

National Home Inspector Certification Council

Looking Back at the CHIBO Report (Canadian Home Inspectors & Building Officials)

The **CHIBO Report** was officially released in 2005 to enhance the credibility and status of the building inspection industry, as well as to harmonize licensing, standards of performance and certification of both home and property inspectors and professional building officials across Canada. The following highlights represent some of the key certification elements of the “**National Certification Program**”. This report also provides some commentaries of how others view the “Program” to suit their needs.

Specific project objectives included:

- A high level comparative analysis of the current curriculum and training materials to determine their future use in the development of courses related to the National Occupational Standards for the ‘home and property inspector’ and ‘professional building official’ occupations
- The identification of training providers (private and public) with experience in certification training, and the capability and infrastructure to develop and deliver curriculum and training programs that meet the requirements of the National Occupational Standards. The list of training providers was *NOT* intended to be a comprehensive listing of all training providers, but rather to act as a starting point for the building inspection industry to determine which types of training institutions have the capabilities and the ‘appetite’ to provide the necessary certification training for building officials and home and property inspectors
- The identification and development of a national certification model for the professional building official and home and property inspector occupations
- The identification and development of a national accreditation model for the professional building official and home and property inspector occupations
- The development of a strategic framework for the roll-out of the certification and accreditation models for both occupations
- A framework or process for building officials and home and property inspectors to conduct a complete program review of their existing certification programs against the tasks listed in the National Occupational Standard (NOS) for each occupation

The national certification and accreditation model for home and property inspectors is (*now was*) intended to comply reasonably closely with CAN-P-9 criteria as published by the Standards Council of Canada. This does not guarantee or ensure that the model is in complete compliance with CAN-P-9 criteria.

The competency requirements for home and property inspectors are defined in the National Occupational Standard (NOS). The key to any successful certification program is the ability to certify individuals who meet the competence standard for their occupation.

Commentary - In reality the NOS is only one part of determining competency. What about other factors including assessments of practical onsite inspection skills, technical knowledge and communications, since reporting is a basic method required to give advice and report to a client about the house and conditions.

Background Review: To determine where an individual fits within the national certification program, an assessment process called a ‘background review’ is used. Background review is the process that the certification council uses to determine if an individual should be within program, and if so, at what stage.

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Provincial Certification: Provincial associations are free to set standards for provincial certification at any competence level they choose – either higher or the same as the competence levels required.

Commentary - However, setting the lower raises the question of “risk” on many different levels and impacting consumers regarding professional competence.

Mentoring: Individuals who have entered into the national certification program as ‘Candidates’ would benefit from assistance or guidance in working through the certification program.

Commentary – Mentoring is certainly beneficial to provide a form of feedback to candidates. But unless there is a uniform standard method and process in place, it leaves the exact quality and process with too many unknowns.

Technical Training: The National Occupational Standard (NOS) for home and property inspectors requires practitioners to be skilled in diagnosing the condition of buildings based on a visual inspection. The work has a forensic nature, in that visible clues are used to determine the condition of a building and its systems, as well as determining the possible causes of problems or discrepancies. This work requires that an individual have a sound education in building science (as recommended in general background), as well as training pertaining to inspection and diagnostic techniques.

Courses and programs must be mapped or linked to specific tasks in the NOS. The linkages may be apparent - for example, a program may have an obvious link to an NOS element.

To ensure that individuals wishing to enter national certification program at the ‘Candidate’ stage had sufficient technical training, the CHIBO Working Committee included a training requirement. Prior to becoming a ‘Candidate’, an individual must complete a number of courses specific to the home and property inspection occupation:

- Complete a **minimum of 200 hours of training** courses covering ALL aspects of home and property inspection from an accredited training institution. The courses should cover all elements of the National Occupational Standard as developed for home and property inspectors
- Complete a **minimum of 50 hours of practical field training** (in addition to the training courses mentioned in the previous point) covering all elements of Home and Property Inspection, including supervised ‘practice’ home inspections. The courses may include a minimum of 50 hours of field training covering all aspects of Home and Property Inspection
- Training courses must be accredited by the National Certification Council
- All training courses **must include an exam**, which must be passed

On becoming a ‘Candidate’, an individual must also complete and pass one test inspection with peer review. The ‘test inspection with peer review’ is a method for verifying the competence of a home and property inspector. A test inspection consists of the following steps:

- The individual **undergoing test inspection** inspects a house with known defects
- The individual **prepares a Written Report and makes a Verbal Presentation** on noted defects to a panel of ‘National Certificate Holder’ home and property inspectors
- The panel evaluates and grades the report and presentation for **compliance with standards of practice, competencies as defined in the NOS, and code of ethics**

The ‘National Certificate Holder’ is the highest stage in the National Certification Program. In order to become ‘National Certificate Holder’, an individual must meet the requirements for individuals at this

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stage as defined in the certification program. Individual's wanting to become 'National Certificate Holders' must have the following practical experience:

- Perform inspections as a 'Candidate' for a minimum of ONE year. Home and property inspectors who have practiced for more than one year (but not while holding 'Candidate' status) may be exempt from this requirement
- Perform a **minimum of 150 paid Home and Property Inspections** as a 'Candidate', or a minimum of 150 paid inspections using an inspection system that complies with a national Standard of Practice
- Complete and **pass a minimum of two test inspections with peer review**. Test inspections with peer review must be at least three months apart

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Accreditation: Accreditation is the process a certification body uses to determine whether the courses or programs offered by a training provider meet some or all of the skill and knowledge requirements of a NOS. It also involves an assessment of a provider's ability to provide a consistent standard of training.

Bottom Line: *Well even to this date (February 24th, 2022) there may have been a bit of enhancement (aka: improvement). However, from a personal POV, I question the credibility and status of more specifically the home inspection industry. The **fragmentation within the "profession"**, and the lack of a unified front for the profession, are evident to all. As far as the ability to harmonize licensing at this point the government has only regulated home inspections in two provinces – BC and Alberta, even the proposed licensing in Ontario appears to be dissimilar.*

*On the **"standards of performance and certification"** of home and property inspectors it appears that some home associations survive by lower certification standards rather than improving the certification requirement benchmark. As one example what was once a "reasonable standard" to gain a NCH™ (National Certificate Holder) status has now become a benchmark lower than the original NCH earned by approximately 300 inspectors back in 2010. One of the key missing assessment elements is the independent field testing and the communication skills provided by the TIPR process.*

Do consumers in Canada requiring a home inspection service deserve better?** When it comes to performance and competency the NHICC certainly believes it is absolutely necessary. Particularly when in our experience testing data indicates that almost 20% have failed the TIPR test and almost 10% have failed the technical content in the National Occupational based exam. **Could that be your inspector?

***What remains lacking** is a focusing of that passion toward a **common goal** which can be shared by all members of the "profession" throughout the country. The NHICC believes that **unifying the profession** around common goals is desired not only by members of the "profession", but also by a host of stakeholders in the Canadian housing and financing community.*

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