



50 Point Checklist for First Time Home Buyers

A. Buyer Education & Expectations

1. Learn the basic steps of the home-buying process from first search to closing.
2. Understand the main players in a transaction (buyer, seller, agents, lender, attorney, inspector).
3. Clarify your priorities: location vs size vs condition vs price vs future resale.
4. Decide your ideal move-in timeframe and any lease or life deadlines you must meet.
5. Discuss with your household what "compromise" looks like so decisions are easier later.
6. Make a short written list of top 5 goals for your first home (e.g., shorter commute, space for office, yard for pets).

B. Mortgage & Lender Setup

7. Gather all lender documents (W-2/1099s, pay stubs, bank statements, ID, tax returns if needed).
8. Get pre-approved with at least two lenders and compare rates and fees.
9. Confirm your maximum purchase price and loan type with your chosen lender.
10. Clarify rate-lock rules, timelines, and any conditions for final approval.

C. Agent, Inspector & Search Strategy

11. Select a buyer's agent experienced in your target area and price range.
12. Select a licensed home inspector and review a sample report in advance.
13. Define must-have features (beds, baths, commute, schools, parking, yard).
14. Define deal-breakers (busy roads, flood zone, high HOA fees, restrictions).
15. Set up listing alerts and track recent sales in your target neighborhoods.

D. Touring & Evaluating Homes

16. Assess neighborhood: noise, upkeep, parking, distance to work and essentials.
17. Check grading and drainage; look for standing water or slope toward house.
18. Scan roof and exterior for visible damage, rot, or missing materials.
19. Note odors, uneven floors, or major wall/ceiling cracks inside.
20. Test a sample of windows and doors for smooth operation and drafts.
21. Run water at sinks and tubs; check pressure, hot water, and drainage.
22. Look under sinks and around toilets/tubs for leaks or soft flooring.
23. Observe electrical panel age/brand and test a few outlets and switches.
24. Inspect basement/crawl space for moisture, staining, or efflorescence.
25. Inspect attic (if accessible) for insulation, ventilation, and signs of leaks.
26. Confirm which appliances and fixtures are staying with the home.
27. Rate each home (condition, layout, neighborhood, overall feel) and take notes/photos.



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E. Offers & Negotiation

28. Review recent comparable sales with your agent to support your offer.
29. Decide offer price, earnest money amount, and preferred closing date.
30. Include key contingencies: home inspection, financing, appraisal.
31. Add area-specific contingencies (radon, well, septic, sewer, lead paint, etc.).
32. Clearly list all inclusions (appliances, sheds, blinds, etc.) in the offer.
33. Understand deadlines for inspections, responses, and financing.

F. Inspections & Due Diligence

34. Schedule the general home inspection immediately after acceptance.
35. Schedule recommended specialty inspections (radon, pest, chimney, sewer, well/septic).
36. Attend the inspection and have the inspector show main shut-offs and filters.
37. Review the full inspection report and highlight safety and big-ticket items.
38. Decide whether to request repairs, credits, a price reduction, or to walk away.

G. Loan, Appraisal & Insurance

39. Send any additional documents your lender requests promptly.
40. Avoid new credit accounts, large purchases, or major job changes before closing.
41. Track appraisal status and discuss strategies if the appraisal comes in low.
42. Obtain multiple homeowners insurance quotes and choose coverage and deductibles.

H. Closing & Move-In

43. Review your Closing Disclosure carefully and confirm cash-to-close.
44. Arrange secure payment (wire or cashier's check); verify instructions by phone.
45. Set up start dates for utilities, trash, internet, and change of address.
46. Complete a final walk-through to verify condition, repairs, and inclusions.
47. After closing, change or rekey exterior locks and update any access codes.
48. Locate and label main water, gas, and electrical shut-offs and test smoke/CO detectors.
49. Create a home maintenance calendar (filters, gutters, servicing, seasonal tasks).
50. List and prioritize your first-year safety, repair, and upgrade projects.