

NATIONAL HOME INSPECTOR CERTIFICATION COUNCIL NHICC

Questions and Answers

Q: What is the NHICC?

A: The NHICC is an independent nationally incorporated non-profit certification body dedicated to the professionalization of the private home inspection sector. It administers the National Certification Program as defined in the CHIBO II document the "National Certification and Accreditation Model for Home and Property Inspectors"

Q: Who operates the NHICC?

A: The people sitting on the NHICC are mostly inspectors who were elected to the previous NCA by the National Certificate Holders across Canada. They have assumed the responsibility of operating the program under the same Policies and Procedures as were mandated for the previous NCA. They will oversee a number of committees:

- National Admissions Board (NAB) - The NAB, appointed by the NHICC, will review applications from inspectors entering the program and will recommend their status to the NHICC. This Board will be comprised of mostly voting individuals (National Certificate Holders) of the organization as well as other experienced and respected professionals from other disciplines.
- Professional Practices Committee (PPC) – The PPC will be comprised of voting individuals (National Certificate Holders) of the organization to address non-compliance with best practices. It will endeavour to resolve disputes that arise or are brought to the attention of the organization.
- National Accreditation Council (NAC) – The majority of the members of the NAC will be voting individuals (National Certificate Holders) from the organization as well as other senior professionals with significant experience in international education, certification and/or accreditation. The NAC will review educational offerings from course providers and evaluate their course content, etc. against the National Occupational Standard (NOS) for Canadian Home Inspectors.

- TIPR Examiners – This group of experienced well respected and specifically trained voting individuals (National Certificate Holders) of the organization will organize and administer TIPR sessions as required. This group will evaluate (in the field) the knowledge and skill levels of individuals being tested by TIPR and will make recommendations about the results to the Chief Examiner.
- Advisory Council – The organization may maintain an Advisory Council appointed by the Board of Directors to serve in various committee functions. The Advisory Council may provide guidance to the organization from expert individuals who might not otherwise fit into a membership category.

Q: I thought CAHPI and the NCA were administering the National Certification Program. (NCP) Has that changed?

A: In April 2010, the CAHPI provincial organizations convinced CAHPI National that the NCP was perceived to be a competing credential to their provincial RHI programs. As a result, the CAHPI National Board voted to initially suspend the operations of the NCP immediately and to completely end the program in March 2011. CAHPI no longer supports or promotes the program. They will accept no more applications

Q: How will this affect National Certificate Holders and others?

A: If the program disappears, many individuals, organizations and other stakeholders will be adversely affected:

- More than 400 National Certificate Holders, some who have invested up to \$ 1,500 in fees and many hours of training and testing, will be left with nothing to show for their dedication and efforts to improve.
- Just fewer than 100 other inspectors, who were being processed within the program, will also have their hopes extinguished and at least a significant portion of their investments in the program lost.
- Canadian inspectors who are not CAHPI members will not be eligible to continue their NCH status unless they agree to join one of the provincial CAHPI chapters. This is in direct contravention to CAHPI's promises and mandate to keep the program fair, objective and inclusive of all home inspectors in the country, whether they are CAHPI members or not. Membership in an association was not to be a requirement for an inspector to qualify as an NCH.

- Canadian home inspectors, government agencies, interested companies, and professionals from other disciplines have invested more than \$ 2,000,000. (Two million dollars) in cash and in-kind voluntary work to improve the industry and enhance consumer protection through this program.
- The Canadian government, through CMHC, HRSDC, the Federal Ministry of Housing, CSC and other agencies has encouraged, supported and promoted this program since 1996. They will experience extreme disappointment that their efforts to help home inspectors have been badly devalued and dismissed as unimportant. This will harm the Home Inspection industry's relationships with government and others for many years into the future.
- Other associations, such as the First Nations National Building Officers Association (FNNBOA) and the Alliance of Canadian Building Officials Association (ACBOA) partnered with the private home inspection industry to develop the National Occupational Standard (NOS) and identify common core values. The end of the NCP would indicate to them that CAHPI does not value their partnerships or contributions.
- Several course providers have paid accreditation fees and have submitted course outlines and other information for evaluation to the previous National Accreditation Council. Almost twenty well respected educational outlets received confirmation that their courses, etc. met requirements to be recognized by the NCA. The demise of the program is seen as a waste for their efforts and an insult to their spirit of cooperation and support for the program.
- Consumers will lose the most. The NCP was envisioned and created because there was a lack of any consistent level of training, education or testing for inspectors across Canada. Since the NCH credential is the same in every region of the country, consumers can rely on that level of ability and knowledge by hiring a National Certificate Holder. There are seven RHI designations in Canada, and all are very different from one another. In some cases, the RHI level is abysmally low, while in others it is reasonably strong. Government agencies, national corporations, and consumers deserve to be able to hire inspectors anywhere in Canada who have similar credentials.

