

CAHI MONTHLY NEWS



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello CAHI members,

During a presentation at one of our monthly meeting, our speaker mentioned that his charge to inspect a pool was \$400.00. That's \$400.00 for a single component. Other single component inspections, such as scoping a sewer line...\$500, septic evals...\$300 plus. Still there are home inspectors out there charging less for a complete home inspection, even though they are evaluating every component in the home.

My question to all of you is..."Do you value your knowledge and service?" If you do, it should reflect in your pricing. As the price of insurance, taxes, food, clothing and everything else is spiraling upward, home inspectors fees remain the same, or are actually dropping. Taking the rise in the cost of doing business out of your profit is ridiculous. Combine that with the potential liability pitfall that we all absent mindedly take on and we have created a potential financial catastrophe.

We want to be considered professionals, but many are pricing themselves as amateurs. Consider the cost of becoming a home inspector, the time and training that you put into it, all the knowledge that you must accumulate and put to use to perform your job.

Last month I was on an inspection where the buyers brought in an engineer to evaluate the framing of a 1920 colonial in New Haven. \$260 for 1/2 hours work. This was a walk through, it did not include a report. I was there three hours so at that rate my inspection fee would have been \$1560. This guy stated the obvious and got paid handsomely for it. We must find the unobvious at a bargain rate.

I encourage you to re-examine what you have put into your profession so far. If you want to be considered a professional, charge like one.

RAISE YOUR PRICES! That's right I said it and it is in writing. **RAISE YOUR PRICES!!!!**

What we do is so undervalued it's not funny. Lets use the price that Realtors like to tell people is what the normal price for a home inspection...\$350. You get paid \$350 and you find the roof of a small ranch is bad and needs to be replaced...bam, \$3500. That's a payback that's ten fold. Where else can you give somebody a dollar and get ten back? No where. But miss the termite infestation and damage and you may be paying ten times what you made. **RAISE YOUR PRICES.** Re-evaluate. Everything is going up but the fee for a home inspection!

Stan

MONTHLY MEETING – Details & Info

Speaker- Joseph Giaino Joseph is the educational director of the Connecticut Pest Control Association. > Presentation will include termite and termite inspections. > Review of the NPMA-33 > Tools needed and much more...

CAHI's regular monthly meetings are held at the Holiday Inn located at 201 Washington Ave (RT 5), North Haven. Meetings are free to members. Most meetings are on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm.

Guests are always welcome! Guests may attend 2 free monthly meetings to experience our presentations, meet our members, and receive a CE attendance certificate.

Joining CAHI may be done at anytime of the year through our Membership Page

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Meeting Dates	
Nov 19	Termite and Termite Inspections Joseph Giaino
Dec	NO MEETING Merry Christmas & Happy Chanukah
	Regular Meeting Location: (otherwise noted) Best Western 201 Washington Ave. North Haven, CT. (203) 239-6700



Newsletter Article or Guest Speaker

CAHI will pay \$25.00 to any member who provides us with a guest speaker for one of our monthly meetings or for any article that is submitted and used in the monthly newsletter.

Articles must be a PDF or Word document. Articles should pertain to our industry.

We will review articles for content and reserve the right to edit, use and/or refuse them.

WANTED, A FEW GOOD PEOPLE!

CAHI can be a much more powerful organization and can bring so much more to the table if more members became involved with the board. We have ideas to be explored that can benefit us all. However, the effort to make the month to month operation of our organization takes all of our available time as board members. We ask for volunteers to work on committees that will strengthen our organization and move us far beyond any home inspection organization in the northeast.



We are currently seeking an Information Tech savvy website. We are also looking for help with mailings, from your home, with no requirement to attend board meetings. Anyone interested, please contact me or any other board member.

member to operate the back end of our web research, etc that can be done

If you have a story, article, or picture that you would like to share with the other members, or if you would like to get involved in helping our board explore the future of CAHI, let us know. It's your organization, get involved!

