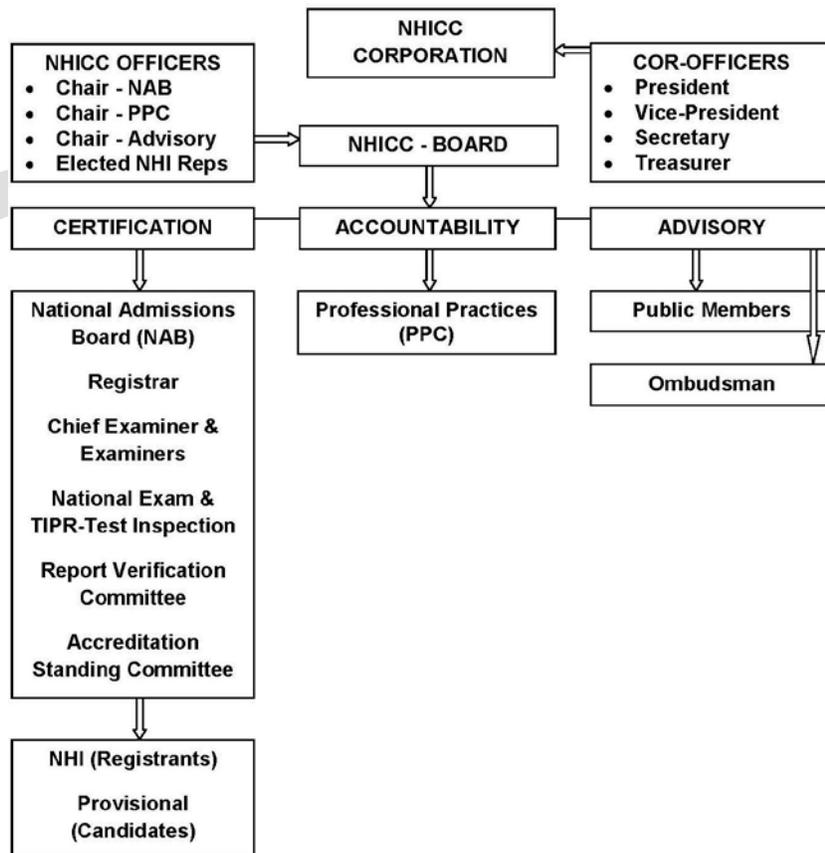


National Home Inspector Certification Council

Policy & Procedures Manual



GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



INTRODUCTION

The National Home Inspector Certification Council (NHICC) accreditation is an objective and reliable verification. The NHICC accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of individual home inspectors and organizations programs, administrative functions and service delivery practices. All are measured against the 'National Certification Program' and 'National Occupational Standards' for the Canadian Home Inspection profession and best practices. These standards emphasize services that are accessible, appropriate, coordinated, competent, evidence-based, individualized, outcomes-oriented, respectful of individual rights, and provides collaboration. As such, consumers, board members, regulators and registrants of the NHICC can have confidence in the credibility, integrity and achievement of the organization or program.

Under licensing agreements, the NHICC holds administrative privileges to Canada's 'National Certification Program' and 'National Occupational Standards' for the home inspection profession. To achieve NHICC certification or accreditation, an individual, organization or program first provides written evidence of compliance with the applicable standards. Thereafter, a group of industry based volunteers (reviewers) confirms adherence to these standards during review, and interviews with the organization's trustees, and applicants. Based on their findings, the NHICC's National Admissions Board then determines whether an individual, organization or program has successfully met the criteria for validation for certification.

The Policy and Procedures Manual is the instruction manual necessary to allow the National Home Inspector Certification Council (NHICC) to operate on a daily basis.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the NHICC policy and procedures manual is to assure a uniform and consistent guide for all to undertake their duties and obligations for the operation of the National Certification Program. From time to time, the governance body may make changes to the policies, at which point the document will be taken through the normal approval procedure, and revised and reissued with such amendments.

Each policy in this document is expected to be consistent with the law, the articles of incorporation, and the bylaws, all of which have precedence over these policies. The policy sections provide guidance on how the NHICC will operate on a daily bases.

The purpose of procedures that are noted provides consistency of operation over time and through its governance. The Procedure sections are the systems that the NHICC Board and committees have developed to handle specific Policies passed by the Board.

The manual is organized in accordance with the NHICC structure. Each Committee is charged annually to review a specific section of the Policy and Procedures Manual to assure that the Policies and Procedures are current with the NHICC's Goals and Practices, as well as determine if sections need to be changed by current Industry

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conditions.

