

# HOME INSPECTION FOR NEW HOUSE

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Purchasing a new house is certainly a happy and exciting experience for the homeowner. Certainly, for most people in Malaysia, it needs a lot of time and money to acquire a new house, whether it is a landed or a high-rise property. However, life is not all sunshine and rainbows. New houses may consist of some defects and damages after the CCC stage. Hence, each owner needs to know several facts and procedures of a home inspection before finally occupying their new house.

Under the Housing Development (Control and Licensing) Act 1966 (Act 118) <sup>[1]</sup>, all new house in Malaysia is under the 24-month Defect Liability Period (DLP), which is a warranty that ensures any defects in the property will certainly be rectified by the developer at free-of-charge. Thus, once the DLP is ended, it surely becomes a hassle for the owner to rectify any damages they are having on their house as they need to spend their own time and a large amount of money to rectify it himself, depending on the severance of the defects.

A home inspection is the process of inspecting a new property to find any flaws or defective workmanship on the structure, utilities, grounds, and rooms of the property so that the developer could repair them at no additional expense to the owner. A home inspection can be done thoroughly by appointing a professional home inspector. Certainly, the cost of the appointment is bear by the owner, however a throughout home inspection will ensure the property is well inspected and guaranteed the safe occupying period. On the other note, it should not be limited to the professional as the owner himself may do the inspection too.

According to the Quality Guidebook for Homeowners (2014) <sup>[2]</sup> by CIDB Malaysia, an owner may follow the standards of CIS 7 with the aid of the QLASSIC tool which stands for Quality Assessment System for Building Construction Works. CIDB has prepared a list of equipment that owners need to prepare before conducting the QLASSIC.

*Table 1: Tools for QLASSIC Inspection Source:*

No.	Tools
1.	Unit floor plan
2.	Writing instrument (Pen / Marker Pen)
3.	Camera
4.	Torch light
5.	Stickers
6.	Tapping rod
7.	Measuring tape
8.	SPA (with relevant specifications and measurements of the property construction)
9.	Spirit level

*Source: Quality Guidebook for Homeowners, CIDB (2014)*

## INTERIOR INSPECTION

As proposed by QLASSIC guidebook, owners who want to inspect their house by themselves should follow the assessment method 6+1 and quick assessment checklist to check the quality of interior finishes of the property.

Table 2: Assessment Method 6+1 for Interior Finishes

No.	Interior finishes
1.	Floor
2.	Wall
3.	Ceiling
4.	Door
5.	Window
6.	Fixture
7.	M&E Fixture

Source: Quality Guidebook for Homeowners, CIDB (2014)

Table 3: Quick Assessment Checklist from QLASSIC tool

No.	Description	Compliance
1	<b>FLOOR</b>	
	a) The floor should be even and level, with no more than 3mm of variation across 1.20m.	
	b) When tapped on the floor tiles, there is no hollow sound.	
	c) The floor finishing is free of paint drips or other stain marks.	
	d) The floor finish is free of cracks, chips, and apparent deterioration.	
	e) The floor tiles or timber panels should have uniform shading and tone.	
	f) Floor tile or wood floor panel joints should be uniform and correctly filled.	
2	<b>WALL</b>	
	a) The wall should be straight and level, with a thickness of no more than 3mm across 1.20m.	
	b) When using an L-square, the wall squareness should not exceed 4mm.	
	c) When tapped with a solid item, there is no hollow sound.	
	d) The wall surface is free of paint drips and stain marks.	
	e) The wall finishing is free of cracks, chips, scratches, and other apparent defects.	
	f) The joints between the wall tiles should be consistent and correctly filled.	
	g) The wall finishing is not patchy and has a variety of tones.	
3	<b>CEILING</b>	
	a) The ceiling surface has no waviness or roughness.	
	b) The ceiling is free of stain marks, finger prints, and paint stains.	
	c) There should be no gaps between the ceiling boards and the ceiling tee.	
	d) The ceiling's alignment and levelness should be even and level.	
	e) The ceiling surface should be free of chippings, holes, cracks, and other noticeable problems.	
4	<b>DOOR</b>	
	a) The door frame and panel should be levelled and aligned.	
	b) The gap between the door frame and the wall should be uniform.	