Stan Bajerski

Share Your Thoughts and Experiences

As a home inspector, I have seen many unusual things over the years. I am sure all of you have as well. Now that most of us are using photographs in our reports, these unusual items are recorded for posterity. I encourage each and every one of you to consider taking a picture and or an unusual condition that you have come across and write a short article about it. Just a few lines, one page with the picture, and submit it to our newsletter. We really want the membership to become more involved with the organization. Personal stories and encounters are always more interesting to read about.

If there are any products or situations that you would like to have addressed in our newsletter, email me and let me know. I will research and attempt to gather interesting information on the subject for all to read.

In addition to being a good article for debate or in our case argument, it is a great starter for the home inspector's Christmas Want List. Thought it best to put in our November newsletter so you do not have to give out ideas to friend and family at the last minute.

Home Inspection Equipment

Home inspectors are actually required to use only a few types of equipment. In theory, an inspector could perform an inspection that complies with most of their Standards of Practice using only two pieces of equipment: a flashlight and an electrical tester capable of testing ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) devices.

However, there is equipment an inspector needs in order to perform inspections safely.

Inspectors should have a respirator for the times when they must enter areas containing materials that may introduce particulates into the air that are potentially hazardous if inhaled. Dust masks are inadequate. Respirators must be equipped to filter out both particulates that represent biological hazards, such as viral, bacterial and fungal organisms, and hazards caused by material lodging in the respiratory system, as with asbestos and other carcinogens. Other particulates that are small enough to become airborne may not be carcinogens but may cause other types of respiratory illness. Gloves and safety glasses used when working around exposed electrical components are other common safety items.

Inspectors use many other types of equipment because their use allows the inspector to offer an inspection of enhanced value. Moisture meters and infrared cameras are good examples. Both of these pieces of equipment allow inspectors to identify unacceptable conditions that cannot be identified visually. Although not required by the Standards of Practice, inspectors sometimes feel that offering inspections using these tools will allow them to provide a more valuable inspection, giving them an advantage in the competitive inspection business.

Some types of equipment are used because they make the inspection process easier or faster for the inspector. Telescoping ladders are a good example. They can be collapsed and carried through a home with less risk of bumping into walls and furniture. Infrared thermometers allow inspectors to check the temperature of heating and cooling system registers located in inaccessible places, such as under beds and other large, heavy furniture.

Inspectors are free to use whatever equipment they choose, as long as their inspections comply with their Standards of Practice. Here are examples of some of the equipment used by home inspectors.



This photo shows an example of the equipment typically used by an inspector. Equipment is taken to the inspection in two cases. Inspectors may use a bag, a bucket or a general-purpose toolbox.

Electrical Testers

Inspectors use a variety of electrical testers according to their preference and how much they are willing or can afford to pay. Generally, the more expensive testers identify a wider range of defects than less expensive testers.



Electrical tester: This type of tester is widely used but indicates only the more common defects. The button is for testing GFCI devices and the three colored lights indicate various defects. It does not test for defective AFCI devices that are often required in certain rooms in new homes. It tests 120-volt electrical receptacles but not 240-volt receptacles. Almost every inspector has one and many inspectors use only this tester when checking electrical components. The photo also shows one mounted on a retractable key chain for easy use and costs between \$10 and \$15.



AFCI/GFCI tester: This type of electrical tester checks for proper operation of both arc-fault and ground-fault circuit interrupter devices. It is used by some inspectors. This is the SureTest Ideal 61-059 tester and costs about \$170.



AFCI/GFCI tester for arc-fault and ground-fault circuit interrupters: This circuit tester tests arc fault- and ground fault-protected electrical circuits to confirm that protection devices are working properly. It is used by some inspectors. This SureTest Ideal 61-164 tester costs about \$260.



