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INSPECTING THE HOME INSPECTOR (Important for those who are planning to purchase a home or other property)

Are you getting the best home inspector possible?

Many people use price or convenience to choose their home inspector, however, home inspectors are not all cut from the same cloth. There are varying levels of expertise in the marketplace. Home inspectors can come from an assortment of backgrounds, and not all of those backgrounds are conducive to being a good home inspector.

Although you now must be licensed by the province of B.C in order to operate as a home inspector that is not a guarantee that the inspector you choose will be a good one.

Unfortunately, from the outset, some of the associations that represent and test home inspectors did, and do not have any prerequisite that the applicant have any trade/construction experience, or related accreditation in order to join. Any good student who can study the theoretical course material can pass the exams that are used, but practical field experience for many is lacking.

In our opinion this is a large contributor to well known and publicized problems in our industry. I was in the construction industry for thirty years prior to becoming a home inspector, and have been an inspector for six years, and I am still learning new things every day.

How can an inspector with a limited background in the building industry be qualified to protect you and your investment?

We have put together the following list of tips and questions to ask when choosing a home inspection professional.

1- Never use price as a determining factor.

There are lots of cheap inspectors out there however; in our industry you get what you pay for. A tool that doesn't work is a poor bargain at any price.

2- Ask friends, associates or family members that have bought homes about their experiences good or bad. The cream will often rise to the top

#3- How long has the inspector been in business?

There are two types on inspectors out there:

- a- Associate inspectors, many who are new to the industry and which usually have less than 200 paid inspections performed, often with limited field experience. If you choose to go with an associate inspector insure that they have a significant background in the trades or building industry. Do you want to pay for someone else's work experience?
- b- Registered home inspectors will usually have significantly more experience and have achieved a level of competence with their associations that reflects that designation (RHI).

#4- What is your background prior to being a home inspector?

A strong trade or construction background is often beneficial to the buyer and proves practical field experience regarding buildings.

#5- Can I attend the inspection?

We encourage full client participation in the inspection process, however you should check with your Realtor to make sure this is acceptable as some vendors do not like the buyers on site without their presence. If a prospective inspector discourages client participation, this should be a red flag.

#6- What type of report do you provide to your clients?

There is little doubt that an electronic or web base reporting system is the best way to go.

There are still some inspectors out there using hand written, carbon copy checklist reporting systems that are difficult to read and full of fine print. In our opinion many of these reports are inadequate and often coupled with a cheap inspection quote.

It's like comparing an apple to a watermelon.

Electronic reports are also easy to print in multiple copies, and email to wherever the client wishes.

#7- Do you have references?

Most good home inspectors will gladly provide references, however this may take a little time due to confidentiality concerns providing phone numbers and other personal information. The inspector may require permission from prior clients before this information can be released.

#8- Are you licensed and insured?

Although this is now the law it is still a relevant question. Having "Uncle Bob" or a friend who is/or used to be a builder perform the home inspection is not a good idea.

Although most good builders understand structure, they often lack expertise on many of the other systems and components, and they are not trained on how to properly perform a home inspection. They also do not carry insurance in case something significant is missed.

No one wants to sue "Uncle Bob".

You are making a significant investment and skimping on the inspection process is the poorest way to save money. Licensed inspectors are required to carry professional liability insurance.

#9- Do you provide other specialized inspection services?

Some inspectors offer more than just standard home inspections and specialize in other services including but not limited to, thermal imaging (infrared camera inspections), mold inspections and air quality, energy audits, or WETT inspections (wood burning systems)

Although it is always helpful to hire an inspector that has other talents, please make sure that the basics are in place before doing so.

#10- What is your charge for a home inspection?

Most home inspections in the mid Vancouver Island range between \$400 and \$500. Watch out for the \$300 home inspection.

Consumer Protection B.C and HIABC (Home Inspectors Association of BC) both have search engines to seek out inspectors that are licensed. Don't just phone the ones that are at the top of the list, as these lists are randomly shuffled on a regular basis. Take a good cross section and do your home work!!

We recommend starting your research as soon as you decide to start looking for a property, not the day before subject removal. We also recommend allowing 5 to 7 business days to book the inspector that meets your needs.

Please visit our web site at www.allinonehomeinspections.ca or visit us on Facebook where we invite you to like this article and share this information with friends and family

I hope that this information is helpful

Yours truly,

Steve Klassen CMI RHI

Certified Level I Thermographer #29652

Certified Mold Inspector (CMI) # 62635

Licensed Home Inspector # 47519

IICRC registration # 20117