

## THE 'HOLMES INSPECTION'

*Q: I UNDERSTAND MIKE HOLMES HAS A NEW TV SHOW ON HOME INSPECTION. DO YOU KNOW WHY HE IS STARTING THIS NEW SHOW? WE ARE LOOKING FOR AN OLDER HOME; WE'RE NOW WORRIED ABOUT WHO WE SHOULD GET TO INSPECT IT.*

A: If you go to Mike's web site you can click on for information to Mike's new show that will air in the fall of 2009. This was announced on January 14<sup>th</sup> by HGTV. It will be called "Holmes Inspection" and if it is anything like the contents of his book "The Holmes Inspection" it is going to open quite a few eyes and probably thin out the numbers who call themselves home inspectors.

The reason behind this is very simple; of the over 1000 e-mails Mike gets every week the largest percentage by far is are complaints about a home inspection. In an average year Mike gets over 65,000 e-mails so this percentage of bad home inspections is disturbing to say the least. In Mike's book he comments " I want to see industry standards improve ... I've met and worked with some excellent home inspectors... but even they agree that something has to be done about the inspection industry as a whole" I could not agree more with this statement and many more that Mike has written about. His comment on page 14 says ... .the inspection industry in Canada is not standardized or regulated... to many home inspectors don't know enough about the building trades to give reliable service" .

Where does this leave the homebuyer like our reader? Unlike the Real Estate Profession who are regulated and must follow a set of rules and guidelines, anyone can hang out a shingle and call himself or herself a home inspector. There are National and Provincial Associations who are attempting to organize and regulate the industry but it is painfully slow. The Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors (CAHPI) were organized with assistance from CMHC to set a national standard. The National Certification Authority was formed as an independent body to guide and certify home inspectors in Canada. If you go to [nca-anc.com](http://nca-anc.com) you can find a local National Certificate Holder or how to become one if you so desire. This standard has been available to every home inspector in Canada for over 2 years now. This standard takes time to complete and you must have minimum training and complete actual home inspections under the eyes of a group of regional examiners. While it is slowly growing, far too many inspectors don't bother for the simple reason as one said to me recently "Why should I waste my time and money learning all this stuff... nobody is going to stop me from doing home inspections!"

In Ontario it is really confusing. There is an existing organization called the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors. They are purported to be the provincial arm of CAHPI, however they have failed in their support of the national program to the point another organization has taken up the challenge to get everyone Nationally Certified. Recently the Professional Home and Property Inspectors of Ontario (PHPIO) was formed. There is another Internet club called NACHI, which is an American organization, we also have ASHI, yet another US organization. ASHI was the first Home Inspection organization in North America. Each one has a slightly different set of membership standard except NACHI, you get can your certification from a brief on-line exam. Mike Holmes is right; it's a mess and a long way from any single licensing. We can salute the province of British Columbia however, as of January 30 every home inspector must be licensed and the standard BC accepted was the National Certification and the RHI status.

What should a homebuyer do now? Reading a copy of Mike's book is a good start. He has some very good questions every prospective buyer should ask his or her inspector.

- 1) How long have you been a home inspector? Make sure it's a full time job; the industry is full of part time inspectors.
- 2) Did you have any experience in the building trades before becoming a home inspector? If so, what kind and how much? Ask the inspector to show his trade certificate any licensed trade has one. Check out any comments about "experience" I know one inspector whose web site says he has done "hundreds of hours of renovation work" In truth he was a part time laborer for a carpentry crew.
- 3) Do you belong to a provincial association and are you a certified member? In Ontario go to [nca-anc.com](http://nca-anc.com) and enter the home inspector's name. It will tell you if he or she is nationally licensed.
- 4) What kind of equipment do you use; a good inspector comes equipped with necessary ladders, thermal laser etc to do the job.
- 5) Can you provide me with references? This is a good idea, however I know of more than one inspector who has his "friends and family" giving references of which they receive a small "fee" for a nice referral, watch yourself with the references.

Mike's new TV program, if has the impact his renovation show has had, is going to open a lot of eyes and its long overdue. As Mike says "when a home inspection is done by a qualified knowledgeable person... it works for everyone involved" Home Inspections are a valuable information tool, every home should have one, just make sure you get an inspector who has more than 2 weeks training and some on-line courses.