

10 Trouble Spots to Consider When Purchasing a Foreclosed Home

Posted By [susanne](#) On December 20, 2009 @ 1:06 pm In [Home Buying 101](#), [Real Estate](#), [Today's Marketplace](#), [Today's Top Story](#), [Today's Top Story - Consumer](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



^[1]RISMEDIA, December 21, 2009—It's easy pickings out there for many potential homebuyers. Housing prices are at their lowest in more than a decade, inventories are high, analysts are predicting a new wave of foreclosures and the government is offering two substantial tax credits for which many homebuyers qualify.

But bargain buyers beware, warns Vince Mastronardi, whose property preservation business has been busy preparing foreclosed homes for sale.

"Buyers need to educate themselves about the potential pitfalls of purchasing distressed property," says Mastronardi, president of On-Site Specialty Cleaning & Restoration. "It's not so much what damage occurred, but the source of that damage and how long before the problem was addressed."

These 10 signs may indicate that trouble is around the corner.

1. Unheated house in winter months. If the home has been properly winterized, there's no need for heat. But if the home has not been properly winterized, pipes will burst and cause water damage.
2. Missing sinks, toilets and other fixtures. Make sure they've been properly removed and not ripped from walls and floors.
3. Peeling, bubbling, and discolored paint; swelling in walls or ceilings (especially around kitchens and bathrooms) or a musty odor all indicate water damage and, potentially, the presence of moisture and mold.
4. Fungus growth inside cabinets, behind drawers and built-ins. Fungus could mean that there has been water damage. Since water falls down, look for the source above the mold.
5. Blocked drains or pipes will cause future problems and may have already created sewage backups.
6. Black cobwebs, greasy gray residue on walls and/or a strong oily odor. This could point to potential soot damage or a malfunctioning furnace.
7. An older home with extensive renovations. Check with the city for pulled permits in order to get remodeling details. If asbestos is present and has been disturbed, be sure it's been remediated by a certified specialist.
8. Excessive painting of every nook, cranny, door and floor may mean that the seller is covering up mold.
9. Discolored subflooring. From the basement, check the subflooring above for stains and small holes, both caused by mold.
10. Air Quality. The air quality within a home tells a lot about the home's condition. Be sure to include air and surface testing in your home inspection. It's a few hundred dollars well spent.

"Time and technique are the most important factors of effective clean-up and preventing future problems like mold or contamination," Mastronardi explains. "Ideally, professional cleanup begins within a few days of the damage; technicians are trained, certified or licensed; and equipment is specialized and up to date."

Ask the seller to explain how the damage was fixed. Plus, check out the company that performed the repairs to ensure it has industry-recommended certification. If needed, follow-up with the seller or repairing company for specific repair details.

For more information, visit www.on-sitecorporation.com [2].

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