

Inspector's Insider™

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ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

In Pennsylvania Home Inspectors are required to complete formal training, maintain professional insurances, pass an accepted exam, and complete 100 inspections to be considered an inspector competent to conduct a Home Inspection. Not all inspectors comply with this law. For your protection, please ensure that you hire a qualified home inspector to perform a home inspection.

To ensure your satisfaction, verify your inspectors credentials and read the company's agreement carefully.

Prepping your home for inspection

By Curtis S. Niles, CRI

Selling your house?

Ever wonder what an inspector is looking for when he/she arrives at your home?

You ought to know that we are not there to pass or fail your home. Our primary purpose is to evaluate your home's systems and components, and to make recommendations as to repairs/replacements/or corrections and specialists which would be required to make necessary repairs.

Does it help to straighten up the house? Usually homes that are scheduled to be inspected are tidied up a bit to look its best. Inspectors appreciate this because it makes for a safer inspection while the inspector goes through the home. Putting away valuables is also appreciated. Why? Well, during a home inspection other people in addition to the Inspector are typically present. There are the buyers, possibly the buyers' family members,



"Making sure kitty doesn't get out of the house is a bit much"



"Putting away valuables is also appreciated"

WDI inspectors, etc. If something is found to be missing or damaged, guess whose the first number that's called? You guessed it... the inspector's. Inspectors usually leave a business card letting you know who was in your home. So calling the number on the card is a natural response. This is one reason why I like real estate professionals present at home inspections. They can verify what did or did not take place at the home inspection.

If you have pets such as dogs or cats, please plan to take them with you or have someone watch them for you while an inspection is in progress. Inspectors have a very difficult job that requires a large amount of concentration. Having to keep a cat at bay or making sure that the kitty doesn't get out of the house is a bit much to ask. Similarly, a dog locked in a kennel, and barking continually is extremely distracting.

Some inspectors, including myself, are allergic to pet dander. So please keep this in mind when leaving your pet home while your home is undergoing an inspection.



"Don't store items in appliances, washers/dryers and dishwashers"

Lastly, leaving a note with any unusual operation of a system or device is always appreciated. Warnings of any malfunctioning or inoperative component are gladly welcomed. Many times on an inspection, while testing a window, a finger or two are almost lost from the top sash crashing down. At least in my experience no window or appendages have not been broken or damaged. A simple warning would prevent such an injury or accident from occurring.

So if you are planning on selling your home, please make it a safe place to visit and inspect. We appreciate it greatly.

Keep an eye on radon

by John McQuiggan

Radon (*noun*) - A naturally occurring gas that becomes dangerous during real estate transactions. Pardon the attempt at humor on a serious topic. The fact is, many people only think about radon when buying or selling a house. But the radioactive gas poses a danger 24-7 and all year long. Are you protecting yourself and your family?

In case you haven't heard, radon causes an estimated 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States every year. Only smoking causes more lung cancer, and the risk from radon is far greater for people who smoke or used to smoke. Radon is present in the soil and the air worldwide. The threat arises when radon builds up inside a house and the occupants breathe the invisible gas over long periods.

U.S. health and environmental authorities have recommended for two decades that every home be tested for radon. Because radon concentrations in the home can change, authorities recommend that homes be re-tested every two years -- even homes with radon mitigation systems installed.

What will the test cost you? As little as \$20 if you do it yourself with kits available online and in home centers; more -- \$110 to \$140 -- if you hire a state-certified radon tester to conduct the test with more sophisticated equipment. Either approach will give you a good idea of whether your home has elevated levels of radon. If you do it yourself, be sure that the kit is EPA-approved and that you follow the kit's instructions for preparing your home and handling, placing and shipping the test device to a lab.

