

Is A Cheap Inspection Best?

Is shopping around for the lowest cost for a home inspection the best way to protect your largest investment you will ever make? Not a chance! I have seen this several times where I would receive a call and the potential client at the other end of the phone is asking firstly "how much is the inspection going to cost me?" or "what do you charge for a home inspection?" Those type of people I would rather not forward my professional services to perform an inspection for. That's right, you heard me. If cost is an issue, I would not spend the whole day (4 to 6 hours) inspecting the home and the additional 3 to 4 hours preparing the report back at my office before it is emailed to my client.

What the home buyer should be asking are the following questions firstly:

1. What kind of experience do you have?

If the inspector doesn't have much of an answer, that's a big red flag. Experience and the right kind of training is key, since even if someone is an engineer, professional builder, plumber, electrician or heating/cooling tech, it doesn't mean they are qualified to inspect a home.

2. Are you a Certified Home Inspector (CHI)?

This is very important, the inspector should be a Certified Home Inspector (CHI) or Certified Property Inspector (CPI) and certified by the association they belong to such as with the British Columbia Institute of Property Inspectors (BCIPI). Not a Registered Home Inspector (RHI), a Associate Home Inspector that is working towards to be a home inspector or worse, a inspector in training.

3. How long have you been inspecting residential homes?

This will tell you what experience, knowledge and construction back ground the inspector has.

4. Can you provide references?

A large, satisfied client base is always a good sign. Get as many as possible from the inspector and call them.

5. Are you independent?

A home inspector is there to offer an unbiased assessment, and shouldn't be part of any construction or homebuilder group or offer repair services themselves.

6. What kind of equipment do they use?

A pen and paper with a paper check list, punch out or binder are simply not adequate. Do they bring many specialty equipment? A thorough inspection includes hard-to-reach places like the attic, roof and chimney. A finished written report with photos, diagrams, home information, etc.

7. Can I follow you around during the inspection?

A good inspector will encourage the potential buyer to take part and will clearly communicate any serious problems, and not bury them in a checklist.

8. Are you licensed with the Consumer Protection of BC?

If the inspector can not show identity as being a licensed inspector in the Province of British Columbia, he or she by law is not to be performing residential home inspections and should be reported immediately to the Consumer Protection of BC.

When referring a professional home inspector to your clients, you can be assured that all of the questions that should be asked as above can be honestly answered. With the knowledgeable experience and professionalism of nearly 25 years construction experience, 12 years of performing thousands of residential and commercial building inspections registered and certified by Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of British Columbia (ASTTBC) and British Columbia Institute of Property Inspectors (BCIPI), your clients are receiving the best for their home inspection needs.

The following are what some inspectors, Realtors and others are saying about cheap inspections and I strongly encourage to ask the eight important questions as mentioned before asking the inspector what his or hers fees are. The more questions you ask, the better you are to know the inspector and what you are going to receive.

A Home Inspectors View

As a home inspector, I have to say that many of these issues would be non-issues if the public were to change their mindsets about hiring the cheapest inspector in town! I inspect in the Durham/G.T.A, and I can't begin to tell you how many potential inspections I've lost, because far too many people shop by price, first and foremost. There are dozens of "so-called" home inspectors out there, marketing themselves at \$199.00-\$250.00. Folks have not yet caught on to the fact that, in this business; you get what you pay for. Why would any self respecting, well trained and experienced home inspector prostitute himself for so little? He/she has invested a lot of time and money in tools, as well as constantly upgrading his knowledge and skills through online training, and attending seminars and conferences locally, and sometimes far away. Why would an inspector with a lifetime of experience, and thousands of inspections under his/her belt give his services away for \$200.00? People who want to pay \$200.00 for an inspection on a home that is likely costing them \$300,000-\$1,000,000,000 deserve exactly what they get. The only inspectors who will charge those prices are likely going to be fresh out of school, with no experience or they just have had no training and haven't a clue as to what they're doing. I'm sure there must be an exception or two to that last statement, but I know it to be true 99% of the time. Many times I've had to go in and re-inspect a home done by a bargain basement inspector, and it's disgusting how many very obvious major defects are missed! Fair market value for a thorough inspection, with photos, should cost between \$350.00 and \$500.00, for an average late model home of 1000-2000 sq.ft. The highest price does not necessarily mean you've got the best, either, but chances are good that if an inspector has enough confidence in his experience, and inspection knowledge and skills to charge considerably more than his competitors.

A Home Buyer

Don't get screwed like we did when we bought our home. It was built by a father and two sons. The son we bought the home off of said he's a house inspector so we didn't need to get one. What a joke. We have more stuff to fix here because they cut corners everywhere.

A Professional Realtor

I am a realtor and I would highly recommend having a realtor suggest home inspectors. You should trust your realtor and their connections, or you should not use them. When asked by my clients about home inspectors, I have 3 that I would recommend. I have heard of some poor inspectors and I have had clients use them. I can't control who my client picks, but I am going to give them the best ones I know to interview. They are my clients and I would not wish a grow house accident on anyone. It affects your health, your homes value, your risk of fire/electrical issues and stigma. Why would you take the chance?? The more eyes and knowledge looking through your home, the better.

A Home Buyer

Your observations are correct -cheap inspectors not able to provide knowledge, documentation, client relations, service. It will not stop when community colleges and email exams certify students without mentor and extensive field experience. The only way you are going to extract them from the market place is to play their game, matching price while providing top-notch service. You will be in demand and these less knowledgeable will find another field to disrupt. Real estate agents get the point when purchasers start legal action. Hold your principals - meet the dollar challenge - old saying give the person enough rope and they will disappear. This is a national problem - everyone thinks they can be an inspector – experience and knowledge prevails. I am working through the same issues, more principals are saying get Victor to do the inspection. It did not take long to separate the field. Every day more are coming on board. Good Luck

Government should have a list of grown-op houses, but home inspectors should be able to find out too, especially for the ones not busted, home buyers are counting on their home inspectors. I am willing to pay more for better services, more importantly, peace of mind.