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HOME SELF INSPECTION CHECKLIST

A Free Printable Visual Guide for U.S. Homeowners and Renters

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Foreword

This guide is provided as a free resource to assist homeowners, buyers, and renters in conducting a basic visual inspection of a property.
While it offers helpful insights and practical checklists, this guide is not intended to replace a licensed home inspector or a certified professional evaluation.

Every home is unique, and some defects may not be visible or detectable without specialized tools or training. For legal compliance, insurance purposes, or real estate transactions, it is always recommended to consult a licensed inspector in your state.
By using this guide, you agree that HomeSelfInspection.com and its creators are not liable for any decisions or outcomes resulting from your personal inspections.

🏡 Grounds – Outdoor Areas & Surroundings

A safe, dry, and well-maintained yard is the first line of defense in protecting your home. This section helps you evaluate drainage, vegetation, walkways, and outdoor structures around your property.

☐ **Proper grading and drainage away from the house**
Why it matters:
The ground should slope away from your home to prevent water from pooling near the foundation. Poor grading can lead to moisture damage and basement leaks.
Tip: You should have at least a 2% slope (about 6 inches drop over the first 10 feet).
📸 *Not sure? Upload a photo to HomeSelfInspection.com and get expert feedback within 24 hours.*

☐ **No evidence of standing water**

Why it matters:
Puddles after rain could indicate drainage problems. Standing water can attract pests, cause mold, and weaken your foundation.
Tip: Check low-lying areas, especially near the corners of your house, walkways, and flower beds.

☐ **No leaks from septic tank or leach field**

Why it matters:
Leaks from your septic system can pose health hazards and result in expensive repairs.
What to look for: Wet patches, lush green grass over the drain field, or unpleasant odors.

☐ **Yard, landscaping, trees, and walkways in good condition**

Why it matters:
A clean, level yard with trimmed landscaping helps prevent accidents and keeps the area looking well maintained.
Tip: Cracked or uneven walkways can be a trip hazard and should be repaired.

☐ **No branches or bushes touching the house or roof**

Why it matters:
Overhanging vegetation can damage siding and roofing, or provide a path for pests like squirrels or termites.
Tip: Keep at least 1–2 feet of clearance between shrubs and exterior walls.

☐ **Exterior structures (fences, sheds, decks, retaining walls, garages) are in good condition**

Why it matters:
Rotting wood, loose boards, or termite damage in these structures can spread to your home.
Tip: Tap on wood posts — hollow or soft sounds may indicate hidden rot or pests.
🔍 Upload photos of damaged structures at HomeSelfInspection.com/upload for feedback.

☐ **Railings on stairs and decks are adequate and secure**

Why it matters:
Loose or missing railings are a major safety issue, especially for children and older adults.
Tip: Shake the railing firmly — it should not move.

☐ **Driveways, sidewalks, patios, and landings are in good condition and slope away from the House**

Why it matters:
Flat or inward-sloping concrete can allow water to seep under the home.
Tip: Look for cracks or pooling near entrances, especially after rain.

🔎 **Need help reviewing your outdoor area?**

Take a few photos and upload them to HomeSelfInspection.com. Our experts will review them and send comments directly to your inbox — no appointment needed.

🧱 Structure – Walls, Frame, and Overall Shape

The structural integrity of your home is essential for long-term safety, stability, and value. Even small distortions in the visible lines of your house can signal foundation issues or framing problems.
This section focuses on visual cues that may indicate structural shifting, settling, or damage.

☐ **Ridge and fascia board lines appear straight and level**
Why it matters:

The ridge line (top of the roof) and fascia boards (horizontal boards under the roof edge) should appear straight when viewed from a distance.

What to look for:
Wavy or sagging lines could indicate roof structure movement, deteriorated trusses, or foundation settlement.

Tip: Stand across the street and compare the roofline to nearby horizontal reference lines (fence, horizon, etc.).

☐ **Sides of the house appear straight — not bowed or bulging**
Why it matters:
Bulging or curved exterior walls may signal framing damage, water intrusion, or shifting due to poor soil support.
What to look for:
Look down the side walls from a distance and check for any bends, bows, or bulges.
📸 *Unsure if it's serious? Upload a wide-angle photo at HomeSelfInspection.com and get structural advice.*

☐ **Window and door frames appear square**
Why it matters:
Crooked or racked windows can mean your house is settling unevenly or that structural components are shifting.
What to check:

- Are the top corners of windows and doors tight and even?
- Are windows hard to open or doors sticking?
- Are there gaps at one end of a frame and not the other?

