■ Handyman Special Buyer Checklist

1. Township / Legal Costs

- Certificate of Occupancy (CO) application fee (varies by town, usually $100–$250).
- Smoke/Carbon Detector Certification fees.
- Possible repair requirements from township inspection before CO is issued.

2. Inspection Costs

- General home inspection ($400–$600).
- Specialist inspections (roof, HVAC, septic, termites, etc.) if needed.
- Note: These are for your knowledge only—seller won't fix anything.

3. Renovation & Repair Costs

- Immediate safety fixes (electrical, plumbing, leaks, broken windows).
- Cosmetic upgrades (paint, flooring, kitchen, baths).
- Major system replacements (roof, furnace, hot water heater, AC) if near end-of-life.
- Permit fees for renovations (varies by town/project).

4. Financing Impact

- FHA/VA not allowed → must use Conventional loan or Cash.
- Conventional lenders may require higher down payment (5–20%) and reserves.
- Possible higher appraisal risk if home condition is poor.

5. Insurance & Holding Costs

- Homeowner's insurance may cost more (old wiring, roof, etc. = higher risk).
- Property taxes continue while you renovate.
- Utility bills during renovation (electric, water, gas).

6. Time & Effort

- Delays due to permits, inspections, and contractor schedules.
- Unexpected surprises (hidden damage, code violations).
- Longer timeline before move-in (not ideal for first-time buyers needing immediate housing).

■ Bottom Line

\- First-Time Buyers → Need strong savings, renovation budget, and patience. Risk of being overwhelmed.
\- Investors / Flippers → This is normal; they build costs into their business model.

■ *Pro Tip: Always set aside at least 10–15% of the purchase price as a repair contingency fund for fixer-uppers.*

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