

# The NC-ASHI® Home Inspector

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER OF THE  
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS  
April 2008

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER by Marion Peebles

[http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Engineering/hilb/engineering\\_hilb\\_inspection\\_checklist.asp](http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Engineering/hilb/engineering_hilb_inspection_checklist.asp)

That's a pretty long web address isn't it? The address is to the page on the Licensing Board web site where you can download the two page inspection report checklist. That would be the same checklist Phil Joyner will use to verify your report compliance with the standards of practice.

If you have participated in Peer Review, your reports have been checked for substantial compliance, not necessarily *total* compliance. We tend to fall into ruts of habit and probably don't think too much about compliance with the SOP until there is a problem or an audit, or God forbid both at once. Take the time to download the checklist and go through your own reports with a fine tooth comb, you may surprise yourself at how much stuff is missing that should actually be reported.

How did you view the roof, the attic, or the crawl space? What parts of the home were not inspected and why? Did you look at the gas piping? Did you look at plumbing piping and its supports? It is not enough to describe the systems and components, you have to actually say you looked at them. Did you sign your report? Does the report have your name and license number?

Answer these questions and the others on the checklist before they get asked by someone else.

Speaking of examinations, ASHI is in the midst of re-examining its bureaucratic structure. A Governance Task Force consisting of 3 directors and 3 COR reps has been appointed by new National President Brion Grant. The intent is to figure out if the board of directors has too many members to be effective, to look at how people are nominated for elective positions, and possibly regionalizing the board.

If you have any opinions (yeah right...an inspector with no opinion?) on the structure or operation of ASHI that you think should be heard by the committee, please send me an email and I will see to it that the word gets to Chicago.

Don't confine your comments to ASHI National, if there is something at the state chapter level that you take exception to or have constructive input to do things better please send that info along as well.

Until June...

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## SPRING EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE & PEER REVIEW

NC-ASHI® holds its Spring workshop at the Clarion Hotel, 415 Swing Rd., Greensboro, April 11-12. Glenn Church teaches the 4 hr. required course Friday afternoon, and Peter Drenan presents on exterior and mechanical inspections, Saturday. Up to 12 hours credit is available. The Peer Review for inspectors with over 100 inspections and Educational Review (a guided inspection) will be offered on Friday. Check our website (NCASHI.com) for more information on these training opportunities. Contact Andy Hilton at (336) 961-6809 if you are ready for the Peer Review challenge or Educational Review.

## PRO REAL ESTATE AGENT by Bruce Rudd

I was involved in an e-mail debate with another NC Home Inspector recently. The inspector with whom I was debating will remain unnamed here, but he publishes an internet media site, and the cause of our debate was a recent post to his website. The debate became rather heated. At the conclusion he called me "pro real estate agent", which was intended to be a crushing insult – implying pandering and unethical conduct. I didn't consider his comment to be an insult at all; but, I was really depressed to be reminded how far we still have to go to put the silliness between Realtors® and Home Inspectors to rest.

Yes, I am very much "pro real estate agent", and why in the world would I not be? I know that over 85% of my inspection business comes from real estate agents. My work is much easier when it involves a real estate agent because the property and my clients are better prepared. My liability is lower for the same reasons. The Realtor can field all the questions concerning the transaction, which are not appropriate for me to answer anyway. It's like having my own coordinator and assistant. As the relationship grows, it continues to become even easier and more comfortable. Why wouldn't any inspector want that?

Since I began my business I have heard speakers and read articles cautioning about the dreaded real estate agent. Always one of those, "lay down with dogs – wake up with fleas" kind of messages, that seems to say, "if you are friendly or offer good service to a real estate agent, then you will surely rot in Hell as a dishonest traitor." Where did that sound reasoning come from? Receiving the terrible insult above started me thinking about this strange thought process again, and maybe I finally figured it out (only took me 15 years!).

Real estate agents, like all salespeople, tend to be aggressive, take-charge kind of people; which I think many home inspectors find intimidating. The natural reaction to intimidation is to run away and stay away. So it follows that if an inspector is friendly and cooperative with a real estate agent, it must be because he is letting the real estate agent "have his way" and "be the boss". As good thinking goes, it ranks right up there with, "the world is flat - don't fall off the edge."

