

Final Walkthrough Checklist for Remodels & New Construction

A thorough final walkthrough tests every system, surface, and fixture in the finished space, documents every open item in writing, and does not conclude until you have received all warranty documents, manuals, permit records, and lien releases.

The final walkthrough is the last checkpoint before you accept completed work and make your final payment. Done well, it is your opportunity to identify every item that needs attention while the contractor still has clear responsibility and motivation to address it. Done poorly — or skipped — it leaves you with a punch list you discover over the following weeks, with diminishing leverage to get anything fixed.

This guide gives you a structured, room-by-room approach to the final walkthrough for both remodel projects and new construction, with specific attention to Florida considerations: HVAC performance in a humid climate, permit records, moisture-prone areas, and the documentation you should have in hand before you sign off. It is written for homeowners, not inspectors — you do not need technical expertise to run a thorough walkthrough. You need a plan, a pen, and the willingness to slow down and actually look.

One principle above all: never let time pressure or social discomfort rush this process. A final walkthrough is not the moment to be accommodating. It is the moment to be thorough. Every legitimate issue you find now is a warranty call you do not have to make later.

Before You Begin: What to Have Ready

Before you walk the first room, gather what you will need. Bring a notepad or use your phone to capture notes and photos — every item you identify should be documented with a description and a photo. Bring a phone charger or a plug-in night light to test outlets. Have a copy of the approved plans or the project scope so you can verify that what was agreed to is what was delivered.

Know who is walking with you. Ideally, the contractor or project lead walks the space with you, not just a crew member. The person doing the walkthrough should have authority to acknowledge items on your punch list without having to "check with someone." If the contractor cannot attend, reschedule — the walkthrough should not happen without qualified representation from both sides.

Set the expectation clearly before you start: you will be documenting every open item in writing, and you expect a written response within a specific timeframe (typically 48–72 hours for a priority list, with a completion schedule for all items). This is not adversarial — it is professional, and a quality contractor will be glad to conduct it this way.

Water and Plumbing: Run Everything

Run every water source in the project: every faucet, every shower, every tub filler, every toilet. Let them run long enough to actually observe performance, not just confirm they turn on. Check for adequate pressure and hot water throughout. Flush every toilet — observe the fill cycle, confirm it seats fully, and listen for any running water after the fill cycle completes.

After running each fixture, get under every sink and check the cabinet floor and the drain connections carefully. Look for any drips, wet spots, or evidence of a slow leak. In Florida's humidity, even a minor plumbing leak under a cabinet can develop into a mold issue within weeks — address anything that looks questionable before you sign off.

In shower and tub enclosures, inspect every caulk joint — at the floor transition, at the fixture penetrations, and at any corners or changes in plane. Caulk that is cracked, thin, gapped, or missed entirely is a water intrusion risk. Inspect tile grout for voids, cracks, or uneven lines. Run your fingers along shower walls to confirm no tile movement or hollow-sounding areas (a hollow sound when you tap a tile can indicate a bond failure). Check that the shower pan or floor tile is properly sloped toward the drain.

Electrical: Test Every Outlet, Switch, and GFCI

Test every electrical outlet in the project with a plug-in tester or your phone charger. Do not assume they work because others work — test them individually. Confirm that all outlets in bathrooms, the kitchen (within six feet of a sink), the garage, and exterior locations are GFCI-protected (they should have the test/reset buttons on the outlet face, or be protected by a GFCI breaker). Test each GFCI by pressing the "test" button — the outlet should lose power — then pressing "reset."

Flip every switch in the project and confirm it controls what it is supposed to control. If any switch controls a ceiling box where a fixture was not installed, confirm with the contractor whether that is an intentional omission or an oversight. Test every dimmer to confirm it operates smoothly through its full range. Turn on every light fixture and confirm all bulbs work and that the fixture is properly seated and secure.

Inspect the electrical panel if new circuits were added. Confirm that every breaker is labeled, that no breakers are tripped, and that the panel cover is fully installed and secure. If you have new exterior outlets or landscape lighting, test those as well.

HVAC: Run in Both Modes and Check for Florida-Specific Performance

In Northeast Florida, the HVAC system is not just a comfort system — it is a moisture management system. An undersized, poorly balanced, or improperly installed HVAC system in a humid Florida climate will struggle to maintain comfortable humidity levels even when it holds temperature, creating conditions for mold growth and degraded air quality.

