

New Construction Walkthrough Checklist

The blue tape walkthrough — your last chance to flag items before the builder considers the job complete.

Property: _____ Builder: _____ Walkthrough date: _____ Closing date: _____
 Builder rep: _____ Buyer's agent: _____

What's different about new construction: The focus shifts from verifying condition to identifying cosmetic deficiencies and confirming the builder finished to the standard in your contract. You'll mark issues with blue painter's tape — those marks become the builder's punch list. Plan for 2-3 hours, not 30 minutes. Finding 30-40 minor items is normal.

1 Before You Walk In — What to Bring

- Blue painter's tape (the builder will usually provide it, but bring your own backup)
- Notebook and pen for your own punch list copy
- Fully charged phone for photos and video — every flagged item gets photographed
- Outlet tester (around \$5) to verify GFCI/AFCI buttons throughout the house
- Tape measure (check appliance cutouts, doorway clearances, room dimensions)
- Flashlight for attic, crawlspace, and dark corners
- Phone charger or small lamp to test outlets
- Your purchase contract, plans, options/upgrades sheet, and any previous walkthrough notes
- Your buyer's agent — even with builder reps present, their eyes work for you, not the builder
- Strongly recommended:* An independent licensed home inspector (~\$400-\$700) — even on new builds

Insist on this: A photo of every completed repair from the builder, or a written explanation for anything they decline to fix. This documentation protects warranty claims if something fails later.

2 Exterior, Lot & Drainage

- Walk the foundation perimeter — check for cracks, uneven settling, or visible defects
- Confirm site grading slopes away from the house on all sides
- Inspect siding, brick, or stucco for chips, gaps, missing caulk, or color variations
- Check the roof from ground level — uniform shingles, no gaps, gutters secure and properly pitched
- Verify downspouts direct water away from the foundation
- Test all exterior outlets, hose bibs, and outdoor lighting
- Inspect the driveway, walkways, and patio for cracks, uneven joints, or staining
- Confirm landscaping promised in the contract (sod, trees, shrubs) is installed
- Check fences, mailboxes, and any builder-installed structures match what you ordered
- Verify house numbers are installed and visible from the street

3 Interior Finishes — The Blue Tape Pass

The 4-6 foot rule: Stand four to six feet from a surface and look. If you can see the imperfection from there, flag it. If you have to press your nose to the wall, builders will often consider it within tolerance.

- Walls and ceilings: nail pops, drywall cracks, uneven texture, mismatched paint sheen
- Paint: missed spots, drips, brush strokes, color variations, overspray on trim or fixtures
- Trim and baseboards: gaps at corners, uneven cuts, missing caulk, paint coverage
- Doors: open and close every door — check for sticking, rubbing, gaps in frames, missing hinges
- Door hardware: tight, level, no scratches; locks and deadbolts engage smoothly
- Cabinets and drawers: alignment, smooth operation, soft-close working where specified
- Cabinet hardware: tight, level, matching as ordered
- Countertops: chips, scratches, uneven seams, sealed properly (especially natural stone)
- Tile work: uniform grout lines, no cracked tiles, sealed grout, level installation
- Flooring: scratches, gaps between planks, uneven seams, squeaks, transitions between rooms
- Carpet: clean (no construction debris), seams not visible, properly stretched
- Windows and screens: open and close smoothly, locks function, no scratches in glass

- Stair handrails and balusters: secure, no wobble, finished correctly

4 Kitchen & Appliances

- Verify every appliance matches what's in the contract (brand, model, finish, size)
- Run the dishwasher through a full cycle; check for leaks underneath
- Test every burner on the cooktop; run the oven and check temperature
- Test the range hood, microwave, and any built-in vents
- Confirm the refrigerator cools and (if applicable) the ice maker and water dispenser work
- Test the garbage disposal
- Run the kitchen sink — check water pressure, hot/cold lines, drainage, and for leaks under the cabinet
- Confirm pot filler, instant hot water, or any specialty fixtures work as ordered
- Check that pantry shelving, lazy Susans, pull-outs match the order
- Verify upgrade selections (backsplash tile, hardware finish, countertop edge) are correct

5 Bathrooms

- Run every faucet — hot/cold, pressure, drainage, no leaks under cabinets
- Run showers and tubs — drainage, proper temperature mix, anti-scald function
- Flush every toilet at least twice; watch for leaks at the base and behind
- Confirm toilets are stable (no rocking) and properly caulked at the floor
- Check shower doors for proper seal, smooth operation, and aligned hardware
- Inspect grout and caulk lines around tubs, showers, and backsplashes
- Test exhaust fans in every bathroom
- Verify GFCI outlets near sinks function (use your tester)
- Run multiple fixtures simultaneously to test pressure under load
- Confirm towel bars, toilet paper holders, and mirrors are level and secure

6 Mechanical, Electrical & Safety

- Run the HVAC in both heating and cooling modes for several minutes
- Confirm vents are open and pushing air in every room
- Verify thermostat functions and changes setpoint correctly
- Locate and test the main water shut-off valve — confirm it's accessible
- Confirm the water heater produces hot water and check for drips at connections
- Open the electrical panel — verify breakers are labeled and the panel is accessible
- Use your outlet tester in every outlet, every room — flag any that don't read correct
- Test every GFCI and AFCI button (kitchens, baths, garage, exterior, laundry)
- Test every light switch and fixture; confirm dimmers function
- Press test buttons on every smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector
- Test doorbell, intercom, and any builder-installed smart-home devices
- Verify cable, internet, and phone jacks are installed where specified

7 Garage, Attic & Storage

- Test the garage door opener (every remote, the wall button, and any keypad)
- Verify the auto-reverse safety: place an object in the door's path — it must reverse
- Wave an object across the safety beam at floor level — door must stop and reverse
- Check garage floor for cracks, staining, or improper slope toward the door
- Confirm garage outlets and lighting work; test GFCI
- Inspect attic access — proper insulation, no exposed wiring or framing issues
- Verify any built-in shelving, hooks, or storage systems ordered are installed

8 Documentation & Permits

- Confirm the Certificate of Occupancy has been issued (check city/county permit portal)
- Verify all required inspections are "finalized" with the local building department