Voltage indicator: This very simple device is used to determine whether voltage is present in a device or in wiring. It has limited accuracy and may give positive readings where no house current is present but levels of generally harmless static electricity are present. The cost is about \$10.



Electrical tester: This tester tests for the presence of both 120-volt and 240-volt electrical current. It is useful for testing electrical receptacles for dryers when no dryer is installed in the home at the time of the inspection.



Other Equipment

Flashlights: Home inspectors are always searching for the perfect flashlight. Powerful flashlights are good for seeing in dark areas where access is difficult or impossible but the strong reflection can make taking photos difficult. Most inspectors own several types. Inspectors should always carry a small spare for safety. Losing the main light unexpectedly can leave an inspector in a dangerous situation if they have no back-up light.



A half-face respirator



A full-face respirator

Half-face and full-face respirators are good for respiratory protection but not very comfortable, especially in the heat. Many inspectors may own them but may not actually use them on a regular basis. They are important to have available because some areas are dangerous to enter without respiratory protection. Some types of organisms can even enter the human body through the mucus membranes around the eyes.



A **combustible-gas detector** detects small amounts of combustible gases. Most inspectors use their noses since the most common combustible gases – natural gas and propane – have odors that are easy to detect. This Bacharach brand costs \$350.

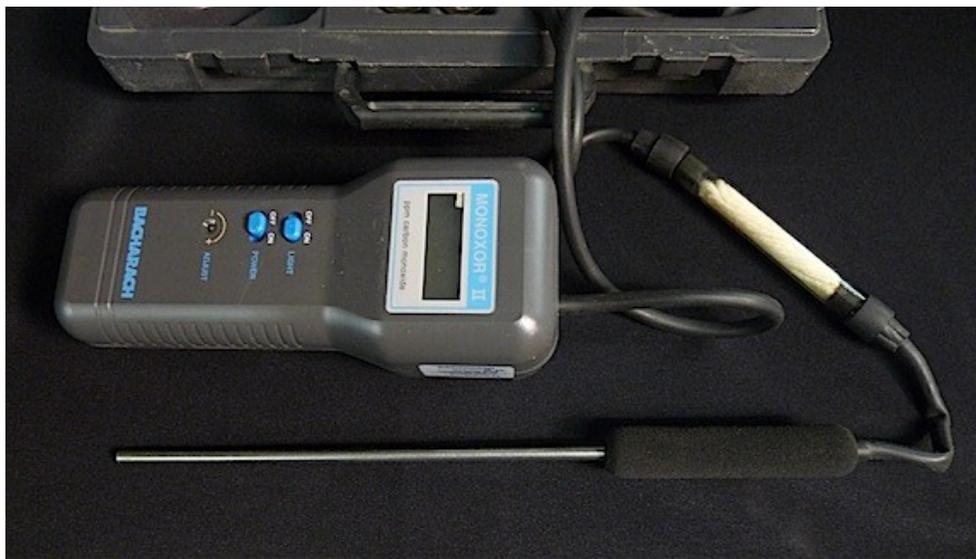


Moisture meter in “search” mode



Moisture meter in “measure” mode

Moisture meters come in two types: search and measure. Using the meter in search mode, inspectors can find elevated moisture levels hidden behind a variety of materials, such as tile and vinyl. This feature helps locate plumbing leaks hidden beneath shower and bathroom floors. Using the meter in search mode allows inspectors to find areas with elevated moisture levels but does not provide a measurement of those levels. Using the meter in measure mode allows inspectors to actually measure levels in materials by touching the material with the two pins. Some moisture meters have both search and measure features. Most meters have either one or the other. Used by most inspectors, they cost between \$350 and \$550.



Carbon monoxide analyzer: Carbon monoxide (CO) is a tasteless, odorless, toxic gas produced by combustion appliances, such as water heaters, furnaces and boilers. CO can accumulate in the human body over time to a point at which it can be fatal. Excessive levels can be produced when combustion appliances operate inefficiently and need servicing or when they are improperly vented. Analyzers measure CO levels and give results in parts per million (PPM). Used by some inspectors, they cost between \$250 and \$500.