In practice, the real estate agent / Home Inspector relationship is quite simply based on setting boundaries. Fortunately, we inspectors really only have one boundary – nobody else is allowed to contribute or interfere in our professional communication (written or verbal) with our clients. That's it! With that established, we can go ahead and offer all the friendly, enhanced business service that everyone (including real estate agents) expects. Except for an occasional reminder of the boundary, relationships with real estate agents don't need to be confrontational or adversarial at all. Those who don't like the boundary just go away and don't call anymore; and those who accept the boundary become wonderful repeat customers.

One last complicating factor: When a real estate agent decides to go away, it is very easy for the Home Inspector to say, "they didn't want full disclosure for their client" or, "they must have wanted an inspector who would gloss over issues and not upset the deal". In addition to being an easy conclusion, it also gives the inspector a rewarding sense of moral superiority. The difficult and necessary thing for the inspector to realize is, maybe they just didn't like you or your business. I can disagree with people who choose to drive a Chevy instead of a Ford, but I don't need to draw any conclusion about their ethical values from the choice.

**It's long past time for all of us to set clear boundaries, re-evaluate our business practices, and stop biting the hand that feeds us!**

**North Carolina ASHI®  
GREAT INSPECTORS; THE BEST OF COLLEAGUES**

## HVAC AGE CODES Contributed by Bill Dillon

**Amana:** BLACKHORSE. B=1971 or 1981. (Of course, now that they've been bought by Goodman, who knows what'll happen.)

### **BARD** 1962 to March 1980

Sample Number 123456 A D

1st six digits are the Unit Identity Number. In this example they are represented by the numbers 123456. 7th digit is the month of Manufacture. (The letter A in the Sample represents January).

A = January/B = February/C = March/D = April/E = May/F = June/G = July

H = August/Letter "I" was not used/J = September/K = October/L = November

M = December

8th digit is the year of Manufacture. (The letter D in the Sample represents 1964).

B=1962/C=1963/D=1964 /E=1965/F=1966/G=1967/H=1968/Letter "I" was not used/J=1969 K=1970/L=1971/M=1972/N=1973/O=1974/P=1975

Letter "Q" was not used/R=1976/S=1977/T=1978/U=1979/V=1980

### **Bard** April & May 1980

Sample number 123 D A 123456

1st three digits are the Compressor Part Number.

4th digit is the month of Manufacture. In this sample D represents April.

D = April/F = May

5th digit is the year of Manufacture. In this sample A represents 1980.

1980 = A

This serial number style was only used during the months of April & May 1980.

6th thru 11th digits represent the Unit Identity Number.

### **Bard** June 1980 to Current

Sample number 123 H80 1234567 02

1st three digits = Compressor Part #

4th digit = Month

A = January/B = February/C = March/D = April/"E" was not used/F =

May/"G" was not used/H = June/"I" was not used/J = July/K = August/L =

September/M = October/N = November/"O" was not used/P = December

5th & 6th digits = Year

80 = 1980/81 = 1981/82 = 1982 right on thru. The year 2000 started the numerical numbering from 00. 00 = 2000/01 = 2001/02 = 2002 right on thru to current date.

7th thru 13th digits = Unit Identity #

14th & 15th digits = Factory Code (01=OH; 02=GA)

**Carrier, Bryant, Payne, Day & Night:** Recently (last 20 years or so) the first four numbers in the serial number represent the week and year. Previously, it was a complex series of letters and single digits. Call 905 672-0860 if you get stuck.

**Coleman:** Serial numbers prior to April 1992=1st two numbers are month, then year, then series.

After April 1992, 1st two numbers are year, then month, then series.

**Comfortmaker (International Comfort)** uses the first letter for the month (skipping I) and the first two digits are the year.

**First Company Service Parts** is one of 4 divisions of First Operations.

They supply OEM equipment to all of the major **HVAC** manufacturers.

They are located in Dallas, TX at 214-388-5751. Harold Hammer at Tech Support (ext#5) will answer your questions.

**Goodman:** First two digits of the serial number are the year. Second two are the month.

Btu rating is model number ie; GMP075-3 (75,000 bonnet input)

Compressor is same :serial # 9709088872 (yr1997 wk 09) Tonnage is

model # CK361C The first two numbers after the CK (letters) divided by

12 is tons. ie: 36 div by 12= 3 tons.

**Lennox:** Either the first two or second two digits are the year, it varies by era, but most of them actually have a separate sticker somewhere that has the year printed on it. Newer ones are first two equals manufacturing plant #, 2nd two are year and letter in fifth slot is month (A thru M minus

I). So 5898G 07568 would be Plant # 58, Year of MFR would be 98 and month would be July.

