

**C**hoosing a home inspector is one of the many exciting experiences you'll encounter when purchasing a home... somewhat like choosing a lawyer or an appraiser. Here is a brief overview explaining how one should read an inspection report. Some reports are typed, some are colourful and some are just plain sloppy... but they should **ALL** have accurate information, required by you to make a logical, educated decision.

### HOW TO READ AN INSPECTION REPORT

When interviewing for a home inspector, you can ask each of them what type of report format he or she provides. There are many styles of reports used by property inspectors, including: the checklist report, the computer generated report, and the narrative report - and mine; a **checklist with a custom summary** outlining concerns, implications and suggested repairs (if possible). All reporting systems have pros and cons. It is how thoroughly the inspector chooses to complete the report which makes them different.

Some reports are delivered on site and some may take up to four days to deliver. The **OK Valley Home Inspection** report is usually delivered by e-mail as a pdf file the same day as the inspection.

The most important issue with any inspection report is the descriptions given for each item or component. A report that indicates the condition as "Good", "Fair" or "Poor" without a detailed explanation or specific terms is vague and can be easily misinterpreted. An example of a vague condition would be:

**Kitchen Sink:** Condition -  Good  Fair  Poor

In other reports, it might be called "Functional, Satisfactory, Needs Repair or Needs Attention"... **OR** a combination of any of these.

If there **ARE** concerns with the sink, none of the descriptions above gives the homeowner an idea about what is wrong. Does the sink have a cosmetic problem?

Does it leak? Is there a sprayer? What is the sink made of? Does the sink have a plumbing problem?

A good report should supply you with descriptive information on the condition of the feature inspected. An example of a descriptive condition is:

**Kitchen Sink:** Condition - typical wear, rust stains, sprayer hose, stainless steel. Recommend sealing sink at counter top. Tighten leaking drain pipes under sink.

As you can see, this narrative description includes a recommendation for repair. Narrative reports without recommendations for repairing deficient items may be difficult to comprehend, especially if one's knowledge of construction is limited.

Unfortunately, some guys use "narratives" which are part of a pool of basic comments that he can plug into a **VARIETY** of situations with with just one pre-assembled sentence. Example: **"The feature examined has visible problems OR concerns and should be looked at OR examined and then repaired OR fixed by a qualified person OR other trade related professional. If this is not corrected OR repaired OR addressed, there is increased likelihood that this feature OR other materials affected, might be damaged OR need replacement in the future"**.

Finally, a report should have a written **summary** of the home's highlights and other concerns. In the summary, one should be able to determine, for example: what needs repairing; what may need replacing soon; and perhaps, the dates of manufacture of appliances such as furnaces, water heaters and air conditioners. Please, take the time to read and become familiar with your report. If the report has a legend, a key, or a series of symbols or icons, read and understand them thoroughly. The more information provided to you (that you understand) about the home - the easier it will be to understand it's overall condition.

At the end of the inspection your inspector will usually ask if you have "any questions or concerns". Use this opportunity to get answers regarding terminology or conditions that you may not be familiar with. **Your inspector should take as much time as is needed to explain and answer your questions, without rushing off to his next job.** If, for some reason, a question cannot be answered, he should research the question and obtain the answer for you as soon as he can. For instance, if he cannot determine the date of manufacture of the water

heater, he should get that information back to you as soon as he gets home.

He should also be able to explain all the terminology in his report. For instance, if his report states that the concrete foundation has “**common cracks**”, be sure to ask, “Why are they common?” The answer you should receive will be along these lines: “*common cracks are usually due to normal concrete curing and or shrinkage*”. The inspector's knowledge and experience is how the size and characteristics of the cracking is determined.

I strongly recommend and encourage you to accompany me through the entire inspection. This helps you to understand the condition of the home and the details of the report. It is a learning tool that everyone buying any home should experience.

### **FRUIT FLIES - AKA “NO SEE-UMS”**

Anyone who has ever left a bowl of fruit sitting out or forgotten to change their garbage, knows all too well the problem with fruit flies. It seems that once they've invaded your house, you can't get rid of them. You can scrub, clean, remove tempting fruit and spray the garbage can with disinfectants, but they always come back. You can't help but cringe just looking at them.

We have always had problems with fruit flies, with one of the main reasons being that we live in the city and by law - we must recycle. Because of where we live, we have to keep our recycling containers inside until they can be disposed of once a week. If the recyclables aren't cleaned well enough after being used, they make a perfect breeding ground for fruit flies. They love bits of rotting food remnants and seem to thrive in even the smallest amount. When fruit flies move in, they just don't want to leave and will lay eggs in and on anything they can find - fruits & vegetables left on the counter, sink drains, garbage disposals, empty bottles & cans, garbage bags, and even mops and rags.

#### **A Few Fun Facts About Fruit Flies:**

- They can lay up to 500 eggs at a time
- Their entire lifecycle is complete in about a week
- While considered mainly a pest, they have the potential to contaminate food with dangerous bacteria



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We all know that removing the food, getting rid of the garbage & cleaning up plays a big role, but we also know what it's like to move a piece of fruit and have a swarm of fruit flies fill the air only to escape your attempts at killing them. Where are they gonna go? Obviously the ones flying around can't be easily captured or killed, so they'll linger about until they find some other place to lay eggs and the whole cycle starts again.

In all my attempts, I found the best way to capture and remove the ones that escape is to create a simple trap using a jar, plastic wrap and a piece of food. Here's how it works:

1. Get a small jar you don't plan on using again (like a baby food jar or something similar) and wash it out well. Make sure it is not a jar with a funky smell such as a used pickle jar or anything that use to have strong spices. You want a clean, odourless jar.
2. Take a chunk of banana (or other fruit) and place inside the jar. This is why you want a clean, odourless jar - so that the banana smell won't be overpowered by other not-so-tempting smells. Banana seems to work the best, but you can experiment.
3. Fit a piece of plastic wrap over the top of the jar, making sure that it fits tight and well sealed around the edges. Then take a pen or pencil and poke 4 to 5 holes in the plastic, just big enough for a fruit fly to fit into. Once a fruit fly crawls in, it can't get out. You would think they would just fly back out through the holes, but they won't!
4. Place the jar in an area where you have seen the most fruit flies. Depending on the amount of fruit flies you have, you can expect to start seeing the jar fill up within just a few hours. After 24 hours, you will discover just how bad your fruit fly problem is!

This simple, inexpensive & safe method works perfectly and if you don't want the jar on public display, you can always slip it behind the garbage can, in the cupboard or even under the sink (Just don't forget about it!). You will want to empty the jar every 3-4 days before any eggs have a chance to hatch. While adult fruit flies can't easily escape through the holes, their maggots can very easily, and besides that - they are disgusting to see crawling around in the jar. You don't want to see these things crawling on your counter!

Cleaning out the jar shouldn't be a problem. If you have a kind heart, you can choose to let them go outside. Personally, I spray the little buggers with bug spray, wash out the jar and start the whole process over again if I think there are still some fruit flies left to capture.

For serious fruit fly problems, you will want to use this method for a good two weeks to make sure you've captured the majority of fruit flies. You might even want to use a few jars in different places. Before long, your home will be back to normal.

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