FOR REAL ESTATE AGENTS · ARIZONA

WHAT TO ASK BEFORE YOU LIST

A septic checklist for Arizona real estate agents

STEEL SEPTIC
& ENVIRONMENTAL

You don't need to be a septic expert. You need to know what to ask — and when to stop asking and call one.

Nine questions. Ask them before the sign goes in the yard.

ASK THE SELLER

1 WHEN WAS THE TANK LAST PUMPED?

The right answer is a date within the last 3 years, with a receipt. Not "a while ago." Not "never had a problem, so never touched it." A tank that hasn't been pumped in years isn't a maintenance item — it's a pending failure.

> **→ No records? That's your cue for an inspection.**

2 IS THERE A RISER, OR IS THE LID BURIED?

A riser is a lid at ground level. No riser means someone digs to find the tank — which costs time and money, on your timeline, not theirs.

> **→ "I don't know" is a real answer. Find out before a buyer's inspector does.**

3 HAS ANYONE MENTIONED A SLOW BATHTUB?

Sinks won't tell you anything — they sit too high. The first real sign of a septic backup shows up at the bathtub, the lowest point running out to the tank.

> **→ A slow tub is not a plumbing quirk. Take it seriously.**

4 HOW MANY BEDROOMS — AND HOW BIG IS THE TANK?

Tanks are sized on fixture count, not square footage. Most AZ residential tanks run 1,000–2,000 gallons: ~1,000–1,250 for a 3-bed, ~1,500–2,000 for a 5-bed. A home that's been added onto may have outgrown its tank.

> **→ Additions and casitas are the red flag here.**

5 HAVE THEY ADDED ANYTHING SINCE THE SYSTEM WAS INSTALLED?

A new bathroom, a casita, a pool house, more people living there. The tank was sized for the original house.

ASK THE SEPTIC COMPANY

6 DO THEY ASK YOU QUESTIONS?

A company that knows what it's doing will ask: where's the tank, when was it last serviced, is there a riser? A company that asks nothing will show up and explore the yard on your client's dime.

> **→ Prescription without diagnosis is malpractice.**

7 WILL THEY BILL ESCROW DIRECTLY?

Most won't. The ones that do take a real friction point out of your closing — the paperwork goes to escrow and escrow handles it, instead of chasing a seller for a check mid-transaction.

8 ARE THEY NAWT CERTIFIED?

Ask. It's a real credential, and it's verifiable.

ASK YOURSELF

9 DO I HAVE BOTH FORMS?

In Arizona, a property sale with an onsite system requires both the transfer form and the inspection. Both. It's a state rule, not just a Maricopa County one.

> **→ Missing either one is where closings quietly fall apart.**

THE HONEST BOTTOM LINE

If the answers are clean — pumped within the last 3 years, riser in place, both forms handled, no slow tub — you're in good shape.

If any answer is "I don't know," that's not a gap in your knowledge. That's a system nobody has looked at. And an unlooked-at septic system is the thing that turns into a failed deal, an angry buyer, and a phone call to your broker.

You don't have to diagnose it. You just have to know when to call someone who can.

QUESTIONS ON A LISTING?

Steel Septic and Environmental · 480-995-0878 — we answer our phones.
steelseptic.com/lunch-and-learn

Bobby Lanham, NAWT Certified · 35+ years in Arizona septic

Want your agents trained on this? We run a free 45-minute session at your office.