

Before buying a house

This checklist covers the points worth reviewing before committing to buy a house in Las Terrenas or elsewhere in the Dominican Republic. It is a general guide: it does not replace a review of your file by licensed professionals, who alone can confirm the property's situation.

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Title and ownership

- Obtain a copy of the certificate of title and check that the registered owner matches the seller and their identity documents.
- Find out whether the document is a certificate of title for a parcel that has gone through deslinde or a constancia anotada.
- Request a recent certificate of legal status from the Registro de Títulos.
- Check for mortgages, oppositions, litigation or other annotations, and agree in writing how they will be cleared before the sale.
- If the seller is a company, an estate or several people, check with your lawyer who is authorised to sign and which consents are needed.

Land and boundaries

- Compare the cadastral designation and the area stated on the title with the plan and with the land you visit.
- Have a licensed surveyor check the boundaries and fences on the ground.
- Confirm that access to the property is via a public road or a properly established easement.
- If the house is near the sea or a river, check that neither the land nor the buildings encroach on the public domain.

Permits and construction

- Ask for the building permit and the approved plans, and compare them with the house as built.
- Identify extensions, pools or outbuildings added after the permit and ask whether they were regularised.
- Check that the permitted land use allows your intended use, especially if you plan to rent the house out.

Technical condition

- Have a licensed engineer or architect carry out a technical inspection: structure, cracks, damp and corrosion of the reinforcement.
- Check the roof, the waterproofing and rainwater drainage.
- Check the electrical installation, the water supply and the wastewater system.
- Look for signs of termites or other pests in woodwork and structural elements.

Taxes and charges

- Ask the seller for proof that they are up to date with the IPI, where this tax applies.
- Check that there are no unpaid electricity, water or rubbish collection bills, and no unpaid fees if the house is in a gated community.
- Ask your lawyer for an estimate of the transfer tax and closing costs before signing.

Contract and payment

- Before paying any deposit, include conditions tied to the outcome of the checks in the preliminary sale agreement.
- Pay by traceable means into an account whose holder is clearly identified in the contract.
- Confirm with your lawyer who will legalise the signatures and how the transfer will be registered with the Registro de Títulos.
- If you are buying as a foreigner, ask your lawyer to confirm the formalities that apply to your situation.

General information, which does not constitute legal advice.

Request a check: <https://terrenascheck.com/en/request/>