

How to Prepare for a Commercial Property Inspection

Here are some guidelines for clients to help them prepare for their commercial property inspection.

The client should do the following:

- 1) Visit the property on multiple occasions and at various times of the day (and night, if possible) before the day of the walk-through survey. This will give you a better feel for how the property operates and aid you in discovering potential deficiencies and items of interest to mention to the inspector. For example, the HVAC system may make unsettling noises, it may be running at night when it shouldn't be running, or it may distribute uneven airflow. Mention these sorts of things to your commercial inspector for their further assessment.

Also, take note and inform your inspector of any areas of the building that are in disarray or contain dirty equipment, especially mechanical rooms. This may indicate deferred maintenance issues or items that are in disrepair. The inspector will only examine readily accessible areas, so consider removing any obstacles before the scheduled walk-through survey, as well.

- 2) Outline your objectives for the inspection. After reviewing the International Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties (ComSOP), jot down any work you want to be completed or excluded that deviates from the ComSOP. This will ensure a transparent scope of work that you can agree to for the inspection. The scope of work for a commercial inspection will differ between projects based on disclosed information, accepted risks, intended building use, and the type of real estate transaction at hand.

In any case, be prepared to inform the commercial inspector of:

- timeframe and deadlines;
- recent or planned building repairs and renovations;
- previous and intended building use; and
- building maintenance and repair responsibilities assigned in the real estate transaction.

With this information, the inspector may advise adjusting the Scope of Work to accommodate your project's needs. This may involve:

- excluding certain items from the inspection;
 - ordering inspections performed by specialists for a higher level of certainty for specific building systems; and/or
 - scheduling a re-inspection of building renovations and repairs, once they have been completed.
- 3) Obtain documents and records from the person(s) with the most knowledge of the property. This is typically the building's current owner, manager, or tenant. Some relevant documents may include lease agreements, Certificates of Occupancy, repair invoices, and maintenance records. Many critical issues can be inferred about the building and its history from these documents and records.
 - 4) Coordinate interviews and develop pre-inspection questionnaires. Once the person with the most knowledge is identified, arrange to have them present on the day of the walk-through survey. If the individual is unable to attend, the commercial inspector can provide a pre-inspection questionnaire to be completed by email or phone. The completed pre-inspection questionnaire should be returned to the commercial inspector before or on the day of the walk-through survey.

Understanding what to expect and how to prepare for a commercial property inspection will help you get the most out of your inspection, but remember that every project is different. Contact us to discuss the specific needs for your project.