Policy and Procedure main titles and subcategories are listed in the Table of Contents.

POLICY DEFINITION:

Policies are guides for mandatory actions and are intended to operate as extensions to the administration. Deviation or changes from policies requires the presentation of a motion by the Board of Directors and an approving vote.

PROCEDURES DEFINITION:

Procedures provide explanation of policies and are intended to direct chairs, volunteers, leadership, administrators and the registrants in carrying out the policies to which they refer.

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CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

OVERVIEW

Certifying individual home inspectors requires policies regarding all areas of the industry, including but not limited to, examination eligibility requirements, submission of applications, registering and administering examinations, examination development, examination scoring, reporting of results, testing candidates with disabilities, and recertification requirements.

A “Background Review” (Prior Learning Assessment) process is used by the NHICC to determine the appropriate stage for an individual. Any individual who wants to be considered at a particular stage must apply to the NHICC and present their background documentation of their personal background. Background review criteria are based on the tasks defined in the National Occupational Standard for home and property inspectors.

The development of the National Occupational Standard for home and property inspectors: “CMHC research has shown that currently there are a number of private inspection associations and organizations across the country each with different inspection standards and levels of qualifications. The difference in standards for certifying private inspectors in Canada has caused confusion in the minds of consumers as well as within other sectors of the housing industry. Also indicated in the research, is the considerable variation in the availability and quality of the home inspection service offered across Canada, with large regional differences. At the time of the research, the majority of practitioners appeared not to belong to any professional inspection association or a qualified private firm. As a result, the consumer and the housing sector could not be assured of a minimum standard of private inspection services.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of CMHC’s national initiative were:

- To elevate the status of the Canadian home and building inspection profession in the minds of the consumer, home inspectors, building officials, government and key stakeholders across Canada.
- To establish minimum national occupational standards, code of ethics and criteria for inspector certification so that the general public can have confidence that all certified inspectors meet the requirements of the national certification process.
- To ensure that inspections comply with the same performance standard throughout Canada.
- To approve, support and coordinate provincial/regional accrediting bodies to administer, certify and provide disciplinary control of private-sector home inspectors.

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The Canadian Home Inspection and Building Officials (CHIBO) Steering Committee for National Occupational Standards was first formed and convened in April, 2000 with a mandate to develop uniform national occupational standards for those employed as home inspectors and municipal building officials.”

Professional standards associated with occupational testing are delineated primarily in to these resource documents – The NHICC Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and the National Occupational Standards.

The strategies to achieve and maintain professional standards are based on attaining compliance with ISO 17024 - General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons.

32.0: CERTIFICATION & CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

32.0.1: The National Admissions Board shall independently administer the NHICC National Certification Program and have essential authority over all essential certification program decisions.

32.0.2: The National Admissions Board shall adopt an operating policy subject to the oversight of NHICC Board of Directors.

32.0.3: The National Admissions Board shall be part of the NHICC overall operating budget.

32.0.4: The National Admissions Board shall consist of at least four (4) National Home Inspector (NHI) registrants serving a staggered two year term with a term limit of two terms and one public member.

32.0.5: No member of the National Certification Standing Committee may serve on the National Admissions Board.

32.0.6: Each year two (2) National Home Inspector (NHI) registrants will be nominated by the Nomination Committee and elected by secret ballot of the registrants in a manner stated regarding – Nomination Committee.

32.0.7: Each year one (1) National Home Inspector (NHI) registrant will be appointed by the National Admissions Board.

32.0.8: One public member shall be appointed for a two (2) year term to invigilate the work of the National Admissions Board.

32.0.9: Certification requirements for registrants to attain National Home Inspector (NHI) and/or Candidate status are available to individuals involved in or associated with the home and property inspection profession within Canada.

32.0.10: Individuals of each class of national certification recognition shall be entitled

to the rights and privileges of that class, as specified by the NHICC, as long as those individuals comply with these policies and procedures and other applicable requirements, including requisite financial obligations.

32.0.11: The certification requirements are subject to review and change from time to time as outlined in this document noting specific dates and specific eligibility requirements. This is entitled Appendix Certification requirements to become a National Home Inspector (NHI) and Certification requirements to become a Candidate.

33.0: NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

33.0.1: The key to any successful certification program is the ability to certify individuals who meet the competence standard for their occupation. A certification model is only as good as the certification body's ability to certify individuals against the National Occupational Standards for Home and Property Inspectors.