Tip: Use a measuring tape or square tool to test diagonal alignment.
🎯 *Pro tip:* Bowed or misshapen windows may also lead to water intrusion and energy loss.

🔍 **Need help analyzing uneven walls or door frames?**
Snap a photo and upload it to HomeSelfInspection.com — our expert review team will assess whether it's a cosmetic issue or a sign of foundation movement.

🪟 Windows, Doors & Exterior Trim

Windows and doors are key points of energy efficiency, moisture control, and structural sealing. Proper maintenance of frames, glass, and seals helps prevent rot, air leaks, and water damage. Use this checklist to spot common issues that could affect your comfort, safety, or repair costs.

☐ **Wood frames and trim pieces are secure, with no cracks, rot, or decay**
Why it matters:

Damaged wood trim allows water to enter and insects to nest, leading to structural rot.
What to look for:

Tap gently on wood trim — if it feels soft, crumbles, or sounds hollow, rot may be present.
Tip: Pay close attention to areas just above or below windows where water might collect.

☐ **Joints around frames are sealed with caulk**
Why it matters:

Unsealed joints allow air, water, and pests into the home. Caulking helps keep moisture out and energy bills down.

Tip: Look for dried, cracked, or missing caulk — especially in corners or under sills.
📸 *Need advice on re-caulking? Visit HomeSelfInspection.com for step-by-step visuals.*

☐ **No broken glass, storm panes, or damaged screens; insulated window seals intact**
Why it matters:

Cracked glass and failed seals reduce energy efficiency and increase moisture risks.
What to check:

- Double-pane windows should be clear — foggy or streaky appearance = broken seal
- Screens should be tear-free and frames not bent
- Storm windows (if present) should close and latch securely

☐ **Muntin and mullion glazing compound is in good condition**
Why it matters:

These thin strips and the putty that hold panes in place can deteriorate over time, especially on older wood windows.
What to look for:

Cracked, missing, or peeling compound means the glass may become loose or leak.
Tip: Press gently with your finger — soft or crumbling putty should be replaced.

☐ **Storm windows or thermal (insulated) glass is used**
Why it matters:

Modern thermal windows save energy and improve comfort. Older homes with single-pane glass benefit greatly from upgraded storm windows.
Tip: Not sure if your windows are insulated? Hold a flame (safely) near the window — thermal glass usually reflects a double image of the flame.

☐ **Drip caps are installed above windows**
Why it matters:

Drip caps prevent rain from seeping into the top of the window frame, especially on wood siding.
What to check:

A drip cap is a small piece of flashing or trim that extends slightly above the top of the window — often aluminum or vinyl.
Missing one? That's an easy fix that prevents major water intrusion.

🔍 **Not sure if your window trim is okay?**
Take close-up and wide-angle photos and submit them at HomeSelfInspection.com — we'll check for signs of rot, seal failure, or improper installation.

🏠 Roof & Attic

The roof is one of the most important systems in your home — it protects everything beneath it. Even small issues can lead to water damage, mold, or energy loss. Use this section to visually inspect your roofing materials, attic, ventilation, and drainage components.

🔷 **Roof Inspection**

☐ **Composition shingles: no curling, cupping, missing, or damaged shingles**
Why it matters:

Asphalt shingles are the most common roofing material. When they start to curl, crack, or lose granules, your roof is nearing the end of its lifespan.
Tip: Use binoculars from the ground or a drone to check without climbing.
Watch for: Bald spots, exposed black patches, or visible nails.

☐ **Wood shingles/shakes: no mold, rot, or cracks**
Why it matters:
Wood roofs are beautiful but vulnerable to rot and insect damage.
Check for: Greenish stains (mold), dark patches (rot), or curled/cracked shingles.

☐ **Flat roofs: no cracks, wrinkles, or ponding water**
Why it matters:

Flat roofs require perfect drainage. Patches, “alligator skin” cracking, or standing water are red flags.
Tip: If you see silt lines, it means water sat there — which shouldn't happen.

☐ **Flashing around roof penetrations is secure**
What to look for:

Check the base of chimneys, skylights, and vent pipes for properly installed metal flashing.
⚠️ *Loose or missing flashing is a common cause of leaks.*

☐ **No excess roofing cement, tar, or caulk**

Why it matters:

Heavy use of roof sealants often hides poor repairs. These may crack and fail over time.
Tip: A well-done roof shouldn't rely on visible gobs of black goo!

☐ **Soffits and fascia boards are in good condition**
Why it matters:

These protect roof edges and allow ventilation.
Check for: Peeling paint, water stains, soft spots, or signs of animal nests.

