

Chimney Inspection Rate Guide 2026

Real pricing data — Level 1, 2, and 3 inspection costs, cleaning fees, and hidden charges

- ✓ Level 1, 2, and 3 inspection costs explained
- ✓ Chimney sweep vs. inspection — what's included
- ✓ Common repair costs and when they're necessary
- ✓ Hidden fees to watch for and how to compare quotes

How Chimney Inspection Billing Works

Chimney inspection pricing follows a standardized three-level system established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 211). Each level involves increasing scope and cost. Understanding which level you need prevents both overpaying for routine checks and underpaying for situations that demand thorough evaluation. Most homeowners need a Level 1 inspection annually — but real estate transactions and suspected damage require Level 2.

Inspection Levels & Cost Overview

Level	Cost Range	What's Included	When Required
Level 1	\$100–\$250	Visual check of accessible interior and exterior; chimney structure, flue, connections, damper	Annual maintenance; no changes to system
Level 2	\$250–\$600	Everything in Level 1 + video camera scan of flue interior; attic/crawlspace/basement inspection	Real estate transactions; after chimney fire, earthquake, or weather event; changing fuel type or flue liner
Level 3	\$1,000–\$5,000	Everything in Level 2 + removal of components (drywall, chimney structure) to access hidden areas	Serious hazard suspected; structural damage investigation; fire damage assessment

Quick Budget Reference

- Annual inspection (Level 1): \$100–\$250
- Inspection + cleaning combo (Level 1 + sweep): \$200–\$400
- Real estate inspection (Level 2): \$250–\$600
- Post-fire/damage assessment (Level 2-3): \$500–\$5,000
- Chimney sweep only: \$150–\$350

Level 1 vs. Level 2 vs. Level 3: Detailed Comparison

What Each Inspection Level Covers — NFPA 211 Standards

Component Inspected	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Exterior chimney structure (from ground)	Visual	Visual + detailed	Visual + detailed + destructive access
Interior fireplace / firebox	Visual	Visual + detailed	Visual + detailed
Damper operation	Check open/close	Full function test	Full function test
Flue liner (accessible portions)	Visual from top and bottom	Video camera scan entire length	Video camera + possible removal
Chimney cap and crown	Visual	Detailed	Detailed
Flashing (roof junction)	Visual from ground	Close inspection	Close inspection
Attic and crawlspace areas	Not included	Included	Included + concealed spaces
Accessible portions of chimney in walls	Not included	Included	Removal of walls/structure if needed
Clearance to combustibles	Visual check	Measured verification	Measured + concealed spaces
Chimney cleanout	Check	Check + evaluate	Full access
Written report	Basic	Detailed with photos	Detailed with photos + repair specs
Video recording of flue	Not included	Included	Included

Level 2 is REQUIRED for real estate transactions.

NFPA 211 mandates a Level 2 inspection upon sale or transfer of a property. A Level 1 inspection is insufficient for a home sale — if your home inspector only performed a Level 1, you need a separate Level 2 chimney inspection.

Chimney Sweep vs. Inspection: What's Included

Cleaning and Inspection — Same Visit or Separate?

Most chimney professionals offer combined sweep-and-inspect services. A chimney sweep (cleaning) removes creosote, soot, and debris. An inspection evaluates structural and functional safety. They serve different purposes — and understanding the distinction prevents paying for one when you need both.

Service	What It Includes	Average Cost	When You Need It
Chimney sweep only	Mechanical or chemical removal of creosote, soot, and debris from flue. Basic visual check during cleaning	\$150–\$350	Annually before heating season; after burning season
Level 1 inspection only	Structured visual evaluation per NFPA 211 standards. No cleaning	\$100–\$250	Annual safety check; not a cleaning
Sweep + Level 1 inspection (combo)	Both cleaning and structured inspection in one visit	\$200–\$400	Best value for annual maintenance
Level 2 inspection only	Comprehensive evaluation with video camera	\$250–\$600	Real estate; post-damage; system changes
Sweep + Level 2 inspection (combo)	Cleaning + comprehensive evaluation with video	\$350–\$700	Pre-sale preparation; thorough annual service

The "\$99 Chimney Sweep" Scam

Beware companies advertising \$99 or less for chimney cleaning. The typical bait-and-switch: They arrive, "discover" serious problems (that may not exist), and quote \$1,000–\$5,000 in "emergency repairs." Reputable companies charge \$200–\$400 for a quality sweep with inspection. If the price seems too good to be true, it is.