**Rheem & Rudd:** in the middle of the serial number will be a letter "F" the following four numbers are the week and year.

The first letter of the serial number gives the year of manufacture as follows: 2823 F0189 12345 means made in January of 1989.

### **TRANE**

Trane uses alpha codes in their serial numbers to determine year of manufacture. They started this in 1987 with the letter B and skipped a couple of letters during the years..... The first letter of the serial number gives the year of manufacture as follows:

In 2002 they started their serial numbers with the year it was built. In 2002 the first character of the serial number is 2, in 2003, 3 and so on.

Z=2001/R=2000/P=1999/N=1998/M=97/L=96/K=95/J=94/H=93/G=92/F=91

E=90/D=89/C=88/B=87/S=86/Y=85/X=84/W=83/U=82(seventh digit)

T=81(seventh digit)/O, A=80(seventh digit)

### **YORK (Unitary Products since 1984)**

Note: they skip the letters I, O, Q, U, Z.

Year of make indicated by 3rd letter in the serial number.

**Fraser, Johnston and Luxaire** were purchased by York in 1980.

1971 - A/1972 - B/1973 - C/1974 - D/1975 - E/1976 - F/1977 - G

1978 - H/1979 - J/1980 - K/1981 - L/1982 - M/1983 - N/1984 - P

1985 - R/1986 - S/1987 - T/1988 - V/1989 - W/1990 - X/1991 - Y

1992 - A/1993 - B/1994 - C/1995 - D/1996 - E/1997 - F/1998 - G

1999 - H/2000 - J/2001 - K/2002 - L/2003 - M/2004 - N/2005 - P

2006 - R/2007 - S

## **CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT FILED IN PEX PIPING FAILURES**

The homeowners who brought these cases have alleged that the brass fittings used to make connections in Zurn PEX systems were incorrectly designed and manufactured. As a result, the homeowners allege that the fittings fail prematurely – sometimes within a year after installation. The Zurn PEX fittings crack or leak in as few as two months after installation. Substantial water damage may occur when the fittings fail.

Zurn has acknowledged that it has seen an increased number of premature failures of these fittings in certain areas but denies that it is liable for those failures. This case is intended to determine who is responsible for the premature failures.

Zurn has admitted in court documents that it has stopped selling brass PEX fittings in Minnesota. Zurn has also stopped selling the brass fittings elsewhere and is now touting its plastic PEX fittings.

Two federal court class actions have been filed against Zurn to date:

- Denise and Terry Cox et al. v. Zurn, pending in Minnesota
- Beverly Barnes and Brian Johnston et al. v. Zurn, pending in North Dakota

## **UPCOMING TRAINING**

The Southern Regional Radon Training Center will be hosting 3 courses for continuing education credits in Greensboro in April. For more information contact Jan Carrington at the SRRTC at 800-626-2703 or [www.eng.auburn.edu/departments/esv/SRRTC/](http://www.eng.auburn.edu/departments/esv/SRRTC/)

April 9--Radon Resistant New Construction & Moisture Control Techniques Seminar

April 9-10--Advanced Diagnostics & System Design Workshop

April 11--Inspecting the Mitigation System During the Home Inspection Workshop

### **EIFS Certification Training April 24-27, 2008 in Charlotte**

Level I-EIFS Inspector Certification is April 24-25.

Level II--EIFS Inspector Certification is April 26-27.

For more information contact EDI at 800-742-5516 or at [edi@exterior-design-inst.com](mailto:edi@exterior-design-inst.com)

**LICENSURE BOARD REPORT FOR MARCH 28, 2008**

By David Jones

The Licensure Board met in Concord NC at the Embassy Suites on March 28.

Don Warner, the executive director, reported that the Board offices have been moved to the first floor of the building at 322 Chapanoke Drive. They are on the left side of the first floor, and include a larger conference room. Signage is being developed to direct the public to the new offices. He also reported that he did a random audit of reports of associate inspectors, and found that almost all were in substantial or complete compliance with the Standards of Practice.

**Education Committee**

Jim Liles reported that the outline of the Pre-Licensing Curriculum is ready for presentation. Bonnie Gregory had copies of the curriculum which were distributed to Board members. The outline has been developed, but no monies can be spent on writing the actual curriculum until there is enabling legislation. The near-term effort will be to get legislators to support or co-sponsor a bill to establish pre-licensing education as a new part of the licensure law.