☐ **Exterior attic vents are clean and functional**
What to look for:

- Soffit vents under eaves should be clear (not painted over)
- Gable vents or ridge vents should not be blocked

☐ **Gutters: clean, secure, and draining properly**
Checklist:

- No sagging, rust, or missing sections
- No mud or debris buildup
- Downspouts direct water away from the house
  📸 *Upload photos of your gutter system to HomeSelfInspection.com for evaluation.*

☐ **Chimney is straight and in good condition**
What to inspect:

- Bricks not cracked or crumbling
- Mortar is solid (not dusty or missing)
- Flashing at chimney base is watertight
- Cement/mortar cap is intact
  Tip: Use binoculars to check from the ground.

🔷 Attic Inspection

☐ **No stains on the underside of roof decking**
Why it matters:

Dark marks around nails or vents = signs of roof leaks or condensation.
Tip: Inspect during or right after rain for active leaks.

☐ **No evidence of wood rot or decay**
Check for:

- Sagging roof sheathing
- Discolored or crumbly rafters
- Musty smells or visible mold

☐ **Properly installed insulation (vapor barrier toward heated space)**
Why it matters:

Incorrect insulation can trap moisture and reduce energy efficiency.
Tip: Look for a plastic or kraft paper facing — it should face the heated side of the home (usually the floor in the attic).

☐ **Adequate ventilation and airflow**
Checklist:

- Air can enter through soffits and exit through roof/ridge vents
- Gable end vents are open and not blocked
- Mechanical fans work (if present)

☐ **No vents from plumbing or appliances terminate in attic**
Why it matters:
Dryer, bathroom, or furnace vents must go outside. Otherwise, warm moist air builds up, leading to mold or rot.
Tip: If you see a metal duct just "ending" in the attic, it's a problem.

☐ **No open electrical splices**
Why it matters:

All electrical connections must be inside a covered junction box. Open wires are a fire hazard.
Check: Are any wires just twisted and taped together without a box? If yes, hire an electrician.

🔧 **Need help evaluating your roof or attic?**
Upload pictures of shingles, vents, or attic conditions at HomeSelfInspection.com and get a fast expert opinion within 24 hours.

🏠 Interior Rooms – Floors, Walls, Doors & Comfort

Your interior tells a story — not just about comfort, but about what may be happening behind the walls. Subtle signs like stains, sticking doors, or cold rooms can point to deeper structural, insulation, or mechanical issues.
Use this checklist to visually inspect every livable room, including bedrooms, living rooms, hallways, and dining areas.

☐ Floors, walls, and ceilings appear straight, level, and plumb
Why it matters:

Uneven surfaces could indicate structural settlement, water damage, or poor construction.
Tip: Use a marble or level tool to check if floors slope or bounce underfoot.

☐ No stains on floors, walls, or ceilings
What to look for:

- Yellow or brown ceiling stains = old roof or plumbing leaks
- Dark spots at wall corners = potential moisture or mold
  📷 *Upload interior stain photos to HomeSelfInspection.com for expert input.*

☐ Flooring materials are in good condition
What to inspect:

- Wood: No soft spots, cupping, or water damage
- Carpet: No visible mold, major wear, or odors
- Tile: No cracks or hollow-sounding sections

☐ No significant cracks in walls or ceilings
Why it matters:

Minor hairline cracks are common in drywall. Large or diagonal cracks could signal structural movement.
Tip: Measure and mark cracks — if they grow over time, get a professional inspection.

☐ Windows and exterior doors operate smoothly, latch properly
Checklist:

- Doors close and latch without force
- No broken or foggy glass
- No sashes painted shut (common in older homes)
- Look for weather-stripping and functional “weep holes” (tiny drainage channels)

☐ **Interior doors open, close, and latch properly**

Tip: Test all bedroom and bathroom doors. Loose hinges or sticking doors can result from humidity, poor installation, or settling.

☐ **Paint, wallpaper, and paneling are in good condition**
Why it matters:

Peeling or bubbling paint may indicate water problems or poor ventilation.
Tip: Look around windows and corners where hidden leaks often start.

☐ **Wood trim is securely installed and looks clean**

Inspect: Baseboards, window trim, crown molding — check for gaps, warping, or signs of moisture.

☐ **Lights and switches work properly**
What to test:

- Try every light switch
- Check that outlets near doors and beds are functional
  Tip: A blinking or flickering light could be a loose wire.

