

The 7 Biggest Red Flags for HOMEBUYERS



Buying a house is fun and exciting, but it requires you to look beyond just the open house and keep an eye out for any warning signs. These things could be physical issues with the home, concerns with the neighborhood, and more.

So take a look at our homebuying “red flags” before you consider making an offer. They might just save you time, money, and hassle down the road.

1 TOO MANY HOUSES FOR SALE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.



Going online can be a great way to start your home search. And it can wave our first homebuyer red flag – which is lots of houses for sale in the same neighborhood. When everyone decides to sell, it's probably not a coincidence. Look into the neighborhood's crime rate or business closures to see why so many homes are on the market.

2 THE PRICE JUST DROPPED. BY A LOT.



Sellers lower the price of houses all the time. But they tend to do it slowly. When the price of a house takes a big drop, it could be a sign that the seller just discovered a big problem. So if the price of a house you like has gone down significantly, ask your real estate agent why.

3 LARGE CRACKS IN THE FOUNDATION.



There is no substitute for a good home inspection. But there are some structural red flags you don't need to be an expert to spot – and large cracks are one of them.

Cracks around window frames, doors that don't close right, and uneven floors (bring a marble and give it a roll to test them), can also be signs of problems. For instance...

4 WHAT'S THAT SMELL?



When water gets into a house – whether it's from a crack, a leaking roof, or a pipe – mold and mildew can develop. And when you get a lot of mold and mildew, you get a smell.

Don't be shy about walking into each room and taking a good whiff – especially in the basement. It's better to smell a mold problem now than pay to fix it later.

And be suspicious if every room has a scented candle, because they might just be trying to hide a smell that's not so sweet.

5 WIRING AND PLUMBING IN OLDER HOMES.



Old houses can be beautiful and filled with an original feel, but this also means they can have frail, outdated wiring and plumbing. This poses a problem because older wiring may not be able to handle today's appliances or be up to current safety codes – and replacing them is an expensive fix.

6 WINDOWS THAT DON'T OPEN AND CLOSE RIGHT.



Windows that you struggle to open and close is a big homebuyer red flag, because these also cost an arm and a leg to replace. Even older windows in okay shape are still much less energy efficient than new ones, letting cold air in during the winter and hot air in during the summer.

7 IFFY LOCATION, IFFY NEIGHBORHOOD.



When you buy a house, you're buying its location and neighborhood, too. A house on a busy, loud street or a house surrounded by rental properties can be warning signs, as both can make a home less attractive to the next buyer and hold down its price.

Other causes for concern are high crime rates and poor school ratings. The quality of the schools can be important even if you don't have school-age children, because it might matter to the next buyer.

And once you've found a house you love that's clear of any red flags, check this out:

[5 Things to Do When Making an Offer on a House.](#)