Common Repair Costs

If Your Inspection Finds Problems — What Repairs Cost

Repair	Cost Range	Urgency	What It Addresses
Chimney cap replacement	\$150–\$700	Moderate	Prevents water, animals, and debris from entering flue
Crown repair (minor cracks)	\$150–\$500	Moderate	Seals top of chimney; prevents water intrusion
Crown replacement	\$500–\$2,000	High	Major deterioration; water entering chimney structure
Flashing repair/replacement	\$200–\$700	High	Prevents water leaks at roof-chimney junction
Tuckpointing (mortar repair)	\$500–\$2,500	Moderate–High	Deteriorated mortar joints; structural concern
Flue liner replacement (stainless steel)	\$1,500–\$5,000	High	Cracked, deteriorated, or missing liner; fire hazard
Flue liner replacement (cast-in-place)	\$2,000–\$7,000	High	More durable option; poured ceramic liner
Damper repair/replacement	\$200–\$600	Moderate	Damaged or non-functional damper; energy loss
Top-sealing damper (with cap)	\$300–\$700	Moderate	Replaces throat damper; better seal and protection
Firebox repair	\$500–\$2,500	High	Cracked firebrick or refractory panels
Full chimney rebuild (above roofline)	\$3,000–\$15,000	Critical	Structural failure; leaning chimney; extensive deterioration
Waterproofing (water repellent)	\$200–\$600	Preventive	Extends chimney life by preventing water absorption
Creosote removal (heavy glazed buildup)	\$200–\$500 (above standard sweep)	High	Stage 3 creosote is a chimney fire waiting to happen
	\$150–\$500	Moderate	Raccoons, birds, squirrels in flue

Repair	Cost Range	Urgency	What It Addresses
Animal removal + screen installation			

Get repair quotes in writing before authorizing work.

A reputable inspector presents findings, provides a written estimate, and gives you time to get a second opinion. They should never pressure you into same-day repairs — unless there's an active safety hazard (cracked flue with visible combustion gases).

Inspection Costs by Region

Region / Metro	Level 1	Level 2	Sweep + Level 1	Key Notes
Northeast (NYC, Boston, Philly)	\$150–\$275	\$350–\$600	\$275–\$450	Older housing stock; high demand; most expensive market
Mid-Atlantic (DC, Baltimore, Northern VA)	\$125–\$250	\$300–\$550	\$250–\$400	Dense older homes; regular use drives demand
Southeast (Atlanta, Charlotte, Nashville)	\$100–\$200	\$250–\$450	\$200–\$350	Moderate use; growing market
Midwest (Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit)	\$100–\$225	\$250–\$500	\$200–\$375	Heavy use in winter; seasonal demand spike in fall
Mountain West (Denver, Salt Lake City)	\$125–\$250	\$300–\$500	\$250–\$400	High altitude = heavy use; wood-burning common
Pacific Northwest (Portland, Seattle)	\$125–\$225	\$275–\$475	\$225–\$375	Rainy climate means more moisture issues
Southwest (Phoenix, Las Vegas)	\$100–\$200	\$250–\$400	\$200–\$325	Decorative fireplaces; less use = less wear
Texas (Dallas, Houston, Austin)	\$100–\$200	\$250–\$400	\$200–\$325	Moderate use; growing awareness
Rural / Low-cost markets	\$75–\$175	\$200–\$350	\$150–\$275	Fewer certified professionals; may require travel

Fall is peak season.

September through November is when demand (and prices) peak as homeowners prepare for heating season. Schedule inspections in spring or summer for faster availability and sometimes 10–15% lower pricing.

Hidden Fees & Add-Ons

Get a detailed written estimate before any work begins. "Chimney inspection" can mean anything from a 10-minute visual check to a comprehensive video-scoped evaluation. Clarify the scope, level, and whether cleaning is included.

