

Quick [HOW TO] *Home Inspection

[CHOOSING A HOME INSPECTOR]

If you're considering a home purchase, you need the most educated, experienced home inspector available. That cousin who used to do some construction work might be cheaper, but when he misses an expensive problem, you're hosed.

And for crying out loud, don't ask your builder or real estate agent for names.

"Real estate agents will recommend that you hire inspectors who don't find much because it's a roadblock in the way of that big commission check," says Aaron Miller, a master inspector and owner of Aaron's Home Inspections.

The same advice holds if you're buying a new home. Refrain from asking your builder the name of his buddy the inspector.

Miller recommends hiring someone who

has examined at least 500 properties. The Certified Master Inspector Board requires master candidates to complete at least 1,000 paid inspections and pass a criminal background check.

The most important certification is from the International Code Council (ICC). The ideal inspector would have a combination certificate from the ICC, meaning he or she is certified as a building, mechanical, plumbing and electrical inspector.

"Those are extremely difficult examinations and require a tremendous amount of



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continuing education," Miller says.

Ask potential inspectors for a sample report from a similar property. A 10-year-old slab home wouldn't have comparable problems to those of the 80-year-old structure on a pier-and-beam foundation you may be considering.

Finally, don't hire an inspector who writes his reports on-site, Miller says. Those inspectors typically are rushed and trying to please a real estate agent.

— Jesse Hughey

Inspector contacts

A little research goes a long way when choosing a home inspector. Check these Web sites for helpful tips.

www.iccsafe.org/e/certsearch.html

To check an inspector's certification, contact the International Code Council at 1-866-422-3926.

www.certifiedmasterinspector.org

The Certified Master Inspector Board lists master inspectors by state.

www.ashi.org

The American Society of Home Inspectors maintains a directory of inspectors searchable by ZIP code or metro area.

www.nachi.org

The National Association of Certified Home Inspectors is a trade organization that maintains a searchable directory.