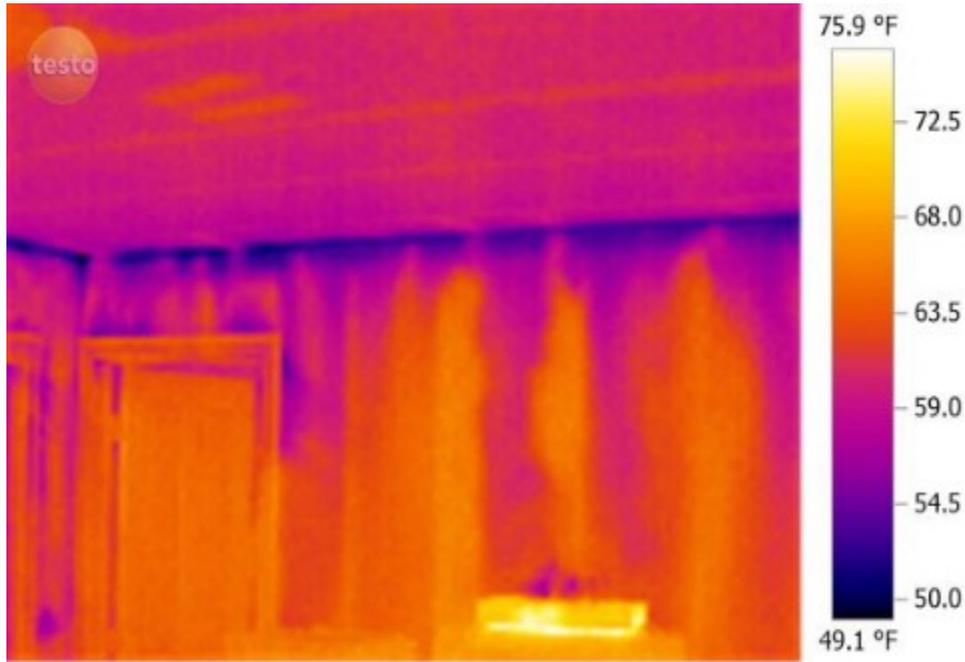
The digital readout on an **infrared thermometer** tells the temperature of whatever you point it at using an infrared beam. It's used for checking the temperature of heating and cooling equipment, including registers, hot water, etc., and the temperature of electrical equipment, such as circuit breakers. Infrared thermometers are also convenient for checking the temperature of items that are difficult to reach. Most home inspectors use these and they cost up to \$100.



Continuous radon monitors test for the radon. Radon testing is an ancillary inspection for which clients pay an additional fee. Radon levels in homes vary by area. Some areas have little or no radon, and some can have high levels. Continuous radon monitors sample the air once an hour. At the end of the 48-hour minimum test period, the monitor gives a result that is the average of all samples. This model costs about \$550.



An infrared camera



An image taken by an infrared camera

Infrared (IR) cameras form images using infrared radiation in a manner similar to the way a conventional camera forms images using visible light. Different colors correspond to different temperatures, so an inspector is able to identify areas that are abnormally hot or cold. The image above shows cold areas at the top of the walls caused by settling of the insulation. The ability to offer it as an ancillary inspection varies among inspectors.



Microwave testers confirm that the magnetron that powers microwave ovens is working. It does not read microwave levels. Some inspectors use them. They cost less than \$10.



Telescoping magnets make it easier to retrieve dropped items, such as screws from the main electrical panel cover. They are used by some inspectors and cost about \$10.



Telescoping adjustable mirrors are easy to carry and useful for looking into areas where accessibility is limited, such as behind siding and stucco to confirm the presence of housewrap.



