

NHICC

LETTER FROM THE NHICC DIRECTORS

Greetings – 2015 was another really busy year that has rolled by quickly. Now we are already half way into 2016. About a year ago policies were reviewed and updated and lots of concentrated time was focused particularly regarding changes to the CSA A770 home inspection standard development. There have been questions raised in some provinces about certifications and right to practice, and also about the future of the profession.

Additionally, the final outcomes 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 or at least need to be well aware of the new CSA Home Inspection Standard that was released that can potentially impact most every Canadian home inspector in the very near future, particularly if it is mandated by government regulation. We offer more a bit later in this release.

Council News

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

A few other noteworthy changes and events included:

- A portion updated in the National Exam related to Professional Practices & Ethics
- Minor changes to the ASHI Standards of Practice related to inspecting built-in appliances
- Participation in the Ontario MCS Home Inspector Licensing panel
- Participation in the Canadian Home Inspector Alliance discussions
- Compliance with mandatory reporting monthly by the Chair of Professional Practices as mandated by BC Consumer Protection
- Participation in the CSA Home Inspection Standard as an observer representative
- Ongoing discussions at a number of levels regarding home inspector licensing in Ontario
- Review with the Minister of Housing in BC regarding recent “licensing” changes
- Current discussions with HRSDC regarding Employment and Social Development Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program currently conducting research on housing inspections in Canada (this can potentially help generate additional inspection services nationally)

CSA Standard A770

As we now know the CSA Standard A770 was publicly released in March 2016. Their version of “Home Inspection Standard” is a document that is available for purchase through the CSA website. However as a precaution we still maintain that home inspectors should adhere to the formally recognized industry standard until such time that the CSA Standard becomes mandated.

Certification Council

A number of inspectors that have reviewed the CSA Standard believe that for a large part the CSA Standard is very similar in scope with the latest version of the ASHI Standard of Practice.

BC Home Inspection Licensing Review

It has come to our attention that the NHICC testing was overlooked in the BC licensing review process. We have expressed our concerns to both BC Consumer Protection as well as the Ministry of Housing. Our major concern is the potential impact it can have on a number of our BC applicants and candidates.

Communications indicate *“The process to review and make changes to the regulation is a government process, which government led and Consumer Protection BC participated in. I cannot speak to the government’s process, and you would have to contact them for details. Having said that it is my understanding that they did approach the NHICC for participation in the process, and did not intend to exclude your examination. The exclusion of your examination was likely an oversight.”*

We currently await their response.

Home Inspector Licensing in Ontario

Having attended a meeting in May 2015 with the Ontario Ministry of Consumer Relations, it appears that licensing could be in place as early as fall of 2016. A private members Bill has made it past 2nd Reading and awaits final review by Committee. Unfortunately since then, things have gotten pretty quiet. We will keep you informed of any more developments.

A Few Questions and Answers

Certification - 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?

As one example unlike home inspection, commercial inspections (aka: Building Condition Assessment) has no licensing requirement. However to properly perform BCA’s requires specific technical expertise. 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 - does a person to assure the required ability to perform a job or task earn a designation?

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

Call Backs - 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.

The NHICC also feels obliged to pass along any complaint to the inspectors respective association where the inspector is not certified under the NHICC.

Certification Council

Status – The NHICC is registered as a not-for-profit Federal Corporation. Our prime focus is maintaining a fair and nationally recognized status as an independent home inspector certification body. Thus we do not provide the benefits or education that are often expected by members of other home inspection associations. The advantage is the NHICC can offer not just an independent review for certification, but also a lower cost for gaining and maintaining certification as a home inspector in Canada.

The NHICC also maintains membership with **ICE the Institute of Credentialing Excellence**, which maintains clear separation between the certification and education process. We cannot find any other type of home inspector certification other than ASHI (American Society of Home Inspectors) that maintains clear separation between the education and certification process.

Updates, Renewals, Etc.

“State of Growth” - On the topic of NHICC fees and renewals – the registrant member numbers have decreased slightly with particular 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. We view this as a dangerous and risky condition that fails to protect consumers. Nevertheless on a brighter 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, which basically offsets any loss in numbers.

“Renewal Fees” - 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. So we look forward and thank you for your patience in working through this change. So we encourage you to consider making electronic payments online on our payment webpage - <http://www.nationalhomeinspector.org/payment.htm>

On another note renewals will now only be offered for a 1-year period.

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

“Volunteers” - Additionally, the NHICC Directorship, the Certification Council and its various committees is comprised of volunteers. We kindly ask that you consider the opportunity help serve in some capacity such as Professional Practices, Report Review, and Admissions. Certainly not to take lightly, the opportunity to serve as a “Mentor” is another path to help train newbies, as well as gain “continuing education credits”.

“Operation Deadwood” – Over the next few months the office administration team will be reviewing the certification list and updating to assure the records reflects current “certificate holders, candidates and applicants”. Persons found in arrears will be removed from the “register” and “certificates” will be deemed as invalidated.

“Retesting” – The NHICC was prepared to start retesting this year for those “certificate holders” that have reached the 5-year time frame. Our initial research and feedback received indicated concerns with respect to how changes in licensing, particularly in Ontario, as well as BC, and the potential for licensing how licensing requirements will impact those home inspectors. The NHICC feels that the TIPR renewals would be best postponed for the next year, and re-evaluated later this year.

Certification Council

“Are “U” Up-to Date?” – Over the past year we have had a number of issues in trying to contact a few home inspectors regarding scheduling TIPR’s. We ask that you please remember to provide us of any update or changes such as your best point of contact – email, etc.

“Best Means of Contact” – Due to our limited staffing, the NHICC finds it best that you contact us by email. Yes we have a phone contact number, but it is not always staffed to handle each and every phone call as a volunteer run body. We kindly request that you follow up with an email regarding your concern.

NHICC Founders

Recently a group of the founders had a chance to get together face to face in Sarnia Ontario to talk about the profession and our future direction. Our host was Bill Mullen, who made sure we did not leave on an empty stomach. It provided a great discussion on the past, the present and the future road forward.



George Webb, Bill Mullen, Wayne Fulton, Cam Allan, Brian Callaghan & Claude Lawrenson
(Brian Crewe, Paul Wilson, Wayne Christopher and Gary Wood not in attendance)

Last but not least, many thanks goes out to our Certification Council that includes:

- Bill Mullen
- George Webb
- Brian Crewe (Francophone & ANIEB)
- Reid Shepherd
- Gary Wood
- Wayne Fulton
- Allan Spisak (PHPIC)
- Claude Lawrenson

Of course we also would like to this time to THANK all applicants, candidates and NHI’s that continue to support the NHICC.

Regards,
Claude Lawrenson, Chair/President
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