☐ **Each room has enough grounded (3-prong) outlets**
Why it matters:

Older homes may lack safe electrical outlets. Grounded outlets reduce shock/fire risk.
Tip: Most modern bedrooms should have 1 outlet every 6–12 feet of wall space.

☐ **Electrical outlets test properly**
How to test:

Use an inexpensive plug-in tester to verify proper wiring, polarity, and grounding.
💡 *Want help interpreting results? Upload photos to HomeSelfInspection.com.*

☐ **Heating/cooling source in every room**
Checklist:

- Central heat/AC vent
- Radiator or baseboard heater
- Wall-mounted split unit
  Tip: Rooms without heating or cooling may not count as "habitable space" in real estate appraisals.

☐ **Signs of insulation in walls**
Why it matters:

Poor insulation leads to cold spots, noise, and high energy bills.
Tip: Knock on the wall — a hollow, echoey sound may indicate missing insulation.

☐ **Fireplace is safe and functional**
Checklist:

- No visible cracks in bricks or firebox
- No dark staining (back-drafting) on the mantel
- Damper opens and closes properly
- Flue is lined and has been cleaned recently

🛠️ **Need help identifying ceiling stains, cracking walls, or fireplace safety?**
Snap a few photos and upload them to HomeSelfInspection.com. Our review team will send back comments within 24–48 hours.

🍽️ Kitchen – Safety, Plumbing, and Appliance Function

The kitchen is one of the most frequently used and moisture-prone areas in the home. Problems here can affect both health and safety — from electrical hazards to hidden leaks under the sink.
Use this checklist to evaluate ventilation, outlets, plumbing, and built-in appliances.

☐ Working exhaust fan vented to the outside
Why it matters:

Range hoods and exhaust fans must remove heat, smoke, and moisture from cooking. Vents that terminate inside the attic or wall can cause mold.
Tip: Turn on the fan and check for airflow outside the building.
📸 *Unsure if your vent is properly installed? Upload a photo to HomeSelfInspection.com.*

☐ GFCI protection for outlets near sink
Why it matters:

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) shut off power instantly if there's a moisture-related electrical hazard. They're required by code within 6 feet of any sink.
What to check:
Look for a small "Test" and "Reset" button on the outlet. Test each one to ensure it's working.

☐ Dishwasher drains correctly, no leaks
Inspect:

- Run a short cycle and check for water beneath or around the unit
- Baskets should move smoothly, and the door should latch and spring open properly
  Tip: A slow-draining dishwasher might point to a partially blocked drain line.

☐ **No plumbing leaks under the sink**
What to look for:

- Drips around pipe joints or faucet connections
- Water stains or puddles at the bottom of the cabinet
  📷 *Take a photo under your sink and upload it to HomeSelfInspection.com for leak detection tips.*

☐ **Floor inside cabinet under sink is solid, no stains or soft spots**
Why it matters:

A soft or discolored cabinet floor is often the first sign of a long-term leak.
Tip: Press gently with your hand — if the surface gives way or feels spongey, it may need replacement.

☐ **Sink has adequate water flow**
Check both hot and cold taps.

- Weak flow could signal clogged aerators, blocked supply lines, or low water pressure.
  Tip: Unscrew the faucet aerator and clean it if flow seems restricted.

☐ **No excessive rust or deterioration on disposal or drain pipes**
What to inspect:

- Look at the bottom of the garbage disposal for rust or dripping
- Examine drain traps and metal pipes for corrosion
  Tip: Any flaking rust or greenish stains may indicate an active leak.

☐ **Built-in appliances operate properly**
Test:

- Oven heats evenly
- Microwave turns and heats
- Cooktop burners ignite
- Refrigerator maintains proper temperature
  Tip: Check for unusual noises or vibrations.

☐ **Cabinets are in good condition; doors and drawers operate smoothly**
Check:

- Doors stay shut and are aligned
- Drawer tracks are intact
- No sagging, warping, or musty odors
  📷 *Not sure if cabinet damage is cosmetic or structural? Submit photos to HomeSelfInspection.com.*

🛠️ **Need help identifying plumbing problems or unsafe wiring in the kitchen?**
Take clear photos and submit them through HomeSelfInspection.com — we'll respond with a custom review within 24–48 hours.

🚿 Bathrooms – Plumbing, Ventilation & Moisture Protection

Bathrooms are high-moisture zones — even small issues can lead to mold, structural damage, or unhealthy conditions. This checklist helps ensure all plumbing, drainage, and sealing elements are in safe, working order.

