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Canadian Home Inspection Industry Still in Turmoil: Consumers Beware!

Unfortunately for consumers, the Canadian home inspection industry continues to be largely unregulated. CPBH hears regularly from consumers wondering about who is qualified to inspect their home. CPBH also hears from consumers who have had a negative experience with a home inspector.

Given the ongoing problems in the new home construction industry, we suggest that all homes, whether resale or newly built, be inspected by a *qualified* private home inspector before the consumer takes possession.

Further, for newly built homes, we suggest hiring a *qualified* private home inspector to inspect at key points during construction, e.g., before the drywall goes up. The homeowner needs to have this right to inspect during written in their purchase contract with the builder before the contract with the builder is signed.

Some tips BEFORE you hire a home inspector:

- Inquire about whether the inspector is qualified to identify any building code violations in his/her report. The clear identification of any building code violations in the inspector's report is important to many consumers, e.g., for submission to their municipality, for submission to the warranty provider, and/or for court purposes if there is litigation.
- Inquire about whether the inspector is willing to testify in court if required, e.g., in the event that construction defects are found, but the builder/warranty provider will not address.
- Obtain a copy of the inspector's contract well in advance of the home inspection, and review it carefully before you sign it.
- In reviewing the inspector's contract, determine if there is any limit on the home inspector's liability. For example, some home inspectors have a clause in their inspection contract limiting their liability to the value of the fees paid by the homeowner for the home inspection. If there is such a limitation clause, if the home inspector misses something of significance, the inspector's liability is limited to the home inspection fee, e.g., \$400.
- Perform other due diligence, such as asking for references (and checking them out), check with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) for complaints, etc.