Add-On	Typical Cost	When You Need It
Video inspection (if not Level 2)	\$100-\$300	Internal flue condition check; usually included in Level 2
Cleaning (if inspection-only quoted)	\$150-\$300	Should be done annually; not always included in inspection
Multiple flue inspection	\$50-\$150 per additional flue	Homes with 2+ fireplaces or furnace flue
Tall chimney surcharge (3+ stories)	\$50-\$200	Access difficulty; safety equipment required
Difficult roof access	\$50-\$200	Steep roof pitch; no walkable access
Smoke/draft test	\$50-\$150	Verifies proper draft; detects leaks
Carbon monoxide test	\$50-\$100	Tests for CO leakage into living spaces
Written report (detailed with photos)	\$50-\$150	May be extra for Level 1; standard for Level 2
Travel fee (> 25 miles)	\$50-\$150	Rural areas; limited local coverage
Emergency / after-hours service	+50-100%	Immediate safety concern
Second opinion inspection	\$100-\$300	Verify another company's findings before expensive repair
Permit pulling (for repairs)	\$50-\$200	Required for liner replacement, rebuilds in many jurisdictions

Ask: "Is this a Level 1 or Level 2 inspection, and does it include cleaning?" Many companies offer a sweep + Level 1 combo as their standard service (\$200-\$400). For real estate, you specifically need a Level 2 with video scan.

How to Compare Quotes & Save Money

Numbered list

- 1 Schedule in spring or summer.** Fall is peak season. Off-season appointments are easier to book and sometimes 10–15% cheaper.
- 2 Get three quotes for any repair over \$500.** Inspection pricing is relatively standardized, but repair pricing varies wildly. A \$3,000 liner quote from one company might be \$1,800 from another.
- 3 Bundle sweep + inspection.** The combo (\$200–\$400) costs less than booking separately. Most reputable companies offer this as their standard annual service.
- 4 Don't fall for the "\$99 special."** Ultra-cheap sweep offers are almost always bait-and-switch. Budget \$200–\$400 for quality annual service from a CSIA-certified professional.
- 5 Ask if multiple flues are included.** Homes with 2+ fireplaces or a separate furnace flue may be charged per flue. Clarify upfront.
- 6 Maintain annually to avoid expensive repairs.** Annual cleaning + inspection costs \$200–\$400/year. Neglecting your chimney for 5 years can result in \$1,500–\$5,000 in repairs from creosote damage, water intrusion, or flue deterioration.
- 7 Water issues are the #1 expense driver.** A \$200 chimney cap and \$200 waterproofing treatment can prevent \$2,000–\$5,000 in water damage repairs. Ask about preventive waterproofing.
- 8 Get the video footage.** For Level 2 inspections, request a copy of the video scan. This is your documentation if repairs are recommended — and useful for second opinions.
- 9 Check insurance coverage.** Homeowner's insurance may cover chimney repairs caused by storms, lightning, or fires. Document the damage and file a claim before paying out of pocket.
- 10 Don't skip the inspection before buying a home.** A Level 2 chimney inspection (\$250–\$600) can uncover \$5,000–\$15,000 in necessary repairs that a standard home inspection misses.

Budget Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to estimate total chimney inspection and maintenance costs. Print and fill in.

Line Item	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost
Inspection (Level __)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Chimney sweep / cleaning	\$ _____	\$ _____
Additional flues (____ x \$____)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Video scan (if not included)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Carbon monoxide / draft test	\$ _____	\$ _____
Cap repair/replacement	\$ _____	\$ _____
Crown repair	\$ _____	\$ _____
Flashing repair	\$ _____	\$ _____
Tuckpointing	\$ _____	\$ _____
Liner repair/replacement	\$ _____	\$ _____
Waterproofing	\$ _____	\$ _____
20% contingency buffer	\$ _____	\$ _____
TOTAL ESTIMATED	\$ _____	\$ _____

Use this worksheet to organize your findings after a Level 2 inspection. Prioritize repairs by urgency: safety hazards first, water intrusion second, cosmetic issues last.

CTA box

Want a quick sanity check on your numbers? Email this worksheet to contact@chimneyadvisor.com or browse certified chimney inspectors at chimneyadvisor.com

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