

Real Estate eNews

Condo Inspections Make Good Sense

Some condominium owners have questioned the necessity of having a unit inspection before they make a purchase. But upon closer examination, the question might be asked instead, "why wouldn't you get one?" Buying a condominium requires a capital expenditure that can be as high as or higher than the cost of a house or townhouse. With such a sizeable investment at stake, it makes sense to fully understand the condition of the property being considered for purchase.



If a condominium purchase is being considered, the inside structures are accessible and can be inspected thoroughly. An inspector can evaluate the major mechanical systems including plumbing, electrical and HVAC configurations. As in a home inspection, the inspector will evaluate the distribution of electrical outlets, to ensure adequate power distribution. Gas appliances including gas stoves, gas dryers and gas fireplaces will be checked for proper operating condition and leaks.



The rooms in which water usage will be required, such as bathrooms, kitchen and laundry area, will be checked for adequate water pressure, proper hot and cold water distribution and drainage. Faucets and handles will also be checked at this point. While in the kitchen, a home inspector will examine the condition of cabinets and countertops as well.

Floors, walls and ceilings need to be checked to determine their condition, and whether they are free of holes, cracks, or water stains. Water damage (if any) from above-unit leaks may be detected at this time. Paint or other finishes on walls and trim will be checked as well.

Windows and doors will be checked to make sure they fit properly and open and close appropriately. A similar inspection is done to steps, stairways, balcony and railings, to make sure maintenance and safety issues have been addressed. During a home inspection, findings of unsafe practices, pest infestations or mold growth, among others will be documented.

Some condo units are self-contained, and house individual heating and air-conditioning units, hot water heater and washer and dryer. In these instances, the condo provides the inspector with easy access to this equipment, allowing the inspector to perform a thorough investigation of these appliances.



In some cases, however, the condo inspector may only be able to ascertain the condition of some of these systems with access to condominium common areas. In other cases, the inspector may have limited or no access to these areas, as well as determining the condition of the roof or other common structures.

In cases in which an inspector has no access to certain systems within the complex, condo inspectors suggest a detailed review of condo association meeting minutes and budget information. These documents will reveal a great deal of information regarding past association expenditures. They may also provide predictions of repairs looming on the horizon. Thus, prospective buyers can budget for current condo costs, as well as the possibility of any special assessments that are anticipated in the near future.