



Your Best & Safest Choice

Testing methods and further evaluation

I have certain steps that I go through, my inspection protocol, to test and evaluate appliances (heating and cooling, dishwasher, etc.) and systems (showers, sinks, toilets, etc.) in your new home, and I perform these steps in a certain order to ensure three things: (1) the unit is properly tested, inspected and evaluated (2) without causing any property damage and (3) without causing personal injury to anyone near the appliance (that includes me!).

Step one typically is a “yes” or “no” to this question: “Does it look like it will work properly?” If yes, I proceed to step two. If no, I quit evaluating that appliance or system and state the reason why it did not look like it would work properly. In my report, I will also state, “Unit not tested. Recommend further evaluation before close of escrow.” This does not mean that you can simply move in and start using the appliance or the system. It means that further evaluation must be completed before the appliance or system is used. I recommend that further evaluation be completed by qualified individuals, usually licensed in their profession under State of Illinois and Missouri laws (plumbers, electricians, etc.). Such professionals typically will evaluate the complete appliance or system during their evaluation to make sure that it is fully functional.

When further evaluation is performed, that licensed professional will have his own inspection protocol, again, designed specifically to do determine what the problem is without causing property damage or personal injury. He should at least begin the evaluation process all over again and should not start in the middle of anyone else’s evaluation, including mine. Additionally, that licensed professional should not rely on any statements by an individual not licensed in that profession, such as me. Keep in mind that home inspectors are not licensed in any profession, even including home inspecting since the State of Illinois and Missouri does not license home inspectors. Relying on statements of others without verifying them can result in property damage, personal injury, or death, especially since no one except the person currently inspecting the appliance can possibly know what might have happened to anything since the last time someone (me!) inspected, tested, or evaluated the appliance.

In some instances, depending on the initial problem, evaluation by the licensed professional might be much more extensive than a home inspector’s evaluation. That’s why they charge more, and that’s why I only recommend them when absolutely necessary. It’s kind of like your family doctor, also called a “General Practitioner.” If you have a chest pain, you’d make an appointment with your family doctor. You’ve done the initial evaluation (“I have a chest pain.”) Upon “further evaluation” by the family doctor, he say you need some X-rays or an MRI. He’ll send you for “further evaluation” to the laboratory. Once you get that done, you’ll go back to him for more “further evaluation.” Let’s say that the X-rays or MRI indicate that you have some blocked heart arteries and need surgery. Who do you think will do the surgery? Not the family doctor! He’ll send you for “further evaluation” to the heart surgeon. When you get to the heart surgeon, he’ll read the family doctor’s report, look at the X-rays or MRI, and then do his own evaluation, perhaps even having some more X-rays or MRI taken. In every case, the family doctor is far less expensive than the heart surgeon.

Home inspectors are like your family doctor. We’re inexpensive because we’re “General Practitioners.” We know something about everything, but everything about nothing. So if I find something wrong with the electric panel, I’ll recommend “further evaluation” by a licensed electrician, equivalent to

the heart surgeon. That licensed electrician, due to his licensing and expertise, is considered by the State of Illinois and Missouri to be more knowledgeable about electricity than an unlicensed home inspector.

So, as stated in your [home inspection agreement](#), I'm looking for the biggest problems that can cost you a significant amount of money, are extremely dangerous, or, if not corrected soon, can cause significant property damage. If I find the big problem, then there is no reason for me to try to document any other problems. The simple fact is that it doesn't look like it's going to work. Let's use the dishwasher as an example. First, if the property owner or tenant is available, I'll ask them, "Does the dishwasher work." If they answer, "No," then I have to take them at their word and not test it because testing it could cause property damage or personal injury. Sometimes they'll even tell me what they think is wrong with it, which I will also put in your property inspection report. So armed with disclosure information, I'll recommend "further evaluation by a qualified professional before close of escrow." That qualified professional repairman gets to determine what the exact problems are. Many times a problem can only be detected when something is being used, so if it doesn't look like one can use it safely and for the purpose for which it was intended, I don't go any further.

I'll use the dishwasher as an example. Under normal circumstances, this would be my protocol:

1. Does the dishwasher look like it will work? If yes, I proceed to step two. If no; I quit testing and state the problem. This quite often happens when the dishwasher is present but the shipping and packing materials have not been removed—good appliance installation personnel will not remove shipping and packing materials until the appliance is fully installed and ready to be used. After all, if it looks like it will work, then someone might try to use it, possibly causing property damage or personal injury. With shipping and packing materials still in place, it obviously does not look like it will work, and people should not be trying to use it.

Subsequent steps for the dishwasher would include:

2. Is the water supply hooked up? If yes, proceed with testing. If no, quit and state the problem.
3. Is water drain hooked up? If yes, proceed. If no, quit and state the problem.
4. Is door latch working? If yes, proceed. If no, quit.
5. Is door seal present to prevent leaks? Yes or no.
6. Is door hinge working? Yes or no.
7. Is an air gap present? If so, what kind?
8. Is there any physical damage?
9. Are the control knobs/buttons damaged? Are operating labels readable? Does any display screen work and is it readable?
10. Did unit work?
11. Did unit drain properly?
12. Did unit leak? Is the floor around the dishwasher wet?
13. Did soap dish work?
14. Did rotator arms work?
15. Did unit's heating elements appear to work?

Steps 5 through 15 may or may not prevent additional testing and are dependent on the specific dishwasher. At any point, if a no answer also means that the dishwasher cannot be properly tested, then I will not proceed with subsequent steps.

If I did try to document all the other problems, your home inspection would have lasted many hours and cost substantially more than what you paid, and your home inspection report might have become unwieldy, unreadable, and/or undecipherable. So, again, I'm looking for the biggest problems first and then the more minor or cosmetic problems. This is also the reason why I offer different [inspection types](#) for different Clients with different wants and needs.

Many home issues such as those disclosed in your property inspection report can be interpreted and acted on in different ways depending on your needs and any advice that you might solicit from third parties, especially those who were not at the property at the time of the inspection and don't know what the [conditions](#) of the property were at the time of the inspection. Additionally, your intended use of a

property might result in varying opinions about what you should do about some of my recommendations in your property inspection report. Therefore, if you have any questions about anything, please [contact me](#).

Any advice that you might rely on that does not agree with the information in your property inspection report should be obtained in writing (preferably signed and dated on the providing company's letterhead) and further researched; also see "[When things go wrong](#)." Please [contact me](#) if you get information that you think conflicts with my recommendations in your property inspection report.

With that said, I highly recommend that you do not summarily dismiss my recommendations in your property inspection report, and do not let anyone else convince you to summarily dismiss my recommendations. If you have any questions about my recommendations, you should contact the source of the recommendations: me! Please feel free to [contact me](#) at any time. I am happy to talk with you and your representatives to explain my recommendations in further detail if necessary.

I try to answer my phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Personal hygiene, stuffing my mouths with food, and lack of cooperation by the providers of my telephone communication services sometimes will prevent me from answering the phone all the time. So if you get voice mail, simply leave a message, or my , and we'll get back to you as soon as I get your message.

If you have any questions about anything, simply [contact me](#).