It will be necessary for the board to review the curriculum and then write some language to "flesh out" the pre-licensing education statute so that it will be ready for introduction when the legislature convenes in May. The update course for 2008-09 has been written by Tom Williams. The content involves seeing a series of slides at the beginning of the inspection and writing repair comments based on the slides. Further elaboration during the course will reveal the interaction between systems and how a problem in one area can affect other areas. At the end of the course, the participants will write comments again, and compare their comments to the original comments.

Jim Liles proposed authorizing the expenditure of up to \$10,000 for development of a course that will identify safety items that would be reportable in a home inspection. Hopefully, in the process of developing the course, the definition of what constitutes a safety concern would be clarified. The course could be offered on-line at no cost to inspectors. The measure received unanimous approval.

Mr. Liles also proposed authorizing up to \$10,000 for development of a course on safe inspection procedures. This course would also be offered on-line at no cost. It also was approved unanimously.

**Exam Committee**

John Hamrick reported that the exam committee has not met, but that he is planning to meet with Noel Zak to discuss adoption of the National Home Inspector Exam as the standard exam for NC.

**Finance Committee**

David Jones reported that the income for the current fiscal year is comfortably ahead of expenses. Even with the fee holiday for next year, the board should still be in good financial shape.

**Standards of Practice and Rules and Interpretations Committee**

The committee met on Thursday afternoon and developed language for an interpretation about inspectors supervising associates to replace the interpretation that was to be effective on April 1 of this year. The language is as follows:

The factors that the Board will consider in determining whether a supervisor is adequately and actively supervising and training an associate pursuant to N.C.G.S. Section 143-151.52(5) include the following:

1. Availability, by reasonable means, of the supervisor to the associate to answer the associate's questions and provide guidance to the associate.
2. Actual review of the associate's reports. A signature of the supervisor on a report (whether an actual or electronic signature) is a representation by the supervisor that the supervisor has actually reviewed and approved the report.
3. Training and supervision that is reasonable and appropriate for the associate's experience and skill level. An associate with less experience and less skill shall require a higher level of direct supervision and field training.

The interpretation was approved by the Board and will be effective immediately.

**Personnel Committee**

No report.

**Systems Enhancement Committee**

No report

**Standard Report Format Committee**

Gerald Canipe reported that Terry Todd was not in attendance, and that there was no report. It was not clear at the time of this writing, but Terry Todd may have resigned from the Board. The pending change in the real estate contract may have a significant effect on what happens. Additional work will be needed before a compromise acceptable to the home inspectors can be reached.

Phil Joyner reported that his caseload is increasing. A discussion followed about hiring an assistant to help him handle his workload. This will be investigated and implemented as soon as possible, if the usual governmental bureaucracy inertia can be overcome.

The NC Code Council has approved adoption of the 2008 version of the National Electrical Code, effective June 1. One significant change will be the requirement for child-proof outlet covers. There will also be requirements for additional circuits to have arc-fault protection. Details should be available on the OSFM web site soon.

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Are you sure that internet shoppers can find you?

Try it for yourself. Go to google.com or yahoo.com and search for "home inspectors, North Carolina" or whatever words a potential client might use.

Some of our findings: The NCHILB (Lic. Bd.), ASHI®, BBB and Yellow Pages links are prominent, as are several phony home inspector locator sites, and the NC Licensed Home Inspectors Assn., and (sadly) NC-ASHI® are further down on the list. What have you found?

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**The Chapter is growing with 59 members now, according to Chapter Treasurer Larry Conway. We welcome our newest members!**

- Scott Bachman, Maiden, NC**
- Mike Hunger, Winston-Salem, NC**
- Jeff Payne, East Bend, NC**
- Stephen Smallman, Raleigh, NC**

I want to know more about NC-ASHI®!

I am a Certified ASHI® Member       NC-ASHI® renewal

I am an ASHI® Associate       Add me to your mailing list

I am not an ASHI® Assoc. or Member, but want to join NC-ASHI®

Dues are free for first-time members. Renewals are \$200 annually, but remember they are considered paid for the next year when you join us at either our Spring or Fall Educational Conference in 2008.

