

Appropriate (and Unreasonable) Inspection Repair Requests

Most buyers include a home inspection contingency in their contract, which can alert you to problems that may need to be addressed, like malfunctioning appliances or cracks in the foundation.

Your buyer's representative is here to guide you through the findings and help you decide your next steps with the seller. What should you include in your repair requests?

Generally, problems with non-functioning systems and safety issues are legitimate negotiable repairs. Or, if you discover substantial structural defects or serious hazards, you may want to back out of the contract.

On the other hand, issues that have already been disclosed or extensive nickel-and-dime requests will only generate ill will with the sellers and potentially derail the transaction. **If your goal is to reach the closing table, it may be best to pass on these requests:**

1. Normal wear and tear.

Chipped paint on the baseboards. A cracked mirror. Scratches in hardwood flooring. Unless you're buying new construction, most homes have some cosmetic defects. Sellers are typically unwilling to negotiate on flaws that were visible when you made your offer.

2. Inexpensive repairs.

It would be nice if buyers could get sellers to handle every minor repair, from a torn window screen or a cracked switch plate to a burnt bulb in a ceiling fixture. However, remember, it's better to focus on big-picture items and ensure the home's major components are in good condition.



3. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Even though many municipalities have rules regarding these safety items, it may be preferable to pass on smoke and carbon monoxide detector requests. That way, instead of settling for cheap replacements, you can shop for a system that satisfies your long-term preferences while living in the home.

4. Landscaping modifications.

It's unreasonable to expect sellers to trim foundation plantings, remove a dead tree, or repair a loose fence board. Again, these items were visible when you toured the home and will likely irritate the sellers, especially if extreme cold (or heat) makes it challenging to complete the requests.

5. Code updates.

In many locations, inspectors must list any item in the house that does not meet the current code requirements. That doesn't necessarily mean the house needs to be brought up to code. Unless it's a genuine health and safety issue, these items are typically grandfathered into the purchase.

