

Open House Attendance Checklist



Open houses are a great way to check out homes, but if you're visiting an open house without your buyer's agent, it's easy to forget to ask some important questions.

Here are the most important questions you need to ask whenever you're visiting an open house.

- "May I Please See the Property Seller's Disclosure Statement?"** The SDS will give you insight into the physical condition of the property, including the legal disclosure of any sort of water, fire, or other damage that may have been concealed by remodeling.
- "When were the heating / cooling systems last serviced or inspected?"** Were they found to be in good working order? A seller's disclosure statement isn't required to tell you about service history. If a working furnace requires a visit every other month from a tech to keep it that way, you'll want to know.
- "What improvements have been made to the property since the seller purchased it?"** Though most agents are happy to share the upgrades and improvements made to a property, they aren't required to do so. Asking about remodeling and renovation projects is also a great way to get information on whether the work was done by licensed professionals or by the homeowner themselves.
- "What is the age of the current roof?"** A standard SDS requires a seller to share whether or not there are defects or leaks in a roof, but not always the age of the roof. Most roofs have an estimated 20-year lifespan, so even a functioning roof that happens to be 17 years old may wind up being a capital expense in a few years.
- "What is the age of the current septic system?"** Verification of a working septic system is important, but the age of the infrastructure is important too. Like a roof, the mechanicals in a septic system won't last forever, and problems here often go undetected until it's too late because they're buried underground. An old septic system is worth inspecting prior to moving forward with a purchase to make sure you know what you're working with.

“May I please have the contact information for the HOA?” If the home you’re considering is a part of an HOA, make sure you request a copy of the HOA bylaws as well as review any membership information they have. HOAs are typically not too expensive in terms of the money they charge, but they can be a level of control that many homeowners aren’t prepared for. If the home you’re considering is part of an HOA, make sure you know your rights and responsibilities therein.

“Have there ever been incidents involving flooding in the home?” A standard SDS requires homeowners to disclose if there were water issues as a result of leaks, natural disasters, or water entering the home from the outside in any way. However, it does not require a homeowner to disclose an incident like a bathtub being left running; something that could cause equal damage.

“Has there been an inspection recently conducted on the property? If so, may I see a copy of it?” Some homeowners will actually get a home inspection prior to listing the home for sale in an attempt to fix anything that might come up in the inspection process. Though a home seller isn’t required to provide this report to a buyer, it never hurts to ask!