

## Tips to Avoid Bad Apples in the Home Inspection Industry

Home inspectors can be a real asset in the biggest financial transaction of your life. How can consumers make sure to avoid any "bad apples?"

Bad apples exist in every industry -- and home inspection is not immune. Unfortunately, home inspection is not regulated consistently across all states within the nation. There are also schools and Internet sites that offer credentials that make it appear that a home inspector is qualified. For example, recently a web site popped up offering to "certify" anyone as a Master Inspector for \$175.

The home inspection profession is a demanding profession that requires a broad base of knowledge in all areas of home construction, maintenance and safety issues. Consumers should only accept credentials from nationally based organizations such as the National Association of Home Inspectors, Inc. (NAHI™).

Buying a home is the largest financial commitment most people will make in their lifetimes. This isn't the time to worry about being swindled by the person who is supposed to provide protection from a home full of defects. And that's just what a good home inspector can be -- a great asset.

How can consumers keep from hiring a bad apple inspector in the first place? Take time to become educated about the home inspection process. Talk to agents about home inspections or take real estate classes. Ask Realtors®, friends, and coworkers for references. They can recommend inspectors to look to and ones to stay away from. When contacting the home inspector, be sure to ask about the following things:

1. Experience and education (what credentials do they hold and what organizations awarded them)?
2. Are they full time inspectors? How many inspections do they perform in one year?
3. Can consumers attend the inspection and ask questions during the inspection?
4. Can consumers see what their report looks like?
5. Ask if they have had complaints or lawsuits against them. Do some homework with the Better Business Bureau (BBB). The BBB logs complaints against companies in your area, including home inspectors.
6. Although most people will ask about price first, it should be the last question asked in a financial transaction this large. Typically the cost of the inspection is only 1%-2% of the total transaction value. Many inspections will uncover issues many times the fee charged.

The National Association of Home Inspectors, Inc. (NAHI™) is a 20-year old non-profit association established to promote and develop the home inspection industry. NAHI provides educational opportunities to benefit its members, enhance the home inspection industry and protect consumers from fraudulent, misleading or deceptive practices. The NAHI Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics was established to promote the professionalism of home inspectors and to provide a consistent method of performing home inspections. Consumers may obtain referrals to NAHI members in their area or receive a copy of the NAHI Standards of Practice & Code of Ethics by calling NAHI toll-free at 800-448-3942.