for a home builder's defense in the event of arbitration or litigation of a construction defect claim.

The vast majority of homes are located in building department jurisdictions. Inspections are conducted by building department inspectors in compliance with adopted building codes and permit requirements. If a home is located in a rural area outside a building department jurisdiction, then the home builder should retain the services of a qualified fee inspector to conduct



inspections. If there are no building codes, home builders generally use the popular International Residential Code (IRC) and International Building Code (IBC).

At a minimum, new homes should be inspected at the foundation, frame and final stages of construction. The foundation inspection is often referred to as a "pre-pour" inspection because

the inspection should be conducted before the concrete is poured. The frame inspection is often referred to as a "rough-in" inspection because it should be conducted when the systems are roughed-in and before installation of insulation and sheetrock. The final inspection should be conducted when all construction, finishes and landscaping are completed.



An inspected and well-constructed home often results in customer referrals—a home builder's lifeblood. As the age-old saying goes, you get what you inspect, not what you expect.

Homes located in a rural area outside a building department jurisdiction should retain the services of a qualified fee inspector to conduct inspections.



Mr. Keaveny is the Risk Manager and Principal Engineer for the leading new home warranty company, 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Geological Engineering and a Masters in Geotechnical Engineering. He is licensed as both a Professional Engineer and a Professional Geoscientist, and has over 30 years of diverse engineering experience. He serves on the Construction Performance Standards Committee for the Texas Association of Builders, and is an invited speaker and author. Mr. Keaveny's work on the subject of structural claims has been published in major newspapers and has drawn international interest.



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