

Finding a Healthy Home

Are you looking for a new home? Make sure your next home is a healthy one. Whether you're buying a new home or renting, bring this checklist with you when you look at homes. Ask your realtor or landlord for answers you can't find on your own.

General (Interior and Exterior)

- What year was the home built? *If the home was built before 1978, ask if it has been tested for lead.*
- Is there chipping or peeling paint? *If the paint has lead, it may be a hazard. Pay special attention to windows.*
- Are stairs, porches, and railings in good condition?
- Are there working lights outside? *Outside lights can improve safety at night.*
- Are there smoke detectors on every floor and in the bedrooms?
- Does the home have enough outlets in each room for your needs? *Using splitters and extension cords can be a fire hazard.*

Exterior

- Is the roof in good condition? *Look for parts that are worn or sagging.*
- Are gutters and downspouts in good condition? Does water drain away from the home? *If not, water may get into the home and grow mold.*
- Is the siding in good condition? *Are there any missing, broken, or bent pieces?*
- Is the home well-insulated? *Does it feel drafty or wet? Ask about previous gas and electricity bills.*
- Are there holes where pests can enter? *Look around the foundation, basement windows, and porches/decks.*

Kitchen

- Does the stove have a vent to the outside? *If using a gas stove, a vent can help clear the air.*
- Can you see any water damage or mold? *Check under the sink and refrigerator.*
- Is there evidence of mice, rats, or cockroaches? *Look for droppings, dead insects, bite marks, and traps along the bottom of the stove, oven, and refrigerator, and inside cabinets.*

Living Room and Bedrooms

- What kind of flooring is there? *A hardwood, tile, or vinyl floor is easier to clean. Carpet can trap dust and other allergens.*
- Can you see any water damage or mold? *Check the ceiling, in closet corners, on window sills, and patio doors.*
- Can you tell if the previous residents smoked inside? *Smells and smoke stains from tobacco use can stay in the home for many years. Being exposed can create lung and other health problems.*
- Can you tell if the previous owners had pets? *If you have allergies or asthma, leftover pet urine and allergens can cause problems.*
- Do the windows open in each room? Do they have screens? *You can leave through a window in the event of a fire.*

Bathrooms

- Does the bathroom have a vent to the outside or a window? *A vent can help prevent mold and moisture problems.*
- Can you see any water damage, mildew, or mold? *Look on the ceiling, under the sink, and around the tub and toilet.*

Basement

- Can you see or smell any water damage, mildew, or mold? *If so, water may be getting into the basement.*
- Has the home been tested for radon? *Radon can cause cancer. You may need to install a special ventilation system.*
- Is there a washer/dryer in unit? If so, does the dryer vent outside?
- Are the water heater and furnace in good condition? *Well-maintained appliances can save money on energy bills.*
- Is there evidence of mice, rats, or cockroaches? *Look for places they can enter, droppings, dead insects, bite marks, and traps.*

See the back for resources.

State of Michigan Resources

<http://www.michigan.gov/leadsafe>

If you are buying a new home, there are many resources available to help you. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has many additional checklists, including information on getting a full home inspection. **Home inspections are recommended to help protect you in making an important purchase.** Go to www.hud.gov, click on "Topic Areas", and then click on "Buying a Home".

Some other resources that may help are:

Homeownership Classes

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority has a list of FREE local homeownership and home maintenance classes.

www.mshda.info/counseling_search/

Phone: (517) 373-6840.

Lead Safe Homes Program

The Michigan Department of Community Health offers assistance in finding and removing lead-based paint hazards for low-income families in certain target areas.

www.michigan.gov/leadsafe

Phone: (517) 335-9390.

Lead Safe Home Registry

This Michigan Department of Community Health registry lists homes that have received a professional lead service.

www.michigan.gov/ismyhomeleadsafe

Michigan Community Action Agency Association

Michigan's 30 Community Action Agencies offer free programs and services to help low-income families with weatherization, energy efficiency, affordable housing, and foreclosure prevention.

www.mcaaa.org/

Phone: (517) 321-7500

Michigan Energy Options

Michigan Energy Options offers home audits and weatherization programs to help make your home more energy-efficient.

www.michiganenergyoptions.org

Phone: (517) 337-0422

Michigan Housing Locator

This is a free resource for finding affordable rental housing.

www.michiganhousinglocator.com/

Michigan License Lookup

If you are having work done on your home, make sure the people you hire are properly licensed.

Builders, maintenance, and alteration contractors:

www.michigan.gov/licenselookup

Phone: (517) 373-8376

Electricians, plumbers and mechanical contractors:

www.michigan.gov/bcclicense

Phone: (517) 241-9313

Michigan Tax Assessor Directory

Check if the property taxes are paid up to date through your local tax assessor's office. Find your county website here:

<http://publicrecords.onlinesearches.com/Michigan-Assessor-and-Property-Tax-Records.htm>

Michigan Renter's Assistance

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority provides rental assistance through the housing voucher program for low-income families.

Lansing office phone: (517) 373-9344

Detroit office phone: (313) 456-3540