



Reality Check

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Why New Construction Inspections Are Critical

Recently I conducted an inspection on a 4 year old house that was built by a tract builder. I truly felt sorry for the Sellers when I finished. This house looked cosmetically in tip-top shape. They had done a great job in maintaining it. Had they had a good inspection prior to closing on their brand new house 4 years prior, they would have been able to force the builder to correct some major issues that slipped through or could have walked away and bought a different one. Now 4 years later, the Sellers will have a hope and a prayer in trying to get the Builder to correct things. The 1 year builder's warranty is long past. Here's what I found:

1. The shingles were installed with the nail gun set about 1/8"-1/4" off. Instead of the shingles sitting flush to the roof deck, they were poking up. I counted 100+ nails pushing up like this. It was only a matter of time before they poke holes through the shingles.
2. In the attic, the continuous ridge vent was not installed correctly. Running half the length of the home, there was 3"-6" of snow piled up under the ridge vent where snow had blown in. I hope the Sellers got right on this because if it melts, they'll have some pretty good stains in their ceilings.
3. The loose blown insulation was skimped on. Instead of having a nice 12"-14" of Fiberglass to hit the R-38 value, they only had 8"-9".
4. The cheap exterior paint the builder used was already wearing off the hardboard panel siding. In a majority of the seams, the paint was cracked. Some locations on the bottom edge had never even been painted.
5. The low-grade 4 year old 80% efficiency furnace already had a crack in the heat exchanger!

And the worst one:

6. It appeared that either the footer didn't cure long enough before the concrete foundation was poured OR about half of the house had settled downhill. There was a crack in the foundation wall that clued me in. Inside, there were cracks running parallel to the foundation about 5' in. From the crack to the wall, the floor had settled approximately 5/8".

Obviously, the Buyer decided not to proceed with the purchase.

I can't stress the importance enough of having new construction inspected PRIOR TO CLOSE when you're in control and can make the repairs contractual.

Please follow the "Photo Galleries" link off the home page and to find my New Construction Nightmares Gallery.

Greg Wayman is a Certified Inspector of The American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc., has been inspecting full-time for over 9 years, and has personally inspected over 2,300 properties. Greg is Heat Exchanger Experts Certified and is a NE Radon Measurement Specialist. He is a past member of the GO-ASHI Chapter in Omaha. He is the past Nebraska Chapter of NAHI President from '03-'07, past Board member of NAHI from '07-'08, and past national Secretary/Treasurer of NAHI '08.

