

# REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

1. **Intermittent or Concealed Issues:** Some problems can only be discovered by living in a house. They cannot be discovered during a home inspection lasting only a few hours. For example, a shower stall may leak only when people are using it, but no leak was observed when it was run for a few minutes just turning the faucet on. Some roofs and basements only leak under certain specific conditions that may not have been present during the inspection. Some problems will only be discovered when finishes or furniture are removed.
2. **No Visible Clues:** These issues or problems may have existed at the time of inspection; however no visible clues were present to identify their existence. Our inspections are based on the current or past performances of the house. If there are no visible clues of a past or current problem, it is unfair to assume we should foresee a future problem.
3. **We Always Miss Some Minor Things:** Our reports may identify some minor problems, but not others. The minor problems that are identified were discovered while looking for more significant problems. We note them simply as a courtesy to our clients. The intent of the home inspection is not to find the \$200 problems; it is to find the \$2,000 problems. These are the things that affect people's decisions when purchasing a home. The smaller items you will discover and repair, as you live in a home.
4. **Contractor's Advice:** A common source of dissatisfaction with home inspectors stem from comments made by contractors. Contractor's opinions often differ from ours. Don't be surprised when a roofer recommends you replace your roof, whereas we said to budget for replacement in the near future. Our job is to provide you with the best information. That does not include finding work for contractors.
5. **'Last Man In' Theory:** While our advice represents the most prudent things to do for optimal safety or to bring up to today's standards, many contractors are reluctant to undertake these repairs. This is because of the 'Last Man In' Theory. The contractors fear that if he/she is the last person to work on the roof, they will get blamed if the roof leaks, regardless of whether the roof leak is their fault. Consequently, he won't want to do minor repairs with high liability, when he could replace the entire roof covering for more money and reduce his liability. This is understandable.
6. **Most Recent Advice is Best:** There is more to the 'Last Man In' Theory. It suggests that it is human for homeowners to believe the last bit of expert advice they receive, even if it is contrary to previous advice. As home inspectors, we unfortunately find ourselves in the position of "First Man In" and consequently it is our advice that is often disbelieved.
7. **Why Didn't We See it?** Contractors often say, "I can't believe your home inspector didn't find this problem" or "How did your home inspector miss this?" There are several reasons for these apparent oversights. Most contractors have no idea of what is inside or outside the scope of a general home inspection. All of our inspections are conducted in accordance with the New Hampshire Standards of Practice. The SOP's specifically state what is included and excluded from a general home inspection. Most contractors are not aware that there are SOP's and tend to "blame the home inspector" for any



issues found, regardless of whether the issue was within the “scope” of the home inspection. A full copy of the SOP’s are listed in multiple areas of your inspection report and available at the OPLC.gov website.

8. **Conditions During the Inspection:** It is difficult for homebuyers to remember the circumstances in the house at the time of the inspection. For this reason, many seldom remember that it was snowing, where furniture was placed, heavy personal storage concealing items, obstructed appliances or systems, and outside factors such as temperature or weather that may have prevented full inspection or testing of specific systems or components. For example, when temperatures drop below 65 degrees, the air conditioner is not tested or operated due to likelihood of damaging the component; when snow or rain is present, the inspector is unable to traverse the roof covering or visually inspect the roof, decks, steps, etc. that may be concealed or unsafe due to the weather. For this, it is impossible for the contractors to fully understand the circumstances surrounding the inspection and what was visible and what was not.
9. **The Wisdom of Hindsight:** When the problem manifests itself, it is very easy to have 20/20 hindsight. Anybody can say that the basement is wet when there is 2 inches of water covering the floor. Predicting the problem with no visible clues, is a different story.
10. **We Are Considered Generalists:** If we spent half an hour under the kitchen sink or an hour disassembling the furnace, we would locate and discover more problems, too. Unfortunately, the inspection would take days and would cost considerably more than a general home inspection. We are considered generalists; we are not specialist in every field. This is because we are expected to have heating and plumbing knowledge, structural and roofing proficiency, etc. The heating contractor should indeed have more heating expertise than we do because that is their specialized field. This is one of the reasons we defer to the “industry professional” for further evaluation on each inspection issue we discover.
11. **An Invasive Look:** Problems often become apparent when carpets or wall coverings are removed, when fixture or cabinets are pulled out and so on. A home inspection is a visual, non-invasive examination only. We do not perform invasive or destructive tests.
12. **An Inspection is NOT Insurance or a Warranty:** In conclusion, a home inspection is designed to better your odds of NOT purchasing a “money pit”. It is not designed to eliminate all risks. For that reason, a home inspection should not be considered an insurance policy or home warranty. Obtaining a home warranty through a reputable company is strongly recommended upon purchasing your home for any unforeseen issues that may arise in the future.
13. **ALL COMPONENTS HAVE A LIFE EXPECTANCY:** All systems and components, like us, have a typical service life. This means that EVERYTHING in a home will eventually fail. Most water heaters are only expected to last 7-12 years, furnaces last between 15-25 years, roof shingles are only 20-25 years. This means that, although these are functioning today, you will eventually have to address them or replace them in the future. Inspectors cannot predict when these will fail, and these are used a guideline.

