

Special considerations for log homes:

A log home can be very aesthetically pleasing but in most cases they are not as well insulated or as structurally sound as a traditionally built home. Clients should be aware that log homes can be more susceptible to drafts and less energy efficient than traditional construction. Log homes require more maintenance by the home owner. It is also important for the client to understand that occasionally it can be difficult to obtain home insurance on log homes.

When inspecting a log home special care should be given to the outside of the home to ensure that the exterior walls are straight and that they are not falling out or in. You should stand back a distance from the building when you first arrive to get a good perspective. Note any deviations from plumb in your report.

Examine the roof line carefully for any signs of sagging that might indicate spreading or racking.

This is a totally different type of construction from a typical house. Log homes need a good foundation under them as this type of building can be weak structurally. Occasionally they will use a steel reinforcing beam and/or plates to provide extra structural support. There is a certain amount of movement in log homes. Usually the truss system will have steel brackets with lag bolts in them and these require close attention on your part. It is not uncommon to find lag bolts which have been sheered off from excessive movement. This could affect the structural

integrity of the building and should be noted in the report. It is critical to recommend consulting with further investigation by a log home specialist. Log homes are also prone to racking which can cause structural damage.

The exterior and interior wood surfaces are susceptible to water damage (rot) or insect/pest damage. Inspect the logs closely for any signs of rot or decay and mark it clearly in your report. Specialized coatings and caulking are required to protect the wood. Determining the appropriate finish material that should be in-place or needed is beyond the scope of a visual home inspection – recommend that they consult a specialist.

Inspect all the main beams for any signs of failure such as checking, breakage, cracking or movement. Inspect for sway or dips in all major beams which may indicate that the beam was not strong enough for the load.

Pay close attention to the way all of the windows and doors are installed in a log home and make sure that they are operational. Since a log home has more movement within the structure, window and door openings tend not to be trimmed in place as firmly as they are in traditional construction. The trim will either adhere to the log walls or to the window casings but normally not to both. This allows for a small amount of movement without breakage.

There are usually a limited number of electrical outlets as it is difficult to run the wires inside the walls and, as a result, these wires are often exposed.

Check for plumbing stacks extending through the roof and ensure that the plumbing ventilation stack has been properly installed.

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