

Should the Buyer's Agent Attend the Property Inspection?

I was taught that *I should be there* and never questioned it. *Why* wouldn't I want to be there? *Why* wouldn't my buyer-client *want* or *expect* me to be there? Buying a house is likely to be their biggest investment and a lot can go wrong! The purpose of an inspection is to avoid surprises as *unexpected* maintenance can be costly. The inspection and financing are the two major reasons sales fall apart. **This is where we can prove our value!**

Buyer agents *should expect* to provide their experience, training, education, knowledge, resources and time to buyers who deserve a professional who knows what they are doing, will do what it takes to get them into their next home and who will protect and promote *their* best interests every step of the way. The buyer agent's role is like that of a *director*: staying on top of what needs to be done and providing the guidance needed to complete the required tasks. Managing the inspection process and timeframe typically requires our direct involvement.

Inspections are contingencies or "conditions" included in an offer that allow both sides to *reconsider* their agreement. They must be *waived* or *satisfied* to keep the process moving forward. I *respectfully* suggest that a buyer's agent must be fully *engaged* in resolving them. Property inspections often reveal information that a buyer *could* not and *did* not factor into their offer. How do they feel about the house *after* the inspection?

A **property inspection** involves hiring one or more competent professionals to identify any "*material defects*" with the major systems and the structure. The buyer's response or reply to the inspection report may include requiring the seller to make *repairs* and/ or to offer a *credit* if allowed by the lender *or* the right of the buyer to *terminate* the sale. **I believe that a buyer's agent should attend the property inspection to *ensure that the inspector clearly explains to the buyer what he or she is doing, what they find during the inspection, what they think about what they have found and to ensure that the buyer understands the process and their final report.*** I think that an inspection is too important to miss even if the buyer has some expertise.

I would never *assume* that an inspector will effectively present their findings to my buyer-clients. That conversation can be as important as their report. *Any* list can make a buyer nervous. Obviously, the buyer's agent is not an inspector and is not expected to act like one, *nor should they*. However, a buyer's agent should be a calming influence and we *need* "first-hand" knowledge to best represent our client when discussing the inspection report with them as well as with a listing agent if repairs and/ or a credit are being requested.

I have heard a variety of reasons regarding why some buyer agents do not attend inspections as if it were their *choice*. *Avoiding liability* is one I hear often: *whose* "interest" is more important? Does the buyer agent's absence *really* manage or limit their potential *liability* if something goes wrong? Is it *really* their office policy? I am not sure that *avoiding* an inspection accomplishes anything productive, *especially* if something goes wrong *after* settlement. How does this demonstrate their *fiduciary* duty to their client? We are expected to provide *reasonable care and diligence to limit foreseeable risk or harm*. At *what* point in a sale is this *more relevant*?

Discussing repairs with a buyer and then negotiating them through the listing agent can be difficult if **the buyer's agent was not there** to see what the issues were and hear what the inspector had to say about them. I have seen inspectors miss things I saw in a house or submit a report without something we discussed during the inspection. *Suppose* I had not been there to represent the buyer? Who would have benefitted if those sales ended unsuccessfully or if the buyers had an *unexpected* expense later for something the inspector missed?

Given the *importance* of the inspection contingency, **I would never want to miss one.** A buyer may terminate a sale out of fear or frustration, perhaps missing out on a nice house and the one best-suited for their needs. They could lose hundreds of dollars spent on the inspections for no good reason. Does this make any sense?

As a seller's agent, I expect the buyer's agent to **provide access** for a property inspection as they would for a showing appointment. It is a likely violation of our Code of Ethics for them to allow others to access a home without permission. I cannot control how agents conduct themselves during the inspection but they are responsible for providing access, for what happens during the inspection and for securing the house afterwards. Some agents forget that a home is someone's private property: we are expected to *value* home ownership.

There is no time for inexperience, empty promises or false expectations!

HIRE WISELY: We are not all the same!