33.0.2: The governance and structural elements of the models are based on criteria defined in the CAN-P-9 (ISO) Standard 'Criteria for Accreditation of Personnel Certification Bodies'. The CAN-P-9 Standard is published by the Standards Council of Canada, and is based on the international ISO standard ISO/IEC 17024.

33.0.3: Individuals who are within the National Certification Program will be at one of two stages – 'Candidate' or 'National Home Inspector' (NHI). The 'Candidate' stage is for individuals who have the appropriate training and who have displayed the required degree of competence to be home and property inspectors but lack experience to obtain certification. The 'National Home Inspector' (NHI) stage is for individuals who have the appropriate training, experience and competence.

33.0.4: A 'Background Review' process will be used by the National Admissions Board to determine the appropriate stage for each individual. Any individual who wants to be considered for either stage would apply to the National Admissions Board and present their personal background. Background review criteria are based on the tasks defined in the National Occupational Standard for home and property inspectors.

33.0.5: 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 National Admissions Board uses to determine if an individual should be within program, and if so, at what stage. An individual, who wants to be considered for any stage, would apply to the NHICC and present their personal background. An individual's personal background would be presented through a structured application form completed by the individual, which may be supplemented if necessary through an interview.

33.0.6: NHICC certification criteria, does not allow decisions on certification to be subcontracted. However, other formally recognized home inspection organizations could provide the National Admissions Board with recommendations as to whether specific individuals meet the background requirements of the National Certification Program.

34.0: AUTHORITY TO CERTIFY

34.0.1: The National Admissions Board will be empowered with the authority to recommend individuals as being competent to practice or work within the home and property inspection occupation.

34.0.2: The NHICC Registrar keeps track of the appropriate stage at which each applicant, candidate or certificate holder is approved.

34.0.3: An applicant is recognized as an individual that has applied for background review by the NHICC National Admissions Board. Such an individual has no formal recognition, but upon completion of the application review will receive written confirmation of their placement status.

35.0: CERTIFICATION STAGES

35.0.1: The Candidate stage acts as an entry point for individuals who have received training as home and property inspectors into the National Certification Program. The Candidate stage also provides the national certification body with a mechanism to oversee the activities of individuals who are already working in or interested in working in the home and property inspection occupation.

35.0.2: Individuals who have entered into the National Certification Program as Candidates would benefit from assistance or guidance in working through the certification program. Current National Home Inspectors may act as mentors.

35.0.3: National Home Inspector (NHI) stage is the highest stage in the National Certification Program. In order to become a National Home Inspector (NHI), an individual must meet all of the requirements for individuals at this stage as defined in the certification program.

35.0.4: Individual's wanting to become National Home Inspector's (NHI) must have the following practical experience:

- a) Perform inspections as a Candidate for a minimum of one (1) 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
- b) Complete and pass a Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics Exam

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- c) 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
- d) Complete and pass a minimum of one (1) Test Inspection with Peer Review.

36.0: OBLIGATIONS OF REGISTRANTS

36.0.1: All registrants shall comply with the following requirements:

- a) Mandatory compliance with the Standards of Practice. The Standards of Practice shall be the latest version of the provincial Standards of Practice in which the inspector practices.
- b) Mandatory compliance with the insurance requirements.
- c) Mandatory compliance with the Code of Conduct (Ethics), Professional Practice and Conflict of Interest Guidelines, as set out in the Bylaws, Policy & Procedures and are subject to disciplinary procedures.
- d) Maintain annual certification requirements and fees and status in good standing.
- e) Completion of any Mandatory Upgrading Requirements and Continuing Education Requirements, except for Applicants or Retired NHI's.
- f) In the event of written complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved, the registrant may be suspended from inferring any affiliation with the NHICC, including participation in education programs, or the completion of the registrant qualification process.
- g) Act in good faith to all, uphold the integrity and reputation of the profession, respond promptly to complaints.
- h) Always provide a written contract to the client and a written or printed report of the system(s) that were inspected.

36.0.2: Registrants are required to exercise the practices in the profession with competence and diligence, upholding their duty of care to their client and also to the best interest of the NHICC.

37.0: NATIONAL EXAMS, TEST INSPECTIONS & RETAKES

37.0.1: Licensing and regulation requires evidence that all home inspectors seeking certification must complete a proctored exam specific to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. An exam is provided by the NHICC and the

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applicant/candidate must provide an acceptable exam proctor to complete the exam.