Q: Why has the NHICC assumed the operation of the NCP and how is it qualified and authorized to do so?

A: The National Certification Program is based on the National Occupational Standard (NOS) for Canadian Home Inspectors. The research and creation for the NOS was primarily financed by public money through CMHC and HRSDC. The resulting documentation is therefore in the public domain. Any 'body' in Canada that is independently (third party) deemed to have an Equivalency standing with the previous NCA, which has several personnel with experience in administering the NCP and which commits to adhering to the CHIBO Certification Model, may assume stewardship of the national program.

The NHICC is uniquely and perfectly qualified to assume management of the National Certification Program. The NHICC has notified most individuals, government agencies, companies and organizations having any interaction with the previous NCA that the NHICC was ready, willing and able to operate the NCP in a fair, objective and inclusive manner.

Q: When will the NHICC begin operations and when and how can inspectors participate?

A: The NHICC already has its incorporation, bylaws, policies and procedures and initial committee members and volunteers in place. The NHICC website www.nationalhomeinspector.org is functional and office space and administrative personnel are ready.

Inspectors who are or wish to become National Certificate Holders can contact the NHICC at info@nationalhomeinspector.org for more information.

Existing NCH's can transfer their credential to the NHICC for a seamless transition to a 'permanent' credential. This credential will remain the 'National Certificate Holder' or 'NCH'. They may also renew with a CAHPI provincial organization but that credential will no longer exist after March 2011.

The NHICC will try to process those individuals who have been in the NCP process through CAHPI. The success and simplicity of this will depend a lot on CAHPI's cooperation in refunding money to those individuals and transferring documentation to the NHICC.

Q: Is the NHICC connected in any way to a home inspection company, franchise, or association?

A: No. The NHICC, unlike its predecessor, is not an 'arm's length' branch of any association. The NHICC is an independent, inclusive and objective organization with its own directors, executive, committees and financial operations. None of the board or council members have been appointed by any association or self-interest group. There are members of every Canadian home inspection sitting on various boards and committees, as well as some inspectors with no association affiliation whatsoever.

Q: Are any home inspection groups or individuals excluded from the program?

A: No. Any individual who feels he/she possesses the qualifications is invited to apply for National Certification.

Q: Why should we believe this version of the National Certification program will be any different than the one that was just cancelled?

A: This version is fully independent of any association or other influence. The members of the NHICC were all duly elected by NCH's, and have committed to the promotion and support of the NCP. This version will stay faithful to the ideals and intent of the National Initiative for Home Inspectors, without any regional or other influences. This version will be observed as being more valid by government, etc. because it is not a 'committee' of an association; it is an autonomous, free-standing entity.

Q: I became a National Certificate Holder under the original program. Will the 'new' certification be the same and have the same validity?

A: Your NCH credential will remain the same, with the same strength, validity, and credibility. The transfer to the 'new' system should be seamless and will not require any changes to your stationery, business cards or websites. The 'new' system offers you the use of an attractive logo should you wish to add it to your promotional materials.

Q: What are the fees for certification?

A: The application fees will be \$ 500.00 for each individual who is a member of a group that has an Equivalency agreement with the NCA/NHICC. The fee for all others will be \$ 650.00. This includes a background review, administration costs and one TIPR.

There will be an annual renewal fee of \$ 125.00 for each NCH who is a member of a group having an Equivalency agreement and \$ 200.00 for others.

All fees are subject to applicable taxes.

Q: Is there an appeal process if an application is denied?

A: Yes an appeals procedure is available to the NHICC.

Q: Will National Certificate Holders be required to carry Errors and Omissions and liability insurance?

A: Yes.

Q: What or who originally generated interest in the national Certification Program?

A: Increased demand for home inspections and the lack of qualified practitioners lead to a number of consumer concerns – primarily inconsistencies in the quality and level of service provided. The Canadian public, through CMHC, demanded an accountable level of competence and training.

Q: Since the National Certification Program was initiated by a CMHC study, will CMHC be promoting this program?

A: CMHC has supported the development and implementation of the program and has promoted it in many of their publications. The National Certificate Holder (NCH) is the only credential they mention in their publications.

Q: What is a Test Inspection with Peer Review?

A: Each applicant will be required to inspect a house with known deficiencies and deliver both a verbal and a written report on the home to an evaluator. The written report must meet the requirements of the Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics.

Q: I've been inspecting homes for fifteen years. Why do I have to have a background review and Test Inspection with Peer Review?

A: In order to establish a consistent level of competence among home inspectors, all applicants will be required to follow the same process.

Q: How do the examiners become qualified to do their work? Who tests them?

A: The examiners will be National Certificate Holders, very experienced, respected members of their profession; they will be tested by the Chief Examiner.

Q: Are volunteers needed to help administer the program?

A: Absolutely!!! All of the various council and committee members are volunteers, so more hands would reduce their workload. Contact the NHICC if you want to help.