☐ **Working exhaust fan that vents outside (not into attic)**
Why it matters:

Bathroom fans must remove moisture from the air and exhaust it to the outside. If the vent leads into the attic, it can cause mold and wood rot.
Tip: Turn on the fan and check for air movement outdoors (often near the roof or soffit).

☐ **Adequate water pressure and flow at all fixtures**
Test:

- Sink, tub, and shower: good hot and cold water flow
- Pressure should be steady, not weak or pulsing
  Tip: Low pressure might indicate clogs, valve problems, or old galvanized pipes.

☐ **Sink, tub, and shower drain properly**
Check for:

- Slow draining water
- Gurgling noises
- Standing water after use
  Tip: Use a drain snake or enzyme cleaner if water pools for more than a few seconds.

☐ **No leaks under sink or in cabinet floor**
What to inspect:

- Pipe joints
- Shutoff valves
- Cabinet base (check for swelling, stains, or mold)
  📷 *Upload cabinet interior photos to HomeSelfInspection.com for review.*

☐ **Metal sink is rust-free and overflow drain is leak-free**
Why it matters:

Rust and overflow leaks are common in older sinks and can lead to unseen water damage.
Tip: Fill the sink to the overflow drain and watch for drips under the sink.

☐ **Toilet works correctly**
Test:

- Flush completely
- Tank refills without running endlessly
- No unusual noises or weak flushes

☐ **Toilet is stable; no rocking or stains at base**
Why it matters:

A loose toilet may break the wax ring seal and leak into the subfloor.
Tip: Straddle the toilet gently and rock side-to-side — it should feel solid.

☐ **Caulking in good condition inside and outside tub/shower**
Why it matters:

Cracked or missing caulk allows water to seep behind walls, leading to mold or rot.
What to look for:

- Mildew in corners
- Gaps or peeling around tub edge
  📸 *Take close-up photos of damaged caulking and submit to HomeSelfInspection.com.*

☐ **Tub and shower tiles are secure; wall surfaces are solid**
Test:

- Press tiles with your fingers — they should not move
- Hollow or soft-feeling areas could indicate water damage behind the wall

☐ **No stains or signs of leaking around base of tub or shower**
What to look for:

- Dark or discolored grout
- Water marks on floor next to tub
- Cracked tiles or missing caulk along base

💡 **Tip:** After a shower, check for water pooling outside the tub or along baseboards. Persistent moisture here means something is leaking or improperly sealed.

🛁 **Need help diagnosing a leaky toilet, soft floor, or tile issue?**
Upload pictures and get expert feedback at HomeSelfInspection.com — fast, visual, and easy.

🛠️ Miscellaneous & Safety Features

Some of the most important safety items in your home aren't part of the structure — they're small details that protect lives. This section covers key safety devices and overlooked systems like stairways and garage doors.

☐ **Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors installed where required**
Why it matters:

Smoke detectors save lives. Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors are legally required in most states, especially near bedrooms and gas appliances.

Check:

- One smoke detector per bedroom and hallway
- At least one CO detector per floor, outside sleeping areas
- Test each unit monthly
  Tip: Replace batteries annually and the entire unit every 8–10 years.
  📸 *Unsure if your layout meets code? Submit a photo to HomeSelfInspection.com for review.*

☐ **Stair treads and risers are solid and secure**
Why it matters:

Loose or uneven stairs are a common cause of falls.
What to check:

- All steps should be the same height (risers) and depth (treads)
- No wobbly boards or creaking when stepped on
- Stair surfaces should not be slippery

☐ **Stair handrails are in place where needed and firmly attached**
Requirements:

- Handrails are typically required on stairs with 3 or more risers
- Should be mounted between 34–38 inches high and easy to grip
  Tip: Give the rail a firm shake — it should not move. Missing handrails should be added for safety.

☐ **Automatic garage door opener works correctly and reverses for obstacles**
Test:

- Close the door, then wave an object under the sensor beam — the door should stop and reverse
- Apply light pressure to the bottom of the door as it closes — it should stop and reverse
  Why it matters:
  Malfunctioning sensors or openers can pose a danger to children, pets, and vehicles.

⚠️ **Pro Tip:** Garage door openers manufactured before 1993 may lack required safety features. Consider upgrading if yours is older.

🧰 **Want a quick safety check on your stairs or detectors?**
Take a few photos and upload them to HomeSelfInspection.com — we'll let you know if anything is missing or unsafe.

🧱 Basement or Mechanical Room – Structure, Moisture & Utility Space

Basements and utility rooms often reveal hidden problems in a home's structure, moisture control, and long-term stability. This area may house your foundation, furnace, water heater, or main electrical panel — making it essential for a thorough inspection.