37.0.2: The National Occupational Standards performance standards identifies the skill sets and provides the background to establish a testing process to allow home and property inspectors to be legitimately certified as competent and qualified professionals.

37.0.3: The Test Inspection and Peer Review (**TIPR**) process and the National Exam for Home Inspectors are open to all qualifying home inspectors in Canada. Its purpose is to test, validate and improve inspection and communication skills and assure confidence in the essential services provided to consumers. The peer review must be conducted by an individual other than the one involved in the supervision and practical training process.

37.0.4: Home inspectors seeking National Home Inspector (NHI) recognition are required to complete the National Exam and fulfill the Test Inspection with Peer Review requirements in order to advance in the National Certification Program. The acceptable minimum standard for passing any examination or final grade in any subject is seventy (70) percent. The pass grade for the TIPR is eighty (80%).

37.0.5: All exam records are kept on file for a period of (1) one year in paper format, and stored in an electronic database thereafter. Digital copies must be password protected. Digital records must be backed up weekly on an external portable hard drive.

37.0.6: Test Inspection with Peer Review exams must be conducted under the supervision of an NHICC approved Examiner.

37.0.7: The National Exam must be conducted under the direct supervision of an NHICC approved "proctor" and/or NHICC approved Examiner.

37.0.8: An exam retake (National Exam or Test Inspection with Peer Review) can be arranged after a 60 day waiting period, based on the date of completion of the last exam. A fee is assessed for a Test Inspection with Peer Review retake. Typically the TIPR review is allotted up to a maximum of 60 days for full completion review.

38.0: MENTORING/SUPERVISED FIELD WORK

OVERVIEW

The mentor program was developed with the purpose of assisting applicants and candidates in the NHICC National Certification Program to obtain guidance and practical onsite home inspection experience by those qualified home inspectors recognized as meeting the detailed requirements listed below to take part in this program as mentors.

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All membership applicants are required to provide proof of either 10 supervised home inspections, 50 hours of supervised practical training or an acceptable combination of both.

MENTOR DEFINED: A mentor is defined by the National Certification Program as “a trusted counselor, teacher or expert”. Mentors share their experiences and their knowledge regarding the occupational standards, experience and professionalism to improve a (mentee’s) candidate’s competence and confidence in completing a home inspection and inspection report.

MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

38.0.1: The mentor inspector must meet all of the following requirements:

- a) Be a National Home Inspector (NHI) in good standing in the National Certification Program or be pre-approved by the National Admissions Board
- b) Have completed a minimum of 5 years of home inspection experience/ and/or minimum of 750 fee paid home inspections
- c) Must be able to objectively assess and provide feedback to others
- d) Mentors must be – trustworthy, nurturing, have integrity, confidential, positive
- e) Must apply and be pre-approved by the National Admissions Board
- f) Must complete the mentoring obligations as listed below in this document

MENTORING OBLIGATIONS

38.0.2: The mentor inspector must complete the following obligations:

- a) Provide a letter or letters of reference attesting to the number of mentored inspections and/or hours completed by the candidate
- b) Provide the address of the home(s) inspected in the letter(s) of reference attestation
- c) Attest and attach one completed Parallel Inspection Standards Compliance Checklist for each and every candidate
- d) The mentoring fee must be reasonable and must not exceed \$100 for a home inspection

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- e) The supervised field work must be completed under the direct supervision and management of the qualified mentor
- f) Either the mentor or the candidate inspector may provide the inspection venues. These do not have to be paid inspections, mock inspections may be used.

CANDIDATES OBLIGATIONS

38.0.3: The candidate inspector must complete the following obligations:

- a) Act with professional courtesy and respect at all times to the mentor and property owners
- b) Follow the rules of conduct and behavior required by the mentor
- c) Must adhere to all safety standards at all times. Additionally, the candidate will be personally responsible for any damages or injury the candidate causes at the inspection site.
- d) Must complete home inspection reports that meet the current ASHI Standards of Practice. Reports deemed to be not in compliance with the Standards of Practice will not count for the final 70% of the required 50 hours or at least 10 houses inspected and reviewed under guidance of their mentor
- e) Mandatory submission of two (2) home inspection reports completed by the candidate for audit and review by the NHICC Report Verification Committee.

39.0: MATERIALS AVAILABLE

39.0.1: ASHI Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics – A copy of this may be obtained from the ASHI and/or NHICC website. Carefully review the entire document, taking special care to read and understand the Glossary of Terms.