The wick of a **smoke pen** produces smoke that shows the movement of air. A smoke pen can be used to check combustion appliances for back-drafting that can pull toxic exhaust gases out of an exhaust flue and into the living space. It might also be used to show that return-air vents are operating properly. They are used by some inspectors and cost about \$15.



A **compass** is used to determine the home's directional orientation, which can be helpful if the home has energy-efficient features or if the client requests that the home's elevation be described by the direction it faces. Some inspectors carry them and they cost less than \$10.



Safety glasses are good protection for situations in which inspectors may find their eyes or vision at risk. Crawlspace and attics have protruding wires and fasteners. Electrical panels may give off sparks or debris during short circuits. They are used by some inspectors and owned by most, and cost about \$10.



Electrical gloves should have high dielectrical and physical strength. They typically consist of liner gloves under rubber insulating gloves, with protective leather gloves worn over these. Manufacturers recommend that all home inspectors wear electrical gloves that meet ASTM D-120/EIC903 specifications. Their cost is around \$170.



High-traction **roof boots** with replaceable soles make it easier for inspectors to walk roofs without slipping. They run about \$80. When the soles become worn, they can be changed out.



Toolkits: Although inspectors are not required by most Standards of Practice to disassemble anything, sometimes the removal of a few screws can allow easier inspection of various items, such as furnaces. They cost about \$10 each.



Collapsed telescoping ladder



Extended telescoping ladder

Telescoping ladders are easy to carry through homes without bumping into walls and can be carried in the trunk of a car. They can be more dangerous than other types of ladders because it cannot be visually confirmed that the locking mechanisms are fully engaged. They are used by some inspectors and cost about \$170.



Collapsed articulating ladder



Extended articulating ladder



Articulating ladder in step-ladder configuration

Articulating ladders can be used as both step ladders and extension ladders and will fit in the trunk of many

cars. They are used by many inspectors and cost about \$300.



Tool vest: Inspectors need to carry a variety of tools while they inspect a home. Flashlights, a moisture meter, infrared thermometer, electrical testers, cell phone, and a mirror are just some of the equipment they commonly carry. A vest allows inspectors to work hands-free and gives them quick access to their equipment. They are used by some inspectors and cost between \$60 and \$140.



Spectroscope: Safely inspect and photograph roofs. This 38' tall telescoping pole camera allows you to safely take high quality pictures of the roofs of homes from the ground. Simply connect the Samsung ST150F wireless camera to your Apple iOS or Android enabled smartphone or tablet, extend the pole, and start capturing photos. You can also order the Spectroscope without a camera and use your own wireless camera. Available through www.InspectorOutlet.com

This list represents equipment commonly used by inspectors. The specific items inspectors use may vary with climate zone, the type of inspections they offer, the type of home being inspected, and personal preference.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning and Detectors

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas that forms from incomplete combustion of fuels, such as natural or liquefied petroleum gas, oil, wood or coal.

Facts and Figures

- 480 U.S. residents died between 2001 and 2003 from non-fire-related carbon-monoxide poisoning.
- Most CO exposures occur during the winter months, especially in December (including 56 deaths, and 2,157 non-fatal exposures), and in January (including 69 deaths and 2,511 non-fatal exposures). The peak time of day for CO exposure is between 6 and 10 p.m.
- Many experts believe that CO poisoning statistics understate the problem. Because the symptoms of CO poisoning mimic a range of common health ailments, it is likely that a large number of mild to mid-level exposures are never identified, diagnosed, or accounted for in any way in carbon monoxide statistics. Out of all reported non-fire carbon-monoxide incidents, 89% or almost nine out of 10 of them take place in a home.

Physiology of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

When CO is inhaled, it displaces the oxygen that would ordinarily bind with hemoglobin, a process that effectively suffocates the body. CO can poison slowly over a period of several hours, even in low concentrations. Sensitive organs, such as the brain, heart and lungs, suffer the most from a lack of oxygen.

