

Valves, breakers, outlets, and gas pilot lights

Only a visual inspection of shutoff valves and circuit breakers is done. I not only want you to be safe in your new home, I want to be safe while I am inspecting your new home. Therefore, I do not turn any water or gas shutoff valves on, move any electric circuit breakers to the on position, plug in anything that has been unplugged, or light any gas pilots, simply because I do not know why the valves or breakers were off, why the equipment was unplugged, or why the gas pilots were turned off. Turning valves and breakers on, plugging in equipment, or trying to light gas pilots without such knowledge can cause property damage, personal injury, and, in a worst case scenario, loss of life. I also do not do any of the opposite functions, i.e., turning water or gas shutoff valves off, moving electric circuit breakers to the off position, unplugging anything that is plugged in, or extinguishing any gas pilot lights.

The function of the water heater TPR drain pipe cannot be determined since it is connected to a valve; it is given a visual inspection only.

Due to the constant pressure in the water supply lines and the lack of daily use of shutoff valves at the toilets, sinks, and water heater, the valves can fail at any time. Many sellers try to be helpful by turning off all the water shutoff valves at the toilets, sinks, and water heater as the last thing they do when they move out. That is exactly the wrong thing to do. In many cases the valves are very difficult to turn due to rust, corrosion, and/or mineral build-up from hard water, and when they are forced, they break and then leak when they are turned back on. I recommend that you have a licensed plumbing professional inspect water shutoff valves at the toilets, sinks, and water heater before close of escrow to ensure proper operation.

If you choose not to have the water shutoff valves at the toilets, sinks, and water heater inspected and tested before close of escrow, I recommend that you instruct the sellers to leave the water on at all water-using appliances, particularly if you are going to be moving in within a couple of days or so.

Any circuit breakers that were in the off position are noted as such and are not switched to the on position for any reason whatsoever. If breaker tripping problems are detected, you should seek the professional services of a licensed electrician—circuits might be overloaded or a short might have occurred at an outlet or switch due to damage during the move-out/move in process.

I determined the type of branch circuit wiring used in your home by inspecting the electric panels. Inspecting the wiring in or at electric outlets; light switches; lighting fixtures; electrical junction boxes; or in walls, ceilings, floors and the attic, or any other places other than the electric panel, is beyond the scope of a property inspection since a high number of components of the home would have to be dismantled. It would be extremely time-consuming to unplug someone's equipment and appliances (and I don't do that) and unscrew every outlet and light switch cover to check the wiring. Such an inspection could take several days or hours and would cost many hundreds of dollars more than what you paid for a general property inspection. It is entirely possible, particularly with older homes, that wiring at electric outlets; light switches; lighting fixtures; electrical junction boxes; or in walls, ceilings, floors and the attic, or any other places other than the electric panel, might be different from that in the electric panel, particularly if the home has been renovated or has additions.



The function of some outlets might not have been determined for various reasons. For example, outlets in use and outlets blocked by furnishings and storage are not tested. I do not unplug anything from any outlet in order to test an outlet and I do not move furniture or storage. Some wall switches might not have appeared to have worked at the time of the inspection but might actually have been operating outlets that were not accessible for testing. Only a maximum of 50% of the electric receptacles are tested (one receptacle per two-receptacle outlet). Outlets are easily damaged during the escrow period and during the move-out/move-in process. Outlets that were working and in good condition at time of inspection could be damaged or not working by the time you are completely moved in. I believe that it would be useful for you to visit a home improvement store, or even a grocery store, and buy a small nightlight to test all the outlets during your final walk-through, especially if the property was occupied and furnished at the time of the inspection.