Send this and your personal information to:

NC-ASHI® Secretary Andy Hilton  
 Hilton Home Inspection, Inc.  
 3033 Lori Lane  
 Yadkinville, NC 27055

## REALTOR®/HOME INSPECTOR COMMITTEE TACKLES THE TOUGH ISSUES

by Bill Dillon, Co-Chair, 2008 WSAR REALTOR®/Home Inspector Committee

Six years ago in the Winston-Salem area, several progressive thinking NC-ASHI home inspectors determined that the problems, discontentment, and in some cases, hate between real estate agents and Home Inspectors were predominately a gross lack of communication and understanding. The agents did not understand or want to understand the role of home inspectors and their responsibility to their client. Likewise, Home Inspectors did not understand or want to understand the role of the agents and their responsibility to their clients and the massive hurdles agents have to clear to get a property to closing. These progressively thinking inspectors contacted several like minded agents to discuss these problems and to try to find a forum to get agents and home inspectors together to discuss these and other problems where Realtors and Home Inspectors butted heads.

The Winston Salem Regional Association of REALTORS® (WSRAR) was gracious enough to allow such a debate at their house/office. The WSRAR afforded the group paid staff members to assist in the workings of such a group. The debate began with only a few REALTORS® and Home Inspectors. The first few meetings addressed the responsibilities of both groups, what their requirements by law and ethics were, the mechanics of each profession, and what were the major problems as home inspections applied to a real estate transaction. In a relatively short time, most of the participants were endowed with an eye-opening experience into each others profession as it relates under all of the legal and ethical requirements of both professions in North Carolina.

Once meetings began on a regular basis, the group was dubbed "The REALTOR®/Home Inspector Committee". The group was not a sanctioned committee within the structure of the Winston-Salem Regional Association of REALTORS®, but an accepted group of people working for improved understanding and relations between REALTORS® and Home Inspectors.

After a couple of years and steady growth of participants and issues within the committee, several REALTORS® realized the worth of such a committee and petitioned the WSRAR to sanction the REALTOR®/Home Inspector Committee as a recognized committee of the WSRAR. Their requests were approved, and the REALTOR®/Home Inspector Committee became a part of the oldest and largest REALTOR® organization in the state.

Since that time the committee has discussed and been involved in many REALTOR®/Home Inspector issues. Over the entire life of the committee, the members have spent uncounted hours discussing and debating the challenges that the NC Association of REALTORS® organization has tried to push on the North Carolina Home Inspector Licensure Board. Issues such as the call for a "summary page" for all NC inspection reports, a push for a "standardized report form", the insistence that "Safety Issues" and other statements that refer to the "habitability" of a home be banned by law from the summary page.

The committee has taken up the Home Inspection Report and reporting method(s) in depth, with REALTORS® expressing their inability to read, understand, and locate pertinent information within a home inspection report and the most contentious point of the report...what should and should not be included within the aforementioned "Summary Page". During the years of debate and the beginning of a mutual understanding of each other's problems, the committee invited other individuals from the real estate, home inspector, and legal professions to enlighten the committee on these topics.

The committee is in its sixth year of existence and has grown to 30+ members for the 2008 sessions. The committee consists of a good mix of residential and commercial REALTORS® brokers and home inspectors, and includes; two members of the NCHILBs special rules committee (*appointed to re-assess the most recent and ridiculous Home Inspection Report rules changes that the Governor put a stop to last November*), a member of the NCARs Forms Committee, a member of the NAR's legislative committee, professional real estate educators, past and present Presidents of NC-ASHI, and past members of the NCHILB.

This collection of professionals has given the committee a more accurate view into the workings between REALTORS® and home inspector and their associated groups and licensing boards. This collection of industry professionals has also opened corridors that allow the committee's questions, opinions, and decisions on these issues to find their way to the governing boards and committees that will be tasked with making decisions that will greatly affect both professions for many years to come.

The slate of issues that the 2008 WSRAR-REALTOR®/Home Inspector Committee has adopted to address or continue to address is an aggressive one. The issues slated for discussion and/or action are as follows: 1) the ongoing debate with regard to the Home Inspection Report Summary and its content, 2) continued debate on problems between agents and home inspectors, 3) promoting a NC-accredited educational program for REALTORS® on home inspections, 4) home inspections vs. paragraph 16 dealing with repairs within the NC Offer to Purchase Contract, 5) review of Home Inspection reports their format, content, and adherence to the NCHILB Standards of Practice, 6) how to better educate buyers and sellers to the home inspection process and how it applies to their real estate "Offer to Purchase" contract, 7) the new and upcoming (2009) NC Offer to Purchase Contracts being formulated within the NCAR and contract alternatives, 8) Multiple Listing Service, 9) possession and use of Supra Key pads, 10) the need for REALTORS® to be present at home inspections, 11) the issue of the NCAR's influence within the NCHILB, and 12) to assist any other REALTOR® Association in NC in forming a REALTOR®/Home Inspector Committee. The Committee has also begun to comprise an open "Question and Answer" session, inviting all members and affiliate members (home inspectors) of the WSRAR. This session is tentatively scheduled for late summer or early fall.

