

A NEW ONTARIO ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS CAHPI

I am going to dispense from my regular format of questions and answers this week. One of the most difficult things to do when purchasing a home is finding a qualified home inspector. For years now there have been a number of organizations, some with questionable standards including one with a provincial mandate to develop the home inspection industry in Ontario. This organization has done a poor job in developing this mandate and in doing so has left the consumer in Ontario struggling to find a standard unto which they can be assured the inspector they are hiring is qualified.

In the late 90's, CMHC, the Canadian Government Agency that oversees the majority of construction standards and home development became aware of the growing problem with "flashlight and business card" home inspectors. A lack of training and education were found to be the major issue. Complaints from the general public and the Real Estate Industry brought this to the forefront. These issues were not unnoticed by a number of qualified home inspectors and working with CMHC they formed the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors (CAHPI) Over the next 4-5 years a group of dedicated individuals led by Bill Mullen from Sarnia Ontario worked tirelessly in conjunction with CMHC to develop a standard of education and experience for all of Canada. This set of standards makes it possible for any home inspector in Canada to attain what is known as the National Certificate Holder status.

The path to National Certification is quite clear for anyone who wants to become certified as a home and property inspector in Canada. A separate body was set up to oversee this Certification process. It is known as the National Certification Authority (NCA). The first step is the Candidate status. At this level the Candidate must complete 200 hours of accredited training and pass all examinations. Complete a minimum of 50 hours of field training and comply with the standards of practice and code of ethics of the organization. They must complete one year of practice as a home inspector. It is recommended, but not yet required that the candidate have some construction related experience, a trade ticket or a diploma in building sciences. Once they have attained that level then they can apply for their National Certificate. The first step is confirmation of having completed 150 paid home inspections. Next the inspector must pass two Test Inspections with Peer Review, know as the TIPR. These TIPR examinations must be 3 months apart. The TIPR is conducted using a home where the defects are already documented by NCA Certified Examiners before they inspect the home. Once the candidate completes these requirements they are presented with their National Certificate. For more information on this program go to <http://www.nch-anc.com/>.

Across Canada this program has received strong support from all the Provincial Organizations with the exception of Ontario where the development of this program has suffered from neglect and a lack of support from the organization that was expected to develop it. Consumers in Ontario have not had the benefit of being able to go to the NCA website and select a number of inspectors in their region and make their choice.

A week ago that all changed, the Professional Home & Property Inspectors of Ontario (PHPIO) came into existence. Led by a committee of former executive members from OAHl and other concerned home inspectors from across the Province these gentlemen came to the conclusion that a clear path to the NCH for all home inspectors in Ontario was past due. The initial response was considerable and the PHPIO office is now busy handling a backlog of member applications. PHPIO has one single objective, to open the door to every home inspector in Ontario to the path of National Certification. In time this will give every home buyer in Ontario the opportunity to hire a qualified home inspector who has attained the National Status. If you want more information about this organization or are interested in becoming a Canadian National Certificate Holder, go to PHPIO.ca and browse thru the web site.

From a personal perspective this is long overdue. The current process is fractured and splintered. While every educated professional is human and can make a mistake, there is a Canadian standard unto which electricians, mechanics and even engineers can be judged or verified. This should apply to the Home Inspection profession too. The consumer deserves to know that the truck that pulls up for their home inspection is an educated, trained and Canadian Certified Professional and not someone with a fancy truck and catchy slogans who will walk thru your prospective home with blinders on just to obtain the referral and collect his fee.