

HOME INSPECTIONS HELP BEAT RELOCATION BLUES

When a business executive has to uproot his entire family and move to a new home in another town because of his job, the last thing he needs is a houseful of problems. A leaky roof, a flooded basement or a temperamental heating system are more than just nuisances. They represent unexected financial hardships and unwelcome distractions from the responsibilities of his new position.

In order to ensure that the housing aspect of their relocation goes smoothly, people who are anticipating a corporate move in the near future would be well advised to hire a professional home inspector before committing to the purchase of their new house. A pre-purchase home inspection will provide them with an evaluation of the mechanical and structural components of the house before purchase is made, thereby avoiding unpleasant surprises and repair expenses after the move.

Perhaps the most important part of the home inspection process is the selection of the home inspector. This is not as simple as it might seem. The profession is relatively new and, in the absence of Provincial regulation, many unqualified amateurs have attempted to make their fortune by setting up shop as home inspectors virtually overnight. For an individual who is moving to new and unfamiliar surroundings, the difficulty is greatly compounded by having to make these arrangements long distance.

The Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors (CAHPI) will assist a family who is considering a move to a new location, in finding qualified professional home inspectors in their area. The CAHPI is a non-profit self-regulating professional organization of independent home inspectors which can serve as a central network of home buyer information for the families of corporate executives on the move.

CAHPI's Code of Ethics forbids its members from engaging in any activity which might be construed as a conflict of interest. For example, a CAHPI inspector may not use home inspections as a vehicle to obtain repair contracts or even to recommend a contractor for repair work, lest he be suspected of giving biased evaluations.

CAHPI not only defines its members' responsibilities, it individually screens applicants on the basis of technical expertise and professional experience. Once admitted, an inspector is expected to stay current with the latest building technologies and inspection techniques, by the reading material distributed as well as attending the monthly meetings where technical speakers are on the agenda for the educational portion of the meetings. Annual Educational Conferences and regional seminars/workshops are also held by the Association.

Only individual inspectors may become members of the CAHPI; there is no category for "company membership". Home buyers should therefore request confirmation that the individual inspector doing the actual inspection is a member of the organization.

Most home inspectors recommend that their clients accompany them on the inspection in order to learn more about the house first-hand and to ask specific questions as they arise. In a relocation situation, this is often not possible, and so it is critical for the home buyer to inform his inspector in advance if he will not be able to attend. He must then ask the inspector to include as much detail and information as possible in writing, since the inspection report will be an important factor in his final purchasing decision.

Finding faults in a home doesn't necessarily mean one shouldn't buy it, only that the type and amount of repairs will be known in advance. Many sellers are even willing to renegotiate the purchase price because of significant problems discovered in an inspection.

After the inspection, a buyer can proceed with the transaction confidently, having the peace of mind that comes from making a well-informed decision. Given that relocation is already a stressful time for the executive and his or her family, a pre-purchase home inspection can be a crucial element in making the transition a successful one.

For further information on Home Inspections, or to obtain the names of qualified home inspectors in your area, visit: www.cahpi.ca - and link to the website applicable to your province.