If you do home inspections around the Winston-Salem area, it is clear to see that this Committee is making a difference within the day to day workings of REALTORS® and inspectors, especially with the agents, brokers, and inspectors that have participated. As good news travels, the understandings reached and information uncovered over the past years is being spread by participants throughout the area.

REALTORS® and home inspectors depend on each other to assist, guide, and protect the real-estate buying and selling public, not to mention a goodly portion of each others livelihood. It would only seem to be the natural chain of events that these groups should come together in a forum such as a REALTOR®/Home Inspector Committee. If any readers of this article would like more information on how to start such a committee in their area, contact the writer. Our meetings are open and the Committee would be happy for any interested parties to be our guest. We meet every third Tuesday of each month at 1:00pm in the WSRAR office building in Winston-Salem. If you have like-minded REALTORS® and Home Inspectors in your area, the Committee would be more than happy to send our representatives to you at your local REALTORS® Association location to explain how our committee works and how you can start your own REALTOR®/Home Inspector Committee.

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### Clever Tools You Should Have

A telescoping-handle mirror will help you look in places you can't reach, like into gutters, around the back of chimneys, inside and air handler, etc. An excellent one, 18" long with a 2" x 3" mirror is available at Advanced Auto Parts for about \$6. Got a favorite gadget you want to share? E-mail us at [jwoodmansee@bellsouth.net](mailto:jwoodmansee@bellsouth.net) and we will include it in a future newsletter.

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### Let the World Know That You Are An ASHI® Champion!

Need a large 9" ASHI® Member logo sticker for your truck? John Woodmansee has a small supply and will sell you one at cost (\$17). Look for him at April's Spring Conference, at any monthly NC-ASHI® meeting or call the office at (336) 768-5992 to reserve yours!

## WHAT IS AN ASSOCIATE HOME INSPECTOR? by Glenn Church

The NCHILB has defined an Associate Home Inspector as:

### § 143-151.52. Requirements to be licensed as an associate home inspector.

To be licensed as an associate home inspector, a person must do all of the following:

- (1) Submit a completed application to the Board upon a form provided by the Board.
- (2) Pass a licensing examination prescribed by the Board.
- (3) Pay the applicable fees.
- (4) Have a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- (5) Be employed by or affiliated with or intend to be employed by or affiliated with a licensed home inspector and submit a sworn statement by that licensed home inspector certifying that the licensed home inspector will "actively supervise and train the applicant."

From this definition it is clear that beyond the application, test, fees and a high school diploma or equivalent the Associate Home Inspector must "be employed or affiliated with or intend to be employed by or affiliated with a licensed home inspector". Additionally the associate home inspector must "submit a sworn statement by the licensed home inspector certifying that the licensed home inspector will "actively supervise and train the applicant.""

Two concepts are used in these statements which are not defined in the Rules of the Board. The fact that "affiliated" and "actively supervise" were not originally defined in 1996 when the Rules were first published has resulted in a myriad of issues that lead to the proposed definition of "actively supervise" which was presented on March 9, 2007.

The Board defined "actively supervise" to mean: The Board members unanimously approved an interpretation of the term "actively supervise and train the applicant" to mean, the licensed home inspector shall be in the presence of and provide direct supervision of the associate during the inspection and report writing process throughout the training period. This will become effective on October 1, 2007...

Then to clarify the March 9, 2007 interpretation the following additional interpretation was published: The home inspector does not have to be constantly in the actual presence of the associate but he must be physically on-site during the entire time and available to the associate. The home inspector is equally responsible for any errors committed by the associate.

These interpretations lead to a ground swell of concern by the associate and licensed home inspectors across the state. For many of the multi-inspector firms these interpretations spelled an end to growing new home inspectors via the associate license.

Collectively many of us voiced our objections to this course of action by the Board at the September 14, 2007 meeting and the end result was that the Board tabled the implementation of this interpretation until the spring of 2008.