High concentrations of carbon monoxide can kill in less than five minutes. At low concentrations, it will require a longer period of time to affect the body. Exceeding the EPA concentration of 9 parts per million (ppm) for more than eight hours may have adverse health effects. The limit of CO exposure for healthy workers, as prescribed by the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration, is 50 ppm.

Potential Sources of Carbon Monoxide

Any fuel-burning appliances which are malfunctioning or improperly installed can be a source of CO, such as:

- furnaces;
- stoves and ovens;
- water heaters;
- dryers;
- room and space heaters;
- fireplaces and wood stoves;
- charcoal grills;
- automobiles;
- clogged chimneys or flues;
- space heaters;
- power tools that run on fuel;
- gas and charcoal grills;
- certain types of swimming pool heaters; and
- boat engines.

PPM	% CO in air	Health Effects in Healthy Adults	Source/ Comments
0	0%	no effects; this is the normal level in a properly operating heating appliance	
35	0.0035%	maximum allowable workplace exposure limit for an eight-hour work shift	The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
50	0.005%	maximum allowable workplace exposure limit for an eight-hour work shift	OSHA
100	0.01%	slight headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, errors in judgment	
125	0.0125%		workplace alarm must sound (OSHA)
200	0.02%	headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness	
400	0.04%	severe headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, confusion; can be life-threatening after three hours of exposure	evacuate area immediately
800	0.08%	convulsions, loss of consciousness; death within three hours	evacuate area immediately
12,000	1.2%	nearly instant death	

CO Detector Placement

CO detectors can monitor exposure levels, but do not place them:

- directly above or beside fuel-burning appliances, as appliances may emit a small amount of carbon monoxide upon start-up;
 - within 15 feet of heating and cooking appliances, or in or near very humid areas, such as bathrooms;
 - within 5 feet of kitchen stoves and ovens, or near areas locations where household chemicals and bleach are stored (store such chemicals away from bathrooms and kitchens, whenever possible);
 - in garages, kitchens, furnace rooms, or in any extremely dusty, dirty, humid, or greasy areas;
 - in direct sunlight, or in areas subjected to temperature extremes. These include unconditioned crawlspaces, unfinished attics, un-insulated or poorly insulated ceilings, and porches;
- in turbulent air near ceiling fans, heat vents, air conditioners, fresh-air returns, or open windows. Blowing air may prevent carbon monoxide from reaching the CO sensors.

Do place CO detectors:

- within 10 feet of each bedroom door and near all sleeping areas, where it can wake sleepers. The Consumer Prod-

uct Safety Commission (CPSC) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) recommend that every home have at least one carbon monoxide detector for each floor of the home, and within hearing range of each sleeping area;

- on every floor of your home, including the basement (source: International Association of Fire Chiefs/IAFC);
 - near or over any attached garage. Carbon monoxide detectors are affected by excessive humidity and by close proximity to gas stoves (source: City of New York);
 - near, but not directly above, combustion appliances, such as furnaces, water heaters, and fireplaces, and in the garage (source: UL); and
- on the ceiling in the same room as permanently installed fuel-burning appliances, and centrally located on every habitable level, and in every HVAC zone of the building (source: National Fire Protection Association 720). This rule applies to commercial buildings.

In North America, some national, state and local municipalities require installation of CO detectors in new and existing homes, as well as commercial businesses, among them: Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont and New York City, and the Canadian province of Ontario. Installers are encouraged to check with their local municipality to determine what specific requirements have been enacted in their jurisdiction.

How can I prevent CO poisoning?

