

NO SECTION

## Why homebuyers should consider sewer scans and chimney inspections

Starting now, I'm going to start recommending two new inspection services in addition to standard home inspections: sewer scans and level 2 chimney inspections.

**By Reuben Saltzman**

FEBRUARY 9, 2016 AT 5:16AM

Starting this year, I'm going to begin recommending two new inspection services in addition to standard home inspections: sewer scans and level 2 chimney inspections. I've always been quick to recommend these services in the past, but based on the input from all of the inspectors in my company, these are services we should start recommending to our clients, regardless of our inspection findings.

For the record, neither of these are services that my company offers. Yet.

### **Sewer Scans**

A sewer scan is done by a company that specializes in this service. A technician accesses the main sewer cleanout hole in the basement and feeds a fiber-optic camera through the sewer line that runs from the house to the city sewer at the street. This sewer line belongs to the property owner, and any problems with this sewer line are the financial responsibility of the owner. If there are problems with the sewer line that routine sewer cleaning won't solve, the repairs will be expensive.

In my experience, most sewer scans on old houses reveal tree roots finding their way into the sewer lines and slowing things down, but no major problems. It's the situations where major problems occur that make it worth having a sewer scan done. Sewer scans typically cost less than \$200 and are usually scheduled at the same time as the home inspection.

Unfortunately, no home, no matter what its age, is immune to sewer problems. While it's unlikely, even new homes can have problems with the main building drain. As you might imagine, the potential for problems increases with the age of the home. If you're buying a new home, you probably don't need to spend your money on a sewer scan. If you're

buying a century-old home, it's probably smart to have a sewer scan done. There is no clear dividing line between homes that should and shouldn't have a sewer scan performed. The decision will ultimately come down to the new home buyer's tolerance for risk.

Two local companies that I've had many good experiences with are Ron the Sewer Rat and DC Annis Sewer.

## Level 2 Chimney Inspections

A Level 2 chimney inspection is basically the same thing as a sewer scan, but for the chimney. This type of inspection is recommended by NFPA 211 any time there is a sale or transfer of a property. Unlike sewer inspections, a fair number of chimney inspections end up revealing potentially costly defects.



(The Minnesota Star Tribune)

This is an inspection that is recommended for all solid fuel-burning appliances, which typically means a wood-burning fireplace. The person conducting this inspection should

be a professional who is certified by the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA). The specific title that CSIA gives to trained chimney experts is "Certified Chimney Sweep."

I specify this language because there are plenty of hacks out there that throw their untrained, unqualified opinion around as gospel. For more information about hiring a CSIA Certified Chimney Sweep, click here: [http://www.csia.org/homeowner-resources/how to hire a chimney sweep.aspx](http://www.csia.org/homeowner-resources/how_to_hire_a_chimney_sweep.aspx) .

For more information about having a Level 2 fireplace inspection performed, click here: [http://www.csia.org/homeowner-resources/chimney inspections.aspx](http://www.csia.org/homeowner-resources/chimney_inspections.aspx)

Author: *Reuben Saltzman, Structure Tech Home Inspections*

(The Minnesota Star Tribune)



© 2026 StarTribune. All rights reserved.