

Habitable or Regrettable

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You are building your dream home. You have spent hours at the design studio, visited the new home site on numerous occasions and now you are ready to close and move into your new home. Is it habitable or regrettable? How will you know? A professional home inspection can identify deficiencies that are not obvious

to you. We have completed thousands of inspections in the valley and can share the following information, misconceptions and myths about new home construction inspections:

1. What types of inspection should be completed on new homes? AJF Engineering offers two inspections: 1.) A pre-drywall inspection that is completed once the foundation; framing; and rough mechanical, electrical and plumbing are completed. The “guts” of the home are visible for inspection prior to installing the insulation and drywall. 2.) A final inspection once the home is completed and all utilities are turned on. The final inspection is similar to a home inspection that is completed on a used home and includes the structure, roofing, attic, electrical, plumbing, water heater, A/C, heating, etc.

2. Builders typically offer 1, 2 or sometimes 10 year warranties on new homes. Why do I need a home inspection if it is under a comprehensive builder warranty? The builder will only correct deficiencies that you identify to them. While it is easy to identify cosmetic deficiencies during a builder walkthrough using blue masking tape, it is another matter to identify deficiencies that are not so obvious. For example, are the electrical outlets correctly wired, is there sufficient insulation in the attic, are there roofing issues, is the A/C installed correctly and working. These are examples of potential issues that are identified by the home inspection but most likely would not be identified by the homeowner.

3. The home “passed” all the city code inspections and received a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) when the home was completed. Doesn’t the CO guarantee that the home is properly constructed and all systems are in working order? While the city code inspections are a necessary and vital part of the new home construction process, they spend very little time at each inspection; don’t carry ladders; are prohibited from going on the roof or entering the attic due to insurance requirements; don’t carry electrical circuit testers; and depending on their background may not be knowledgeable in all the home’s systems and components. The city’s emphasis is on code compliance, while the home inspector’s emphasis is on whether the systems are correctly installed and functional.

4. A decision not to have a home inspection on your new home can cost you money when you re-sell your home at a later date. The new buyer will typically have a professional home inspection completed as part of the escrow process. Imagine your surprise when the home inspector identifies a list of defects & issues that you now have to repair at your expense. Happens all the time. This scenario could have been avoided by having a new home inspection and having the builder repair the items at no charge to you while the home is under warranty.

5. I am building a very expensive custom home using a builder with an impeccable reputation for quality construction. Do I still need a new home inspection? Absolutely, in our experience, the large custom homes can have more issues than the smaller production homes. Production homes are typically constructed from a small number of plans, using the same subcontractors for the entire development. The production builder and their subs have the opportunity to work out any ‘bugs’ as they complete each type of home and floor plan and the homes are less complicated with less to potentially go wrong. Custom homes are one of a kind, and although they may use higher quality materials, they can have many more water heaters, air conditioner systems, heating systems, electrical circuits, etc. which means more potential problems. In addition, a custom home builder may use a particular sub-contractor for the first time because their bid is very low or they are not happy with their previous sub-contractor, only to discover after the home is constructed that the sub-contractor’s work is unprofessional and sub-standard.

AJF Engineering was honored as a company to be part of the recent NEW HOME MARKET seminar at the Arizona School of Real Estate. It was clear to us that most builders go out of their way to build and deliver a quality product and construction errors or deficiencies are the exception rather than the norm in their industry. However, we all agreed that a professional home inspection is a small price to pay to reduce the risk of your home being that one exception. Don’t be the one who has to regretfully say: If we had only had it inspected.

We wish you the best in 2013 and look to see you at “RISING ARIZONA” on January 22nd from 9:00 – 1:00.

Sharon Wolf-Furman and Paul Furman are the owners of AJF Engineering. AFJ Engineering, a home, termite and commercial inspection company, has completed over 33,000 inspections in Arizona since 1996. Sharon or Paul can be contacted at 480-661-8888 or www.ajfengineering.com.