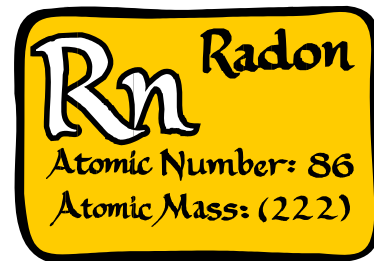
Here are health and environmental agencies' guidelines on when to test:

- **When buying a home. If the seller can't provide documentation of a recent test, testing is recommended. [Radon is measured in "picocuries per liter" (pCi/l), and the agencies recommend that a house be fixed if the number is 4.0 pCi/l or higher.]**
- **If it has been more than two years since the last test on your home.**
- **If you have a radon mitigation system that has not been tested recently. These systems can fail, and conditions in the home or below it may have changed since the system was installed.**

- **If you plan to increase the time spent in low-lying areas of the home, such as adding a family room, office or bedroom in a basement..**
- **If you are making structural changes that could allow more radon to enter. Radon seeps in through cracks and openings between the ground and the floor and walls of the home.**

Beware of the many myths about radon. Elevated levels of radon have been found in new homes and old, tight homes and drafty. Homes with or without basements can have a radon problem, and homes side by side can have far different radon concentrations. Elevated levels of radon can be found in any neighborhood. Radon levels can almost always be reduced if yours is one of the estimated 1 in 7 homes with a radon problem.

But the only way to know is to test. Then test again.



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Chapter News

A new year ushers in a new Board of Directors for our chapter. The current officers are as follows; Treasure: Catherine Hall, Secretary: John McQuiggin, Membership Coordinator: Bill Dare, Vice President: Jim Makara, and President: Curtis Niles. Feel free to contact any member of the board with any questions or concerns you may have.

We also have a new Affiliate Membership and Associate Membership. Let's welcome Rob Bruno of Boro Exterminating, our 1st Affiliate member. Inquiries regarding affiliate membership are welcomed. We also have Associate members which are distant National members who lack a close chapter to join. Contact a board member if you have any interest or questions regarding this membership.

This past year was packed with exciting speakers and topics to help educate our members from the latest in, foundation repair technology to environmental and health issues in homes. This year's topics for inspector education include; Engineered lumber in today's construction, new plumbing materials, Chimney and fireplace safety inspections. Plan to come out and join us at our scheduled meetings every 3rd Monday of the month.

Also planned for this year's end will be a holiday party for the inspectors and their wives. This will be the first of its kind for the chapter. Stay tuned for further planning and announcements scheduled later in the year.

This spring the PA Home Inspector Coalition will hold its 2nd annual educational conference in Carlisle, PA. All PHIC, NAHI and ASHI member inspectors are welcomed to further educate themselves and sharpen their skills as a professional. Continuing educational credits will be earned by attending. Please keep an eye out for a mailing from PHIC regarding this conference and plan to attend and meet other inspectors in the Commonwealth.

Spring Educational conference



The Beautiful Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

This year's educational conference was a particularly memorable. It marked the 20th year anniversary for our association. The conference culminated with a formal gala and award ceremony. Our own chapter member and president, Curtis Niles received the 2007 Member of the year award. The conference was held at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in beautiful Las Vegas. The largest conference registration on record was present to share in the association's success.

The speakers and certification classes were well attended and the positive feedback have already begun to stream in.

An organizational meeting with ASTM was held at this conference to consider a uniform home inspection standard for the profession. This was an open meeting attended by stakeholders such as ASHI, NACHI, and others. The opinions of the stakeholders were heard by all in attendance and it appears that the majority was in favor of an additional meeting to be held in the Philadelphia area at or near ASTM head quarters.



A crowded room of inquisitive inspectors



Basement specialist presentation 2006



www.nahipa.org

Chapter meetings are held every 3rd Monday of the month, 6:00 pm at the Best Western Inn in Lansdale, PA. New inspectors are invited to attend. Contact Bill Dare, Membership Coordinator, at 215-487-3599 or visit NAHIPA.org for additional information.



NAHI's 2007 Member of the year award recipient Curtis Niles and wife Lori



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