

OPINION  
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## 7 repair requests buyers should never make

Repairs unrelated to a safety issue or the breakdown of an expensive system are better left alone

BY MISSY YOST  
TODAY 2:45 A.M.

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Most buyers and sellers understand that buying and selling a home requires [negotiation](#). You give a little here, and they concede a bit there. But what do you do when you have a buyer who demands unnecessary repairs after a [home inspection](#)?

[Educating buyers](#) so that they better understand which repairs are necessary and which may annoy the seller enough for the deal to shatter is part of the job of a [real estate agent](#).

Here is a list of seven [repair requests](#) that buyers should think twice about before making.

### 1. Easily repaired items under \$10

Whole house inspectors often come back with a list of items that cost under \$10 to repair or replace. Save yourself the hassle, and omit these things from the list of requested repairs.

If repairs are not related to a safety issue or the breakdown of an expensive system, it's better to refrain from listing them.

### 2. Replacement of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

Sometimes buyers are adamant they want missing smoke detectors or carbon monoxide detectors replaced.



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Although these are safety items, unless local codes say differently, it is better if the buyer installs the smoke and carbon monoxide indicators after closing. That way, they can make an informed decision on the type of alarms they feel most comfortable using in their new home.

### 3. Cosmetic issues in a resale home

Unless the home is brand-new construction, advising your clients against noting uneven paint or stained baseboards on a repair request is a good idea.

Normal wear and tear should be expected in any resale home and should be a factor in the original price negotiations.

### 4. Repairs related to minor plumbing and electrical issues

Simple issues such as an upside down outlet or a corroded water line to a sink are simple DIY repairs or matters easily handled by a handyman.

## 5. Repair of hairline cracks in the basement or driveway

Concrete expands and contracts naturally, and over time, cracks will occur. As long as the cracks are minor, don't list them in a request for repairs.

However, if the breaks are over a quarter inch, it's an excellent idea to have a structural inspection. Structural cracks are a whole new ballgame.

## 6. Outdoor landscaping, porch and fence repairs

These items were visible at the initial showing and will be a factor in the initial offer and negotiations.

It's not a good idea to ask for things that were obvious at the beginning such as sod replacement, fence restoration, loose railings or loose hinges.

The exception is if the repair is necessary as part of the loan process such as in an FHA or USDA loan.

## 7. Replacement of failed seals in windows

Unless the window is under warranty, most sellers will refuse to fix a failed seal. Window seals fail over time with use, and depending on the age of the window seal, failure can be expected.

It's another simple fix, and sometimes you need to choose your battles.

For all items on this list that your buyer would like to have fixed and are not safety or related to the failure of an expensive system can be included in a request for credit at closing.

Sellers are more likely to agree to a [\\$300 credit for the buyer](#) to replace 30 \$10 items than they will to repair or replace the 30 issues themselves.

*Missy Yost is a Realtor with Weichert Realtors Coastal Properties in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Follow The Yost Group on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).*

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**Christopher Klingaman** · Broker Associate at RE/MAX

Number 6 always gets me. Unless you were blindfolded during the showing you can clearly see some of these issues and buyers should make their offer based on the current condition.

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**Missy Meguire Yost** · Sales Associate at WEICHERT, REALTORS®-Coastal Properties

I agree. My background before real estate was in law. In my opinion that is open and obvious!

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**Laura Rushing** · Realtor at McBride Kelly & Associates Realty

Well written and good advice!

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**Lance Brown** · REALTOR®; Licensed at Stephen Cooley Real Estate Group at Keller Williams

Excellent article (sharing).



Windows are like used cars, they need work and replacement after years of use. It is just part of the homes expected maintenance. Good article.

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**Philip Unger** · Real Estate Agent/Broker at Coldwell Banker Cheshire CT

The furnace is old.....I WANT A NEW ONE

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**John Juarez** · Realtor and Member of the Medford Real Estate Team at Keller Williams Benchmark Properties

A certain number of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are required by law in California. Appraisers are required to note the absence or presence of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Lack thereof can stop a loan from being funded.

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**Missy Meguire Yost** · Sales Associate at WEICHERT, REALTORS®-Coastal Properties

Yes. Thanks for your comment. Depending on where the home is located this can be a requirement. If it is required by local or state laws it becomes a non-negotiable item.

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**Andrew Wetzel** · Saint Joseph's University

No matter how "logical" we think this post is, some buyers will do as they wish regardless of what the term "material" defect really means. As long as they can terminate a sale without explanation (as in PA), sellers may be forced to accept what a buyer wants or risk more time on the market and the stigma attached to a sale that falls through (violating MLS rules regarding proper reporting of "status" changes is NOT an acceptable "work around" and could violate the COE).

Two specific thoughts. First, if a buyer and agent see an issue during a showing, do not assume the seller will fix it or... See More

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**Missy Meguire Yost** · Sales Associate at WEICHERT, REALTORS®-Coastal Properties

Thanks for your comments. They are very helpful. Especially, " if a buyer and agent see an issue during a showing, do not assume the seller will fix it or that the municipality will require them to address it. Inquire and, if need be, consider factoring it into your offer (do NOT then turn around and ask for the repair anyway!). "

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**Jacquie Owens** · Palm Springs, California

Sadly most agents are totally oblivious to what constitutes a reasonable request for repairs, as the buyers are apparently never counseled on this. Nearly every RR I receive from buyer's agents, even from the most seasoned ones, are a ridiculous multi-page punch list containing every single thing on the report, even the "recommendations!"

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**Bruce Minter** · Real Estate Agent/Broker at The Real Estate Group, VA

Amen, Jacquie Owens. It's the mindset of a lot of buyers agents. Look Mr. Client I'm gonna get you everything we can. The whole home inspection process has become so convoluted as to be approaching irrelevance. Like the inspector who writes the tub stopper is missing, then takes a photo with the missing stopper sitting on the corner of the tub AND THEN .....wait for it the buyer asks for it to be replaced. How absurd!

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**Paul Stonkus** · Broker/Owner/Realtor at EXIT ELITE Realty,

"2. Replacement of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

Sometimes buyers are adamant they want missing smoke detectors or carbon monoxide detectors replaced."

<https://www.nachi.org/home-depot-smoke-detectors.htm> According to InterNACHI, at least a half dozen or more states have requirements for smoke certificates at transfer which a lender should require at closing, and therefore completed by the seller. Many more states legally require the existence of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, but the InterNACHI list doesn't state when/if they are inspected. Those states seem to cover a significant majority of the ... See More

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**Ann Cohen** · Agent- Residential Real Estate at Keller Williams Realty Boston-Metro

It's all about keeping perspective! Inspections should be an introduction to how the home works. Just system, health and structural surprises should be addressed after an inspection.

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