Home Buyer's Pet Odor & Damage Checklist

Use it during walkthroughs. Pick the situation that matches the house.

Insider Knowledge from OdorXpert. We find and treat pet urine odor in homes for a living, often after the buyer has already moved in. This checklist puts what we look for in your hands, so you can spot warning signs and ask the right questions before you close escrow.

A general home inspection is typically a visual examination of a home's readily accessible systems and components. Tracing pet urine below the surface is generally outside its scope, so it's worth knowing what to look for yourself.

Property address: _____ Walkthrough date: _____

Before you start

- Ask the agent to close the windows and doors. If possible, turn off fans and air purifiers. Wait about 10 minutes.
- Smell at floor level as well as standing height. Urine odor is usually strongest low.
- Your nose adapts to an odor after a few minutes. Step outside for a minute and notice your first impression when you walk back in.

Which house is this?

- You smell it and you can see damage → **1. Odor + Visible Damage** (page 1)
- You smell it but can't see where it's coming from → **2. Odor + No Visible Source** (page 2)
- You don't smell it, but something makes you wonder → **3. No Odor + Warning Signs** (page 3)
- The house was recently remodeled or updated → **4. Recently Remodeled / Updated** (page 3)

More than one can apply. Use every section that fits.

Key: ☐ = check item ⚑ = red flag

1. Odor + Visible Damage

The question: how far does it go?

☐ Rooms where you notice odor: _____
☐ Stains or discoloration at carpet edges, room corners or under furniture
⚑ Staining, swelling or gaps on baseboards
⚑ Stains or bubbling paint on the lower part of walls
⚑ Staining or swelling at door jambs, wall corners and stair areas (cat spray can reach well above the floor)
⚑ Carpet that feels damp or soft, or edges lifted with dark tack strip underneath
☐ Dark staining at seams of wood, laminate or vinyl floors
⚑ Dark rings or stains on garage or basement concrete
⚑ Odor in three or more rooms

Ask: Has the odor been treated before? What was done, and when? Was the pad or subfloor replaced or treated, or was the carpet only cleaned?

Next step: Get a remediation estimate before making repair or price decisions. A pet odor inspection maps where the contamination is and how deep it goes.

2. Odor + No Visible Source

The question: where is it coming from?

- ☐ Room where the odor is strongest: _____
- ⚑ Odor is stronger at floor level than standing
- ⚑ Odor comes back or gets stronger after the windows are closed
- ☐ Closets (closed spaces hold odor)
- ☐ Under area rugs and furniture (ask before moving anything)
- ⚑ Near HVAC returns or vents (air movement can spread odor through the house)
- ☐ Laundry room, behind doors and other corners where pets spend time
- ☐ Baseboard edges, door frames and jambs, stair landings and fireplace areas
- ☐ Garage and any finished basement
- ☐ Odor seems stronger on warm days or when the house has been closed up

Ask: Did pets live here? Where did they spend most of their time? Has any carpet, pad or flooring been replaced? Was the house recently cleaned?

Next step: A pet odor inspection to find the source and how deep it goes. UV/black-light screening can help locate suspect areas but does not confirm pet urine by itself, so inspectors also use moisture meters and other checks.

3. No Odor + Warning Signs

The question: could something be going unnoticed?

Warning signs that pets lived here:

- ☐ Pet door, pet gates, bowls, crates or a fenced dog run
- ☐ Scratches on doors or trim, chewed corners
- ☐ Listing or disclosures mention pets

Conditions that can make odor harder to notice during a showing:

- ☐ Strong air fresheners, plug-ins or candles
- ☐ Windows or doors open, fans or air purifiers running
- ☐ Carpet that smells freshly cleaned or still feels damp
- ☐ Area rugs in unusual spots
- ☐ House recently vacant with the HVAC running

Tip: Your nose adapts to an odor after a few minutes. If you can, visit a second time at a different time of day with the house closed up, and bring someone who hasn't been inside.

Ask: Pet history, any past odor treatment, and what the disclosures say. Request the OdorXpert House Odor Damage Survey from the seller through your agent.

Next step: If the warning signs add up, consider a pet odor inspection before you remove your contingencies.

4. Recently Remodeled / Updated

The question: could new finishes be covering an older problem?

Most updates are routine. The point is to know what's underneath, because new finishes can make an older odor problem harder to detect.

- ☐ New carpet or flooring (which rooms: _____)
- ⚑ New flooring in only some rooms
- ⚑ Fresh paint only on the lower part of walls
- ⚑ New baseboards in some rooms but not others
- ☐ New flooring running up to old baseboards, or new baseboards installed with the flooring (shows how far the update went)
- ☐ Sealed, painted or epoxy-coated garage or basement floor
- ⚑ Pets in the home's history and new flooring
- ☐ Odor that appears on warm days or after the house has been closed up

Ask: For receipts, invoices or permits when available. Was the old flooring removed before the new flooring was installed? Was any subfloor or concrete exposed, treated or sealed before the new finish went down? What prompted the update? Was there any odor before?

Next step: Ask the seller what was treated versus what was replaced or covered. If nobody knows, a pet odor inspection can help.

Before you own the home: the inspection is non-destructive.

While the property still belongs to the seller, we inspect only what can be evaluated without opening or altering the home, unless the seller or authorized owner gives permission. We may use UV/black-light screening, moisture readings, visual inspection, odor mapping and, when useful, thermal imaging to identify suspect areas. We do not remove flooring, baseboards, drywall or other finishes without permission.

In a recently remodeled home, non-destructive testing may show where contamination is suspected, but new flooring, paint, baseboards or other finishes can prevent us from determining the full extent of what is underneath.

Already purchased the home and discovered odor after closing?

Once you own the property, the inspection can expand into an odor investigation. With your permission, we can selectively open or remove appropriate finish materials, such as carpet or pad, baseboards or trim, to determine the extent of contamination and document additional physical evidence with photographs, moisture readings, affected locations and a written report.

Your assessment

Total red flags (⚑) checked: _____

- **0 red flags:** Minimal concern. Proceed with your general home inspection.
- **1–2 red flags:** Possible concern. Request the OdorXpert House Odor Damage Survey from the seller and consider a pet odor inspection.
- **3 or more:** Strong concern. A pet odor inspection can show whether pet damage is present, where it is and how deep it goes before you proceed.

Your next step

Call **(877) 386-3677** for a free phone quote, or visit **odorxpert.com/pet-odor-inspection-service/**. Tell us which section fit your house and what you checked.

Notes: _____

This checklist is an educational resource provided by OdorXpert for home buyers. It is not legal advice and is not a substitute for a general home inspection or a specialized odor inspection. OdorXpert is not a law firm and does not provide legal services.

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