



## **New Construction Home Inspections**

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Longmont has a lot of new homes being built. Just driving around one will see developments around Clover Basin, County Line Road and Rt. 66. While reputable companies are building all of these developments, we frequently run across poor quality in the construction, resulting in increased repair and maintenance costs to the homeowner in the early years of property ownership. In part this may be because large housing tracts are being erected at a pace where quantity and staying on schedule can be a higher priority than quality. However that's not always the cause. Recently, I inspected a new home in the \$800,000 range that had all the windows and doors installed improperly. For this prospective owner, they would not have seen a problem until many months into their ownership only if we continued to wet weather. Unfortunately, most homebuyers of new homes are not aware they could have an independent inspection performed as part of their new home contract. Many possible defects can be identified early on by having a professional home inspection during the construction and completion of their new home.



Some buyers assume that state or local government officials oversee builders and their contractors, and that the city building inspector thoroughly checks the house out. This is true to some degree, however, few if any municipal inspectors spend anywhere near enough time in the home to fully inspect it. Most building inspection departments are understaffed and sometimes end up sampling a few houses in the tract rather than looking at each one. Further, there could be problems with the home that are not necessarily code violations, yet have serious consequences for the new homeowner. Building inspectors are not responsible for quality control and do not necessarily look at workmanship or defective materials.

Today very few builders employ full time tradesman for the majority of construction tasks (foundation, framing, plumbing, electrical, etc.). These are usually subcontracted to the lowest bidder, with maintaining the schedule, not quality, being a primary consideration. With many separate activities going on at the same time, it's often difficult for the builder /contractor to personally monitor all phases of the home construction. Many of the problems we see occur when subcontractors conflict with each other's work. Melted PVC pipes, cut rafters, pinched wiring and improper roof venting, flashing, and insulation are just a few things we have discovered during our new home inspections.

If the buyer of a new home takes advantage of their ability to have an inspection, there are several phases where inspections can take place such as foundation, framing, open wall and final walk through. The cost of these inspections is usually less than 1% of the cost of the home. Mountain View Property Inspection advocates two new construction inspections; the open wall or pre-drywall / pre-insulation inspection which would be followed by the final walk through inspection. The open wall inspection allows us to review the framing, rough electrical and plumbing prior to being enclosed in sheet rock. We can review the quality of materials, location of fixtures and the workmanship of the framing, electrical and plumbing infrastructure. The final walk through inspection usually encompasses 800-1,000 inspection points ranging from roofing to drains in the basement. The emphasis is on functionality as well as workmanship. Depending on the builder, the list of defects can be as long as 50 items.



Be aware that some builders have prevented professional home inspectors from inspecting newly built houses. If you are in the process of buying a new home and the builder does not allow you to bring a professional home inspector on site, this poses a couple of obvious questions. Permission should definitely be obtained (if possible in the contract to purchase) before you go under contract with the builder.

If you missed the opportunity to have an inspection during the construction phase and final walk through, there may be time to come in afterwards. Most new builders offer a warranty period for the new homeowner, however, there are usually many items not covered by the warranty as well as limitations on those that are. Buyer have a bigger advantage when the inspections are performed during the home building process.

Rick Bunzel is the Principle Inspector at Mountain View Property Inspections. If you would like to know more about your home go to **[WWW.MVPinspection.com](http://WWW.MVPinspection.com)** If you have questions or comments, Rick Bunzel can be contacted at Mountain View Property Inspections @ 303-443-9063 or MVPInspection@comcast.net