

5 Things Home Sellers Try to Hide

According to Trulia, these are the 5 things sellers try to hide:

1. **Leaks** – Leaky faucets, pipes, radiators, ceilings, roofs — you name it! Real estate agents, brokers and sellers might try to temporarily plug that drip to attract offers. But honesty is *always* the best policy, and admitting your property's faults can actually work in your favor. Jennifer Breu, a real estate agent based in New York, NY, once showed a home with a ceiling that was falling down; she still got a ton of offers on it and made the sale by being honest that the repairs would be made soon. "Leaks are very common, but they can be fixed very easily before the close," says Breu. "It doesn't pay to mask something that isn't a huge issue and can be fixed. Transparency increases value."
2. **Pests** – Don't judge a book by its cover or a house by its pretty wallpaper. A house that looks beautiful could still have termites eating away inside the walls, and disclosure laws about pests vary from state to state. In WI, sellers are only required to disclose termite, ant and powder-post beetle infestations or prior infestations. If you have a sneaking suspicion there are ANY pests taking up residence in your new home, don't risk it — schedule a pest inspection before closing.
3. **Disturbing Defects** – Depending on the state, sellers don't have to disclose if a property is haunted or if "emotional defects" such as a death or a murder occurred there. In 2014, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in favor of the real estate team that sold a house and did not tell the buyer it had been the site of a murder-suicide in 2006. This may not be a deal breaker for you, but you have a right to know — at least in some states. And if local laws don't require a reveal, websites like diedinhouse.com can give you peace of mind (or clue you in on a new home's unsavory past).
4. **Roof and Foundation Issues** – Great Neck, NY-based Ian Aronovich and his wife fell in love with a house in 2014. Unfortunately, they spotted major cracks in the house foundation that would've cost tens of thousands of dollars to repair. "We smelled some mold in the basement and asked the owner if we could cut a small section of sheetrock to check for the source of [the] moisture," Aronovich says. "As we peeled away the sheetrock, we noticed the crack. In the end, we did not buy that house."
5. **Age of Appliances** – RE/MAX agent Maura Neill in Atlanta, GA, sees a lot of sellers who try to hide the ages of water heaters and HVAC systems with two simple words: "Don't know." A home inspector can find out that

information very quickly, so when in doubt, ask your inspector to look into it. And before you even get to the inspection stage, Neill says, the property disclosure can be telling when it comes to how forthright — and truthful — your seller is. “When it states the bare minimum, we know we are either dealing with a disconnected or uninvolved seller who doesn’t really know their home *or* with a seller who knows there are issues and doesn’t want to disclose them.”