☐ No signs of moisture or water intrusion
Why it matters:

Even minor dampness can lead to mold, mildew, or wood rot.
What to look for:

- Musty odor
- Stained walls or floors
- Efflorescence (white powdery residue)
- Dehumidifiers running constantly
  Tip: Use a moisture meter near baseboards or corners after rainfall.

☐ Exposed foundation: no stains, major cracks, flaking, or efflorescence
What to inspect:

- Cracks wider than ⅛ inch may be structural
- Flaking concrete (spalling) may indicate water infiltration
- White salt-like buildup (efflorescence) is a sign of past water problems
  📷 *Unsure about a crack or stain? Upload a photo to HomeSelfInspection.com for expert review.*

☐ Structural wood (joists, beams) shows no sagging, rot, or insect damage
Why it matters:

Wood framing in basements or crawlspaces is vulnerable to termites, mold, and long-term sagging.
Inspect for:

- Discoloration, softness, or sagging
- Insect tunnels or sawdust
- Gaps between wood sills and the concrete foundation

☐ Wood sills are anchored to the foundation with bolts
Why it matters:

Sill plates (the wood sitting on top of your foundation wall) should be securely fastened with metal anchor bolts for seismic and structural safety.
Tip: You should see large bolts (usually with washers) spaced about 4–6 feet apart.

☐ **Insulation at rim/band joists is present and properly installed**
Why it matters:

The rim joist (where your floor framing meets the foundation wall) is a major source of heat loss.

Tip: Insulation should be tight to the rim area, with a vapor barrier facing the interior.
Red flag: Missing or poorly fitted insulation can lead to cold floors and high utility bills.

🧰 **Want help identifying foundation cracks, stains, or framing concerns?**
Submit a photo of your basement or mechanical room at HomeSelfInspection.com and receive expert comments within 24–48 hours.

🔍 Crawl Space – Ventilation, Insulation & Moisture Protection

Crawl spaces are often neglected but play a critical role in your home's structural health, insulation performance, and air quality. Moisture and pests thrive in unmaintained crawl spaces, leading to costly damage over time.
This checklist helps you spot key issues before they become major problems.

☐ **Crawl space is adequately vented to the exterior**
Why it matters:

Ventilation helps prevent excess moisture, mold, and rot.

What to look for:

- Vents on opposite walls to allow cross-ventilation
- Vents are open and unobstructed
  Tip: Each 150 square feet of crawl space should have at least 1 square foot of vent area (unless vapor barriers are installed).

☐ **Exposed pipes are insulated**
Why it matters:

Insulating hot and cold water pipes helps prevent freezing in winter and reduces energy loss.
Check for:

- Foam sleeves or fiberglass wrap around water supply and drain pipes
- Secure, gap-free insulation

☐ **Subfloor insulation installed properly (vapor barrier toward heated area)**
Why it matters:

Insulation between the crawl space and first floor reduces drafts and saves energy.
Correct setup:

- Insulation batts fitted tightly between joists
- Vapor barrier (paper or foil side) faces upward, toward the warm side
  📷 *Need help identifying insulation problems? Upload a photo to HomeSelfInspection.com.*

☐ **No evidence of insect or rodent damage**
Look for:

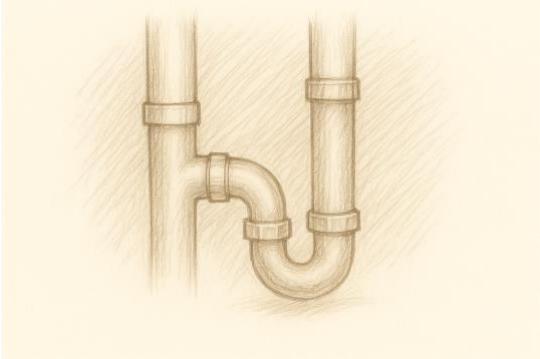
- Sawdust piles, wood tunnels (termites)
- Chewed wires or insulation (mice, rats)
- Droppings, nests, or gnawed wood
  Tip: Use a flashlight to check corners and joists — damage is often hidden.

☐ **No signs of moisture damage**
What to look for:

- Wet or stained soil
- Condensation on pipes or ductwork
- Mold or mildew odors
- Rusted metal components
  ⚠️ *Moisture problems in crawl spaces are a leading cause of wood rot and air quality issues.*

🧰 **Need help assessing your crawl space?**
Take wide and close-up photos and submit them to HomeSelfInspection.com for personalized tips and recommendations.