39.0.2: Supervised Field Work Compliance Checklist – A copy is available from the National Home Inspector Certification Council's website. Note this is the same form used to validate the Test Inspection with Peer Review home inspection report.

39.0.3 National Occupational Standards – A current copy of the standards are available on the NHICC website.

40.0: MENTOR CREDITS

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40.0.1: Supervised field work qualifies for candidates as credit toward the required number of inspections related to onsite inspection and field training hours towards field inspection requirements.

40.0.2: Supervised field work qualifies for 1 CEC (Continuing Education Credit) per inspection for the National Home Inspector (NHI) supervising the inspection. A maximum of 10 CECs per year may be obtained by mentoring.

40.0.3: A mentor fee is negotiated between the National Home Inspector (NHI) and the candidate for this service.

40.0.4: A copy of the Supervised Field Work Standards Compliance Checklist is available on the NHICC website.

41.0: REGISTRANT RENEWALS & RECERTIFICATION

41.0.1: The NHICC requires the annual renewal of National Home Inspector (NHI) certification. Attesting to the continued compliance with the NHICC Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and Provincial Regulations is part of this process. Every year, the candidate must document compliance with the Continuing Education Requirements as described.

NHICC staff shall immediately begin a random audit based upon a percentage of submissions to verify Continuing Education Credit totals claimed by Members on renewal applications. If a member's submitted documentation does not verify the number of CE's claimed, the member will be notified and placed on Administrative Suspension until the deficiency is made up.

41.0.2: In addition, the NHICC determined that the rapid change in technology and required knowledge of materials and building systems with the home inspection industry warrants a relatively short continuing education cycle. The current recertification policy was adopted 2006. Using input obtained as part of the 2001 National Occupational Standards and lastly updated in 2008, the NHICC determined that approximately every 5 years was an appropriate cycle, and a maximum of every year candidates must document a minimum of 20 continuing education credits per year deemed acceptable as defined in the CEC renewal requirements.

41.0.3: Registrant Renewal Forms & Continuing Education Credit claims for renewal of NHICC National Home Inspectors (NHI) will be available on the NHICC website.

41.0.4: Dues must be paid by the renewal date, or as amended from time to time by the National Certification Council, in order to maintain a registrant in good standing.

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41.0.5: Registrants who have not submitted a renewal application within 30 days of renewal date will be sent a reminder by registered letter and suspended status.

41.0.6: Registrants who do not submit a renewal application within 60 days of renewal date will be removed from the NHICC registry and database. They will be assessed a reinstatement fee should they reapply within the current renewal year. The reinstatement fee will be determined by the National Certification Council.

41.0.7: All outstanding fees must be paid in full, together with the reinstatement fee, before a previous registrant will be re-enrolled.

41.0.8: Upon application in writing to the National Certification Council, this provision may be altered or waived, in cases of extraordinary circumstance.

41.0.9: All other requirements of registrants including completing all required Continuing Education Credits submissions and outstanding accounts with NHICC, as noted on the application form, must also be satisfied.

41.0.10: All registrants will be given 15 days grace to pay outstanding debts and service charges before being a deemed a registrant not in good standing.

41.0.11: A registrant that has retired from home/property inspection and earned the occupational title 'National Home Inspector' (NHI) may use the title "National Home Inspector (NHI Retired)", but may not vote in elections. A retired National Home Inspector may serve on a committee but not on the National Certification Council.

41.0.12: Any new NHI credential issued to a National Home Inspector within 90 days of the renewal date will be exempt from payment of the renewal fee.

41.0.13: A copy of a current home inspection report that meets the Standards of Practice must be submitted for review on renewal every 5 years. The rationale is to assure individual compliance with compliance with the current Standards of Practice.

41.0.14: Any member suspended for a period of time shall be able to apply to reinstate his Membership at the termination of the suspension period.

41.0.15: Any individual whose certification has lapsed for up to two years for reasons other than NHICCI discipline may reinstate his or her membership provided that:

- a. All back and current dues and fees are paid;
- b. Proof of required CE's during the absence (20 CE's per year);
- c. There have been no disciplinary actions or complaints about him or her during the absence

41.0.16: Those whose certification has lapsed for more than two years must reapply for certification under the existing application process except that any waiting period will be waived.