Run the HVAC in cooling mode for at least 15–20 minutes and observe: does every supply vent blow conditioned air? Is airflow balanced across rooms, or are some noticeably weak? Are all return air grilles present and unobstructed? Set the thermostat lower than the current room temperature and confirm the system responds. After running, check the air handler for any visible drips or condensation pooling around the unit — the condensate drain should be flowing properly, not backing up.

Then run the system in heat mode and confirm it responds. In a new construction or full HVAC replacement, ask the contractor to demonstrate that the system was properly commissioned and that the refrigerant charge was verified. Ask for the equipment warranty cards and confirm they have been registered with the manufacturer.

If any newly conditioned space has a dramatically different feel from the rest of the house after the system runs, flag it. Duct issues, improper Manual J load calculations, or undersized equipment are worth identifying now, not after you have moved in and lived through a Florida summer.

Doors, Windows, and Exterior

Open, close, and lock every door in the project — interior and exterior. Doors should open and close smoothly without sticking, dragging, or requiring force. Latches should engage cleanly. Deadbolts and locksets should operate without resistance. Check door alignment in the frame — gaps should be consistent around all four sides. If any door was hung new, confirm there is no daylight gap at the sill (particularly important for Florida's rain events).

Open and close every window. Confirm they slide or crank smoothly, latch securely, and seal completely when closed. In Florida, impact-rated windows and doors should be confirmed as specified — ask the contractor to show you the product labels or installation documentation confirming the impact rating. Check the exterior caulking and flashing at all window and door installations — this is the most common source of water intrusion in Florida homes, and it needs to be thorough and continuous.

Walk the exterior perimeter of the project, if applicable. Check all caulk joints at material transitions (stucco to trim, trim to window, siding edges). Look at the roofline, soffit, and fascia if work was done there. Confirm gutters are properly pitched and flowing toward downspouts. Check that downspouts discharge away from the foundation.

Finishes: Surfaces, Cabinets, Flooring, and Details

Walk every painted surface in good light — ideally with a window behind you so the light rakes across the wall — and look for roller marks, holidays (missed areas), drips, brush marks in cut-in areas, and any areas where color is inconsistent. Paint issues are easy to address before punch list close and much harder to negotiate afterward.

Open and close every cabinet door and drawer in the project. Confirm they open smoothly, close fully, and soft-close properly if soft-close hardware was specified. Check that all doors and drawers are level and evenly gapped relative to each other. Pull-out shelves, lazy Susans, and interior organizers should function as specified. Interior cabinet finishes should be clean and undamaged.

Inspect all tile work: look for cracked tiles, grout voids, uneven grout lines, and grout color consistency. Check that the tile pattern is correct per the design and that tile is properly centered in its field. Look at flooring transitions — LVP to tile, hardwood to carpet — and confirm that transition strips are properly installed, flush, and secure. Walk every square foot of new flooring listening for squeaks, soft spots, or hollow areas under LVP or tile.

Inspect all trim work: baseboards, casing, crown molding, window stools, and door casings. Nail holes should be filled and painted. Caulk lines at trim-to-wall and trim-to-floor transitions should be thin, smooth, and consistent. Mitered corners should close tightly.

Florida-Specific Items: Permits, Drainage, and Moisture

In Florida, every permitted project ends with a final building inspection by the local authority having jurisdiction. Before you sign off on the project, confirm with the contractor that the final inspection has been completed and passed — not just scheduled. Ask them to provide the inspection record or the permit card showing the final inspection sign-off. A permit that is not fully closed out is a problem that follows the property — it will surface in a title search when you sell, and it leaves open the question of whether the work was ever verified as compliant.

If the project involved any work near a bathroom, laundry room, exterior wall, roof, or foundation, do a careful moisture check. In Florida, moisture intrusion can begin and cause damage quickly. Look for any staining, efflorescence, or soft spots in substrate materials. If the contractor opened walls during the project, ask whether they visually inspected the wall cavity for any pre-existing moisture damage and what they found.

Check exterior drainage around any new construction or addition. Grade should slope away from the foundation at a minimum of one inch per foot for at least six feet. Downspout extensions should discharge well away from the foundation. In Florida, where heavy rain events are common, improper drainage around a foundation is a significant long-term problem — it is worth confirming before you accept the work.