🚰 Plumbing – Pipes, Water Heater & Water Quality



The plumbing system plays a critical role in daily comfort and sanitation. Leaks, outdated pipes, or poor water quality can lead to costly damage and potential health risks. This checklist helps you review the condition of visible plumbing components and water systems.

☐ **Visible pipes show no damage, leaks, or stains nearby**
What to look for:

- No dripping, corrosion, or moisture around joints
- Pipes are secured and properly supported
- No stains, mold, or water rings on nearby walls, floors, or ceilings
- Drain pipes slope slightly downward (¼ inch per foot) toward the main line

📸 *Unsure about a stain or pipe connection? Upload photos to HomeSelfInspection.com for fast feedback.*

☐ **Water heater: rust-free, properly vented, and adequately sized**
Why it matters:

A failing water heater can leak, overheat, or stop working altogether.
Checklist:

- No rust or corrosion around the base or fittings
- Vent pipe (if gas) is firmly attached and slopes upward
- Capacity matches household needs (typically 40–50 gallons for 2–3 bedrooms)
  Tip: Look for the manufacture date — water heaters typically last 8–12 years.

☐ **Water pump does not short cycle (if applicable)**
What is short cycling?

The pump turns on and off too quickly, indicating possible pressure tank or valve issues.
Signs to watch for:

- Pump running every 30–60 seconds when water is in use
- Fluctuating water pressure
  ⚠ *Short cycling causes wear and tear and should be inspected by a plumber.*

☐ **Galvanized pipes do not restrict water flow**
Why it matters:

Older galvanized steel pipes corrode internally and reduce water pressure.
How to spot it:

- Low flow in one or more fixtures
- Discolored water when first turning on
  Tip: If your home was built before 1960 and still has original plumbing, replacement may be needed.

☐ **Well water test is acceptable (if applicable)**
Why it matters:

Private wells should be tested regularly for bacteria, nitrates, and heavy metals.
Tip: If you have a well and haven't tested it in the past year, request a basic water quality test kit.

☐ **Hot water temperature is between 118° and 125°F**
Why it matters:

Water below 118°F may allow bacterial growth; above 125°F can cause burns.
How to check:
Run hot water for 1 minute, then use a kitchen thermometer under the stream.

🔧 **Need help identifying plumbing risks or water heater issues?**
Take photos of your pipes or tank and upload them to HomeSelfInspection.com — our experts will review and respond within 24–48 hours.

⚡ Electrical – Wiring, Panel, and Safety

Electrical systems must meet modern safety standards to prevent fire hazards, shocks, or code violations. Older homes may still contain outdated or dangerous components. Use this checklist to evaluate the visible parts of your electrical system.

☐ **Visible wiring is in good condition; no knob-and-tube or exposed splices**
Why it matters:

Old or unsafe wiring can cause electrical fires or system failure.
What to look for:

- Wiring is coated, not frayed or cracked
- No open splices (wires twisted together without a junction box)
- No knob-and-tube wiring (common in homes built before 1950)
- Cables are neatly secured and not hanging loose

📸 *Not sure what kind of wiring you have? Upload a photo of your basement, attic, or outlet wiring to HomeSelfInspection.com.*

☐ **Service panel has adequate capacity and is correctly wired**
Checklist:

- No burn marks, melted insulation, or rust inside the panel
- All wires connected with proper cable clamps
- Breakers or fuses are labeled and not hot to the touch
- Amperage is appropriate for the home (typically 100–200 amps)

Tip: If your home still uses fuses instead of circuit breakers, consider upgrading the panel for safety and insurance purposes.

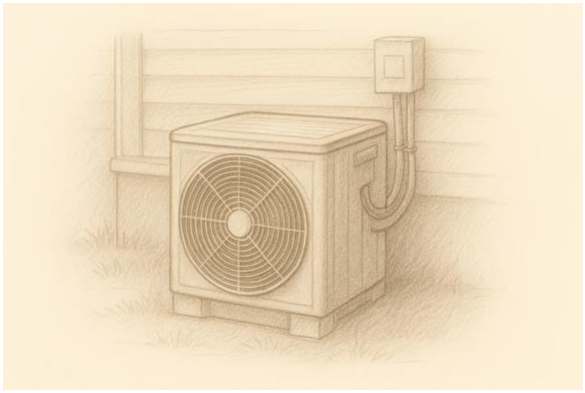
☐ **No aluminum branch circuit wiring**
Why it matters:

Aluminum wiring (common in homes from the 1960s–70s) can overheat and lead to electrical fires if not properly treated.
What to check:

- Copper wiring is preferred; aluminum wiring should be labeled "AL" or "ALUMINUM"
- If aluminum is present, it must be treated with special connectors (e.g., COPALUM) by a licensed electrician
  ⚠️ *Aluminum branch circuits are not allowed in many modern codes without remediation.*

🔌 **Want to verify your electrical system is safe?**
Take a clear photo of your electrical panel and exposed wiring (if accessible), then submit it to HomeSelfInspection.com — we'll help you spot outdated or unsafe components.

