

**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOME & PROPERTY  
INSPECTORS (CAHPI)**  
*NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR HOME INSPECTORS*

In the mid-1970s, a few savvy entrepreneurs began offering a new service to prospective homebuyers where the practitioner would inspect the house being sold and report on its conditions for a small fee. In time, the few grew to be many and a need arose for rules, regulations, and standards, in order to garner professional credibility with consumers.

The problem was – and still is, – that anyone could simply print up some business cards, and call themselves a home inspector. In an effort to enhance the credibility of the profession and instil confidence in the public eye, the home inspection associations then operating in Canada created a “qualifications set” for home inspectors that required education, training, a set of professional standards and ethics to follow, and so on. Now the public had somewhere to turn when looking for a “qualified” home inspector they could trust.

While this was a logical step in the evolution of the profession, it did not solve all the problems. Home inspectors were not (and are still not) required to become members of a professional association in order to practice. Each regional association developed its own set of rules and regulations, which differed from province to province. The media, which focused on sensational home inspection misadventure stories, mostly ignored these professional associations.

During the past decade, there has been a proliferation of pseudo-professional organizations and groups posing as legitimate professional home inspection associations. These groups profit from certifying home inspectors, and often require little to no education or experience. This has led to a rash of “certified” practitioners who lack any meaningful credentials. Thankfully, that’s changing.

What homebuyers need most is a reliable source of trustworthy, competent, qualified home inspection professionals. **Until now**, however, there has been no consistent national standard in Canada for the home inspection industry. About ten years ago, the Canadian government, with the cooperation of several home inspection associations, franchises, educators, and practitioners, decided that something drastic needed to be done on a large scale.

The general consensus at the time was that the only valid way to ensure consistency and fairness would be for all associations, individual inspectors, franchises and multi-inspector firms to agree on a “job description” for the profession. Those involved in this initiative also realized that the success of a project of this magnitude demanded that one umbrella organization should administer the program uniformly instead of many smaller groups reaching for different targets. This decision led to the creation of the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors. (CAHPI)

A process was set to formally evaluate and certify applicants as competent professionals by CAHPI's national certification body, which was named the "National Certification Authority" (NCA).

The certification model for Canadian home inspectors became a reality in late 2005, when the Federal Minister of Housing announced that CAHPI would be "The voice of the Canadian home inspection industry," and would be given the mandate to administer the certification model fairly and equally among Canadian home inspectors, including members and non-members.

Practitioners could now learn what the requirements were for them to become legitimate, credible home inspectors. The requirements are not onerous or impossible, but they have enough rigour to be defended easily and they are based on actual occupational standards that were developed through thousands of hours of study and debate.

The National Certification Authority conducted a pilot project during the first part of 2006 in which more than one hundred inspectors from all parts of Canada participated. Their background qualifications were assessed and all were subjected to a test inspection with peer review. The NCA hired professional consultants to ensure all documents and processes follow accepted guidelines. The NCA also appointed experienced inspectors and members of the public to serve as project coordinator, chief examiner, registrar, and as members of the National Certification and Accreditation Councils. Many more experienced inspectors have been trained to serve as examiners for the test inspections. (Note: Samir Bachir, CREA Past President, and Laura Leyser, OREA Past President now serve on two of the Councils)

The aim of the pilot project was to identify any problems with the model and the process. It also helped the NCA to determine the actual costs needed to accredit courses and to certify practitioners. The pilot project has just been completed. CAHPI and the NCA are now inviting all Canadian home inspectors, both members and non-members, to apply to become National Certificate Holders. The goal is to have 200 to 500 National Certificate Holders by the end of 2006 and many more in subsequent years until most competent Canadian home inspectors become "National Certificate Holders."

For more information, contact CAHPI at 1-888-748-2244 or [www.cahpi.ca](http://www.cahpi.ca).

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