42.0: MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

42.0.1 In order to ensure the competence of Candidate and National Home Inspectors (NHI), the National Certification Program includes a maintenance requirement. Maintenance activities could include any and all of the following:

- a) Continued industry involvement
- b) Courses - Attendance at courses on technical and non-technical subjects related to home and property inspection
- c) Continued professional development
- d) Association membership
- e) Meeting attendance, etc.
- f) Continued membership in good standing of a provincial association of home and property inspectors
- g) Service to a provincial and/or national association of home and property inspectors
- h) Periodic successful completion of test inspections with peer review recertification and/or national exam

43.0: CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to: establish maintenance and retention criteria recognizing the importance of continuing education for practicing professionals; and to enhance the professional credibility in the home/property inspection sector. The NHICC Continuing Education Requirements (CEC) states that “CEC provides a mechanism for certificants to fulfill their responsibility to maintain competence and reduce the potential for professional obsolescence.”

43.0.1: All registrants are required to satisfy the CEC requirements as a condition of continuing education. The CEC requirements are intended to enhance the continued competence of registrants. The mandatory minimum number of Continuing Education Credits are 20 (twenty) contact hours per year.

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43.0.2: Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all National Home Inspectors (NHI). Candidate registrants are encouraged to participate in all relevant continuing education and to keep documents/records of their progress.

43.0.3: The Continuing Education Credits form, along with the annual maintenance fee will be sent to National Home Inspectors (NHI) no later than June 1st of each year.

43.0.4: National Home Inspectors (NHI) must return their payment along with the completed CEC form within 30 days. CECs must be submitted at the same time as annual maintenance fee (due by July 1st every year) following the first year of association within the National Home Inspector Certification Council.

43.0.5: Fees received after July 15th will be assessed a \$50.00 late charge assessment.

43.0.6: Every National Home Inspector (NHI) is required to report and agree to complete the specified mandatory minimum of 20 Continuing Education Credits (CEC's) every year in order to maintain their registrant status. Copies of education credit documents must accompany the renewal application in order to verify the CEC's claimed. The type of proof required is noted on the Continuing Education Credit form.

43.0.7: Failure to comply with articles above will result in suspension of the National Home Inspector (NHI) designation, particularly where such requirements are mandated as a condition of provincial licensing and/or regulation.

43.0.8: Failure to complete the required Continuing Education renewal credits over two consecutive renewal years will result in the condition for a re-application.

43.0.9: While all CEC's are due and reflect the continuing of the year prior to the July 1st renewal date, extension may be considered for extraordinary circumstances. Requests for extensions must be made in writing at the time of renewal and with the CEC submissions and forwarded to the NHICC Registrar.

44.0: INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

44.0.1: The NHICC will make available Directors and Officers insurance at its expense for the purposes of conducting NHICC business work associated with its "directors and officers".

44.0.2: Where required by law, association membership or by regulation and/or license, such registrants that practice must fully comply with the specified insurance requirements.

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44.0.3: All other practicing inspectors are required to provide written disclosure to each and every client that they do not carry E & O insurance coverage for his/her inspections.

44.0.4: Where insurance coverage (example E&O Errors and Omission) is deemed mandatory, and/or required by law and/or by licensure or regulation the National Home Inspector (NHI) must conduct business under such a provision and provide a copy of their insurance policy to the NHICC upon renewal for record purpose.

44.0.5: Where insurance coverage (example E&O Errors and Omission) is deemed mandatory, and/or required by law and/or by licensure or regulation the National Home Inspector (NHI) must notify the NHICC in writing regarding cancellation or non-renewal of insurance.

45.0: REINSTATEMENT OF STATUS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide means for a NHICC National Home Inspector (NHI) to apply for reinstatement within a maximum 1-year lapse in registrant, registration fees.

45.0.1: Former National Home Inspectors (NHI) who have maintained continuous service for a minimum of one year may apply for reinstatement under the following guideline: after two years of documented official leave accepted by National Certification Council.

45.0.2: Former National Home Inspectors (NHI) granted reinstatement would not be required to re-qualify for reinstatement by retaking the required Test Inspections with Peer Review or completing the required number of inspections providing they have been inactive for less than two years.

45.0.3: The National Certification Council shall judge each reinstatement application on merit or extenuating circumstance documented by the former National Home Inspector (NHI) and may approve or deny the Request for Reinstatement as they reason appropriate.

45.0.4: All reinstatement applications and supporting documents will be treated as private and confidential.

45.0.5: Registrants requesting reinstatement must pay the current NHICC National Home Inspector (NHI) reinstatement fee.