

National Home Inspector Certification Council

Certification and Industry Updates June 2016

Letter from the NHICC Directors

Greetings – 2015 was another really busy year that has rolled by quickly. There have been policies reviewed and updated and lots of concentration particularly regarding the CSA A770 home inspection standard development. There have been questions raised in some provinces about certifications and right to practice, and about the future of the profession.

Additionally, the results of the NHICC DACUM provided the industry with a new updated National Occupational Standard, which was released in November of 2014. We have also been dealing with new requirements set out by Consumer Protection BC, and perhaps of more serious consequence, the changes that will be put in place as a result of BC Ministers review of Home Inspection Licensing. Finally, most inspectors should be well aware of a new CSA Home Inspection Standard is on the horizon that can potentially impact most every Canadian home inspector in the very near future, particularly if it is mandated by government regulation.

Council News

The NHICC successfully completed a transition to conform to the latest requirements for Canadian Non-Profit Corporations. Several policy items have made their way through Council reflecting revisions to our governance model. The NHICC successfully completed the transition to the latest NFP Act.

A few other noteworthy changes included:

- A section updated in the National Exam related to Professional Practices & Ethics
- Minor changes to the ASHI Standards of Practice related to inspecting built-in appliances
- Monthly reporting by the Chair of Professional Practices as mandated by BC Consumer Protection
- Ongoing discussions regarding home inspector licensing in Ontario
- Review with the Minister of Housing in BC regarding recent “licensing” changes

CSA Standard A770

As we now know the CSA Standard A770 was publicly released on March 2016. The “Standard” is a document that is available for purchase, however we still maintain that home inspectors should adhere to the formally recognized standard until such time that the CSA Standard becomes mandated.

For a large part the CSA Standard is very similar in scope as the ASHI Standard of Practice.

BC Home Inspection Licensing Review

It has come to our attention that the NHICC testing was

Licensing in Ontario

Having attended a meeting in May 2015 with the Ontario Ministry of Consumer Relations, it appears that licensing could be tabled as early as spring of 2016. Unfortunately since then, things have gotten pretty quiet. We will keep you informed of any more developments.

A Few Questions and Answers

The question of “certification” opposed to “scope of practice” was raised – in other words, can an inspector practice in an area where they are qualified to do so even if they don’t have a specific certification?

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As one example unlike home inspection, commercial inspections (aka: Building Condition Assessment) has no licensing requirement. The contention also refers to taking on work for which members have the required skills, training and competency rather than certification. **Professional certification, trade certification, or professional designation**, often is referred to simply as **certification** or **qualification**. So the debate remains - is a designation earned by a person to assure the required ability to perform a job or task?

Many certifications are used with support letters indicating an earned privilege from an oversight professional body acting to safeguard the public interest.

Another question includes the ethical consideration of inspector-client relations – particularly focused on “call backs”. The NHICC takes all ethical complaints seriously; however there seems to times when the client may contact the NHICC indicating that the inspector has not complied. BC Consumer Protection now requires that all recognized associations with respect to “Professional Practices” must report monthly to ensure an open dialogue on consumer related complaints.

Updates on Renewals, Etc.

On the topic of NHICC fees and renewals – the registrant member numbers have decreased slightly with respect to senior inspectors retiring from the industry, as well as the impact of continuing economic conditions in some regions. Another common comment we receive is in respect to the shortfall of the number of home inspections in regions where a home inspection condition is waived due to bidding wars on a property. Nevertheless on a bright side the number of prospects of potential new members seems to be on the upswing in areas such as British Columbia and the Atlantic region.

The other good news is the decision to maintain the current fees structure with no increases in costs. This can largely be achieved by switching our QuickBooks merchant services to PayPal for Non-Profits which provides a significant cost savings in processing credit based transactions, as well as a few administrative changes in the office space rental cost.

We will also be offering a few more TIPR's in the early spring of 2016. So for those ready and willing to take on that challenge, the examiners look forward to testing your skills.

Claude Lawrenson