Documentation: What You Should Have Before You Write the Final Check

A completed project is not just a finished space — it is a package of documentation that protects you long-term. Before you make final payment, confirm you have received the following.

First, the **warranty documentation** in writing: what is covered, for how long, and the process for making a warranty claim. For Integrity Construction Co., this is a 12-month warranty on all materials and labor we provide and install (customer-supplied materials are excluded from the warranty because we cannot control their quality). Know what your contractor warrants and have it in writing.

Second, all **appliance manuals and warranty cards** for any appliances, fixtures, or equipment installed. These should be registered with the manufacturer where registration is required.

Third, **permit records**: the permit number, the jurisdiction, and confirmation (in writing or in a document from the building department) that all required inspections were completed and passed.

Fourth, **lien releases** from the general contractor and from any subcontractors or material suppliers who sent you a Notice to Owner. Unconditional lien releases, signed after your payment has cleared, are the only form that fully protects you under Florida's construction lien law. Do not make final payment until you understand how lien releases will be handled and have a plan to receive them.

Finally, a written copy of your **punch list** with each item noted, the contractor's acknowledgment of each item, and agreed timelines for resolution. Even if the punch list is short, document it. Open items left unaddressed tend to stay unaddressed without a written record.

The Checklist

- 1 Schedule the walkthrough with qualified contractor representation**

Confirm that the project lead or an owner of the contracting company — not just a crew member — will walk the space with you. Reschedule if necessary.

- 2 Run every water source and check under every sink**

Turn on every faucet, shower, and tub. Flush every toilet. After running each, inspect under every sink for drips, wet spots, or evidence of slow leaks. Check that the condensate drain on any AC air handler is flowing.

- 3 Inspect all tile, grout, and caulk in wet areas**

Look for cracked tiles, grout voids, caulk gaps at corners and floor transitions, and hollow-sounding tile (tap to check bond). Confirm shower floor slopes toward the drain.

- 4 Test every outlet, switch, GFCI, and fixture**

Plug a tester or charger into every outlet. Flip every switch and confirm what it controls. Test every GFCI with the test/reset buttons. Turn on every light fixture and confirm all bulbs are working.

- 5 Run HVAC in both cooling and heating mode**

Run cooling for 15–20 minutes; confirm supply and return airflow at every vent. Check for condensate drainage and no pooling at the air handler. Run heat and confirm it responds. Flag any rooms with noticeably weak airflow.

- 6 Open, close, and lock every door and window**

Test smooth operation, proper latching, and complete sealing. Check door alignment in frame. Confirm impact-rated products at all applicable openings. Inspect exterior caulking and flashing at all window and door installations.

- 7 Walk all painted surfaces in raking light**

Check for roller marks, drips, holidays, inconsistent color, and rough cut-in lines. Good light at a low angle (window behind you) reveals imperfections invisible in overhead light.

- 8 Test every cabinet door and drawer**

Open, close, and confirm soft-close on every door and drawer. Check level and gap consistency. Inspect interior finishes. Operate pull-out shelves and any interior hardware.

- 9 Inspect all flooring, transitions, and trim**

Walk every square foot of new flooring listening for squeaks, soft spots, or hollow areas. Inspect tile for cracks and grout voids. Confirm transition strips are properly installed. Check baseboards and casing: filled nail holes, consistent caulk lines, tight mitered corners.

10 Confirm the final building permit inspection is closed

Ask for the permit number and the inspection record showing final sign-off from the local building department. Do not accept a permit that was opened but never formally closed out.

11 Walk the exterior and check drainage

Inspect caulk and flashing at all material transitions. Check the roofline, soffit, and fascia if work was performed there. Confirm grade slopes away from the foundation and downspouts discharge well away from the building.

12 Document every punch list item in writing with photos

Capture a written description and a photo of every open item. Walk through the list with the contractor, get acknowledgment of each item, and agree on resolution timelines before the walkthrough concludes.

13 Collect all warranty documentation, manuals, and permit records

Confirm you have the written warranty (scope, duration, claim process), all appliance manuals and warranty cards (register where required), and permit records showing completed inspections.

14 Do not make final payment until lien releases are in hand

Request unconditional lien releases from the general contractor and from any subcontractor or supplier who sent you a Notice to Owner. Under Florida law, this is the only form that fully protects you from a lien on your home.
