

7 common mistakes when buying a home



When buying a home, it's easy to get caught up in the excitement.

"The housing market can be very competitive," says Ray Leclair, vice president of public affairs at LAWPRO[®]. "Potential home buyers may get caught in bidding wars or the purchasing hype and can feel pressured to overlook issues that could really cost them down the road, in order to put forward a winning offer."

Although it can be competitive and rushed, it's still important to take time and avoid these seven common mistakes when buying a home:

1. Falling in love with one aspect of the home, such as location, décor, renovations, and ignoring possible problems, such as the age of the systems and status of building permits.
2. Failing to check with a lawyer to ensure a rental unit is legal. If the buyer is counting on rental income to afford a mortgage, this could be a serious problem.
3. Choosing a lawyer by price or agent's recommendation, instead of for their experience and thorough work.
4. Ignoring the risks of not conducting certain searches or inquiries to save the associated costs, such as work orders, easements or taxes.
5. Not telling their lawyer about the intended use for the property. Homeowners can't always do whatever they want, be it opening a small business, building an addition or adding a garage. It's important to check if these changes are acceptable to the municipality before making an expensive mistake.
6. Skipping a home inspection or relying on a family member or friend's view of the status of a home to have a more competitive offer. A realtor may recommend bringing in a home inspector prior to making the offer, to avoid including this condition. Although it can be expensive, this is definitely a better option than skipping the inspection altogether.
7. Not asking for a building-location survey and relying exclusively on title insurance. A survey permits you to verify the location of the structures in reference to the property lines, encroachments onto neighbours' land or vice versa and confirm municipal property setback requirements.

Buying a home is a huge undertaking and not a decision to be taken lightly or quickly. A thoughtful realtor, an experienced lawyer and a long term outlook can help ensure a successful purchase.