At the January 2008 meeting of the Board the following 1<sup>st</sup> draft was presented by Mr. David Jones:

#### New Section.1005

If an applicant is licensed as an associate home inspector, the following requirements must be met:

- a) The associate inspector shall operate under the business entity of the supervising home inspector, as an employee or subcontractor.
- b) During the first 50 inspections performed by the associate, they shall be in the physical presence of the licensed home inspector and directly supervised by the licensed home inspector during the home inspection.
- c) Licensed home inspectors must have held a full NC license for at least 3 years and must have performed at least 1000 home inspections in order to be qualified to supervise associate home inspectors.

The current state of this issue is becoming clearer with regard to what the Board is thinking. However, as with all governance documents one must ask the question, "What was in the mind of the crafters of the original words?"

I do not know the answer to this question but will risk a speculation that the intent was to provide a gateway for the training of new home inspectors via a process of apprenticeship. If apprenticeship was the concept, then what will the latest proposal do to the process as originally intended?

The proposal establishes the business relationship between the associate and the licensed inspector as an employee or subcontractor. The number of inspections the associate must perform with direct supervision is set at 50 inspections at the beginning of the process. Lastly the licensed inspector must have been licensed for a minimum of 3 years and must have completed 1000 inspections to be qualified to supervise an associate inspector.

In my opinion this sets realistic and reasonable boundaries to the apprenticeship process. It clearly defines minimum requirements for both the trainer and the trainee.

What does this do to current practices in training across the state? It will remove some trainers. It will stop some associates from becoming inspectors. It will cost the trainer and associate more time and money in the process. If the associate is an employee the trainer may be required to obtain workman's compensation insurance. Other costs the trainer may have is increased E&O and general liability premiums. It will establish a higher level of commitment between the two parties by linking the trainer to the associate via a contract for the services rendered. This will make the trainer more invested and legally accountable for the actions of the associate.

The list above is by no means exhaustive but in my opinion pushes the training process in the correct direction of greater accountability. Some may say it is restrictive but I believe the ever increasing level of rigor required of home inspectors demands such accountability. This action will also ensure that the public is not harmed by unqualified associate home inspectors conducting unsupervised inspections.

I have personally trained eight associate inspectors over the 13 years I have been involved in this business. The earlier associates did not gain as much from my training as the later. However, I have always been in an employee relationship with these associate or licensed inspectors and have been financially accountable for their services. These two facts make the trainer much more invested in the associate's knowledge, execution and report writing because the trainer will ultimately pay a price if omissions are made.

It is clear that the future process of entering the inspection business in North Carolina is going to require a significant increase in the level of training and financial commitment for the associate. The trainer will find that the associate gains greater knowledge due to the proposed training requirements the Board is developing. However, the associate will still require direct oversight to ensure that the associate is executing the inspection with the benefit of the experienced trainer.

All of this points to a tightening of the entry process to help control the end product of the home inspector which is the written report. I hope that the Board will not see classroom training as the only necessary change in the entry process. Additional supervision in the field will be needed following the initial training to ensure that the new inspector is fully trained and equipped to complete the task of inspecting and writing the report. It will be interesting to see how these changes roll out and what impact they have on the future of new individuals entering the home inspection profession. I for one am very pleased to see the entry bar being raised by the NCHILB.

Editor's Note: Glenn Church was asked to write this analysis and historical review because of his commitment to the apprentice process. Read David Jones' report for the NCHILB's latest policy statement (03/28/08) on Associate Home Inspector supervision.

## **North Carolina Chapter, American Society of Home Inspectors**

Marion Peeples, President

We meet on the third Wednesday of most months at the Courtyard Marriott in Burlington (Exit #141 on I-85, north side). Plan to join us and stay for casual dinner after the meeting. Visitors are always welcome. Visit our website: [ncashi.com](http://ncashi.com).

Our Educational Conference for Spring will be held **April 11-12, 2008** at the Greensboro Clarion Hotel. Glenn Church presents the NCHILB mandated course on Friday afternoon (4 hr. credit), and on Saturday Peter Drenan presents on Structures, Exteriors and Mechanicals for Home Inspectors (8 hr. credit). The challenging Peer Review experience is being offered on Friday, April 11.

### **April 11-12, 2008 -- Spring Educational Conference & Peer Review, Greensboro**

May-- Tankless Water Heaters

June-- Engineered Structural components

July-- to be announced later

August-- Savings and Retirement Issues for the Self-Employed (Dr. Larry Hungerford)

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