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FINE HOMES & ESTATES

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Inspection Mindset (Coachella Valley)

Normal Issues vs Red Flags — what to watch for, and how to think about it

By Tracy Scott, REALTOR® · DRE# 00957686 · November 2026

Why inspections matter

A home inspection is a fact-finding step, not a pass/fail test. The goal is to understand what's routine maintenance, what's a real risk, and what you may want to negotiate, repair, or walk away from.

Normal (common and usually manageable)

These items are often workable with repair, maintenance, or credits—depending on severity:

- Minor drywall cracks, nail pops, worn caulking
- Small plumbing drips, worn shut-off valves, slow drains
- Older fixtures and appliances that still function
- Worn weatherstripping, drafty doors/windows
- Normal roof wear (without active leaks)
- HVAC aging but operating (may be a near-term budget item)
- Minor electrical issues (missing GFCI in some areas, loose outlets, minor labeling)

Yellow flags (needs a closer look)

These don't automatically kill a deal, but they deserve follow-up:

- Prior water stains (identify the source and whether it's resolved)
- Multiple repairs done "DIY style"
- Drainage issues near the foundation
- Evidence of roof patching without documentation
- Signs of past termite treatment (confirm clearance and repair scope)
- Pool equipment that runs but sounds strained, leaks, or has poor circulation
- Seller unable to answer basic maintenance history questions

Red flags (stop and investigate immediately)

These can affect safety, value, insurability, or major cost:

- Active water intrusion (roof leak, slab leak indicators, mold conditions)

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- Foundation movement (significant cracks, doors/windows out of square, uneven floors)
- Electrical hazards (overheated panels, unsafe wiring, high-risk breaker issues)
- Major roof failure (active leaks, sagging, widespread damage)
- Sewer line concerns (backup history, strong odors, recurring clogs)
- Unpermitted additions/major work that impact safety or livability
- Active termite/pest infestation with structural damage
- Safety issues that can block insurance or lending

Desert-specific items I pay attention to

- Roof age + sun exposure wear
- HVAC performance (size, airflow, age, service history)
- Pool/spa equipment condition and leaks
- Irrigation leaks and water pressure issues
- Window seals and heat gain
- Dust intrusion (gaps, older sliders)
- HOA restrictions that affect your plans (rentals, exterior changes, solar, etc.)

What happens after the inspection

You typically have a few options:

- Accept as-is (you understand the condition)
- Request repairs (specific safety/functional items)
- Request a credit (so you control the repairs)
- Bring in specialists (roof, HVAC, pool, structural, plumbing, electrician)
- Cancel during contingencies (if the condition doesn't work for you)

My role

I help you:

- Prioritize what matters vs what's noise
- Decide what to negotiate (and how)
- Line up specialists when needed
- Keep deadlines straight during the contingency period



Want me to review a home with you before you offer?
Text/call Tracy Scott: (760) 840-7441 | TScott@TracyAScott.com

Note: This guide is educational and not a substitute for professional inspections or specialist evaluations.