🌬️ Heating & Cooling System – Comfort, Efficiency & Safety



A well-functioning HVAC (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning) system ensures year-round comfort, energy efficiency, and safety. This checklist helps you assess visible components for airflow, cleanliness, and potential health hazards.

☐ **System operates well throughout the home (good airflow in each room)**
Why it matters:

Uneven airflow may indicate blocked ducts, failing blower motors, or poor insulation.

Test:

- Turn on heating or cooling
- Feel for consistent airflow from every vent
- Check if rooms at the far end of the system are noticeably colder or warmer
  📸 *Upload vent photos or HVAC questions to HomeSelfInspection.com for evaluation.*

☐ **Flue pipes have no open seams and slope upward toward chimney**
Why it matters:

Flue gases from gas or oil furnaces must vent safely outdoors. Open seams or improper slope can cause carbon monoxide buildup.
Check:

- Flue pipe connections are tight and sealed
- Pipe slopes up toward the chimney or vent terminal

☐ **No rust or corrosion around the air conditioning unit**
Inspect:

- Outdoor A/C condenser unit for rust, missing panels, or damaged fins
- Rust inside the indoor unit (near drain pan or coil)
  Tip: Rust may indicate condensation problems or unit age.

☐ **No odor of combustion gas (natural gas, propane, oil)**
Important:

If you smell gas (rotten egg odor), leave the house immediately and call your gas company — this could be a life-threatening leak.
⚠️ *Gas leaks must always be handled by licensed professionals.*

☐ **Air filters are clean and properly installed**
Why it matters:

Dirty air filters reduce airflow and efficiency, and may cause furnace or A/C shutdowns.
Tip: Change filters every 1–3 months, depending on usage and filter type.
Check:

- Filter direction arrow points the right way
- No dust buildup or sagging in filter

☐ **Ductwork is sealed and in good condition**
What to look for:

- No loose or disconnected ducts
- No excessive dust or air leaks around seams
- No gaps or holes in flexible duct sections
  Tip: If you see tape peeling off or hear whistling, the ducts may need resealing.

☐ **No asbestos on heating pipes, water pipes, or air ducts**
Why it matters:

Asbestos was commonly used as insulation in older homes. Disturbed asbestos fibers are a serious health hazard.

How to spot it:

- Look for white or gray fibrous wrap on pipes or ducts (especially near boiler systems)
  ⚠️ *Do not touch or disturb suspected asbestos. Have it professionally tested and removed if needed.*

☐ **Separate flues for different fuel types (gas/oil vs. wood/coal)**
Why it matters:

Combining flue systems for incompatible fuels can lead to back-drafting and carbon monoxide exposure.
Check:

- Each fuel type (gas, oil, wood, coal) should have its own properly vented flue
- Chimneys with multiple flues should be clearly separated and labeled

🛠️ **Not sure if your HVAC system is aging, underperforming, or unsafe?**
Submit photos of your heating or cooling equipment at HomeSelfInspection.com and our experts will review it within 24–48 hours.

🔚 Closing Words from the Author

Hi, I'm **George Vennes**, a licensed Building Inspector and Engineer based in Florida — proudly serving clients across **all 50 U.S. states**.

With over **15 years of hands-on experience** inspecting residential structures, I've helped hundreds of homeowners, buyers, and sellers identify hidden problems before they turn into costly repairs. From **roofing and plumbing** to **windows, electrical systems, kitchens, and bathrooms**, I approach every inspection with engineering precision and practical insight.

This guide was created to empower you with **knowledge and confidence** — whether you're moving in, preparing to sell, or simply maintaining your home. Remember: no book can replace a full, licensed inspection, but with the right tools and awareness, you can prevent many issues early.

If you ever find yourself unsure about a **wall crack**, **mold stain**, or suspicious **water leak**, don't guess — upload a photo or video to

👉 HomeSelfInspection.com and get **fast, expert feedback**, wherever you are.

Thank you for trusting this guide.
Stay safe, and inspect smart.

George Vennes
Remote Inspection Specialist | Licensed Building Inspector & Engineer