	c) The door panels and door frame are free of dents, cracks, stain marks, and other evident defects.	
	d) All accessories, including hinges, knobs, door stoppers, and door closers, should be in good working order and free of stains or malfunctions.	
	g) There should be no squeaky noise when the door opens and closes.	
	g) All screws and accessories must be correctly installed.	
	g) The door panel and the door frame should be flush.	
	h) No accessories are missing.	
5	<b>WINDOW</b>	
	a) The window frame and panel must be levelled and aligned.	
	b) There should be a consistent gap between the window frame and the wall.	
	c) The window frame sealant should be tidy and consistent.	
	d) The aluminium frame and glazing are free of dents, scratches, stain marks, and other apparent defects.	
	e) All accessories, including window stays, knobs, and screws, should be in good working order and free of staining or malfunction.	
	f) The window should open and close smoothly without making a squeaky noise.	
	g) There should be no evidence of a water mark or seepage.	
	h) The window's gasket/rubber should be correctly placed.	
	i) No accessories are missing.	
6	<b>FIXTURE (wardrobes, kitchen cabinets, vanity tops, wash basins, and other permanent fixtures are fixed into the unit.)</b>	
	a) Make sure the fixture is levelled and aligned.	
	b) The gap around the fixture should be properly filled and constant.	
	c) The fixture should be free of stain marks, dents, scratches, and other noticeable flaws.	
	d) All of the accessories should be in good working order, with no stains or flaws.	
	e) The fixture must be functional and able to open and close smoothly without making a squeaky noise.	
	f) No accessories are missing.	
7	<b>M&amp;E FITTINGS</b>	
	a) The fittings' joints should be uniform.	
	b) Joints that are not consistent should be filled/sealed.	
	c) The distance between fits should be uniform.	
	c) Installed M&E fittings should be levelled and aligned.	
	e) The fittings are free of stain marks, scratches, and other apparent damage.	
	f) The fittings should be usable.	
	g) No accessories are missing.	

Source: Quality Guidebook for Homeowners, CIDB (2014)

## EXTERIOR INSPECTION

For exterior inspection of the property, it is already adequate for the owners to conduct the inspection visually as advised by the QLASSIC guidebook.

Table 4: Assessment Elements for Exterior Finishes

No.	Exterior Finishes	Assessment Element
1.	Exterior paint	Colour, even coating
2.	Foundation	Evidence of watermarks, cracking, flaking
3.	Gutter, downspouts	Installation, loose section, rust, peeling paint
4.	Garage floor, driveway, patio	Evidence of cracking
5.	Porch, veranda	Exposed nails/screws, flaking or cracking masonry, uneven surfaces, structural problems
6.	Wall coverings (brick, wood or siding)	Missing or cracked wall coverings
7.	Roof	Ridge is straight and levelled, damaged or missing shingles
8.	Garage	Operation of garage door

Source: Quality Guidebook for Homeowners, CIDB (2014)

## ACTIONS AFTER INSPECTION

Upon inspection, the owner may encounter several defects, whether minor or major, on their property. Owner shall make a list of all the discovered defects and present it to the developer, along with a formal request to rectify and make good on the defects.

If the developer fails to make good on the defects within 30 days of receiving the owner's notice, the owner has the right to carry out the rectification works himself or appoint his own contractor to do so after granting the developer another 30 day notice ('Written Notice') notifying them of the owner's intention to make good on the defects on his own and the costs of doing so.

Following that, the owner must swiftly rectify the defects and is entitled to reimbursement from the stakeholder who holds the final 5% retention sum of the sale and purchase price. A retention sum is a sum retained that normally parked with a law firm as stakeholders where the sum is held as stakeholders to ensure that the developer carries out the defects liability work. Owners are recommended to send notice to the stakeholder to withhold any part of the retained payments upon pending completion of the rectification works within the specified time frame.

If the developer and/or stakeholder refuse to repay the rectification costs, the buyers may pursue legal action with the Tribunal for Homebuyer Claims (the "Tribunal") to reclaim the costs. The Tribunal has the right to grant awards of up to RM50, 000. Inability to implement the Tribunal's decision is a violation of Section 16AD of the Housing Development (Control & Licensing) Act 1966 (2007) <sup>[1]</sup>.

In conclusion, it is crucial to conduct a home inspection as soon as during the Vacant Possession period as any defects detected and rectified during the early stage will surely benefit the owners in the long run. Delaying a home inspection will almost absolutely prolong the severity of the defects and hence multiplying the time and money expenses to repair it.

### References:

[1] National House Buyer Association of Malaysia (HBA). Housing Development (Control and Licensing) Act 1966 (2007). Retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 from [https://www.hba.org.my/laws/hda/2007/ACT118\(2007\).htm](https://www.hba.org.my/laws/hda/2007/ACT118(2007).htm)

[2] Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia. Quality Guidebook for Homeowners (2014). Retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 from <https://pdfcoffee.com/quality-guide-for-homeownerspdf-pdf-free.html>