- Purchase and install carbon monoxide detectors with labels showing that they meet the requirements of the new UL standard 2034 or Comprehensive Safety Analysis 6.19 safety standards.
- Make sure appliances are installed and operated according to the manufacturer's instructions and local building codes. Have the heating system professionally inspected by a licensed heating technician and serviced annually to ensure proper operation. The inspector should also check chimneys and flues for blockages, corrosion, partial and complete disconnections, and loose connections.
- Never service fuel-burning appliances without the proper knowledge, skill and tools. Always refer to the owner's manual when performing minor adjustments and when servicing fuel-burning equipment.
- Never operate a portable generator or any other gasoline engine-powered tool either in or near an enclosed space, such as a garage, house or other building. Even with open doors and windows, these spaces can trap CO and allow it to quickly build to lethal levels.
- Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent unless it is specifically designed for use in an enclosed space and provides instructions for safe use in an enclosed area.
- Never burn charcoal inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent.
- Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.
- Never use gas appliances, such as ranges, ovens or clothes dryers to heat your home.
- Never operate un-vented fuel-burning appliances in any room where people are sleeping.
- During home renovations, ensure that appliance vents and chimneys are not blocked by tarps or debris. Make sure appliances are in proper working order when renovations are complete.
- Do not place generators in the garage or close to the home. People lose power in their homes and get so excited about using their gas-powered generator that they don't pay attention to where it is placed. The owner's manual should explain how far the generator should be from the home.
- Clean the chimney. Open the hatch at the bottom of the chimney to remove the ashes. Hire a chimney sweep annually.
- Check vents. Regularly inspect your home's external vents to ensure they are not obscured by debris, dirt or snow.

In summary, carbon monoxide is a dangerous poison that can be created by various household appliances. CO detectors must be placed strategically throughout the home or business in order to alert occupants of high levels of the gas.

CREDIT CARDS

I do not take credit cards and had no interest in starting. This “advertisement” found on a Linked In forum might get me to think about it.

WHY YOU WANT TO GET PAID BEFORE THE INSPECTION

When I talk to home inspectors about credit cards, I often hear, “I just take cash or check at time of the inspection, that way I don’t have to pay the credit card fees.” This article will give you 4 reasons that it is important for your business to get paid before the inspection date.

#1: Save Money

Let me start off by stating that I understand no one wants to pay credit card processing fees. I know everyone hates them and I don’t blame you. However, by accepting payment before the inspection (which generally requires a credit card transaction via your Home Inspection Software or a link on your website), you are actually saving both time and money. Let’s say you book an inspection with the Jones’ for next week. The next day, Mr. Jones is talking to his neighbor and mentions, “Yep, we are just waiting on the home inspection now.” Then the neighbor says, “My brother in law is a home inspector, he’s dirt cheap, you should use him.” If Mr. Jones has already paid you through the link you sent him the day before, his answer is, “Oh, I already paid for it, it’s too late to back out.” However, if, at the time of booking, you just told him to pay you when the inspection is done, his answer is going to be, “Oh, how much does he charge? Give me his number and I’ll give him a call.” Or, instead of talking to his neighbor, maybe he gets a flyer in the mail, or his Realtor tells him to use another guy, or any number of reasons he may decide to use someone else.

Now, I realize that you don’t get a lot of cancellations; probably around 4 out of a hundred (maybe more, maybe less). However, if you can save just two home inspections out of a hundred from cancelling, you have just covered the cost of your credit card processing fees for the next hundred home inspections with some to spare! If your customer pays beforehand, in their mind, it’s a done deal and it is very unlikely that they cancel. Getting paid before the inspection reduces cancellations and, therefore, makes you more money.

#2 Save Time

I realize it doesn’t take a lot of time to collect money at the end of a home inspection, probably only 2-3 minutes (i.e. waiting for them to find their check book then write a check, or waiting while they find and then count the cash, or the time it takes for you to run the transaction on Square or whatever credit card service you are currently using, and finally getting them a receipt of some kind). That means you are spending around 5 hours out of every hundred home inspections collecting money. That doesn’t even count the time it takes to take that money to the bank and record the transaction into your accounting or home inspection software. Most home inspectors will say that their time is worth at least \$150 to \$200 an hour. Is spending 5+ hours out of every hundred home inspections collecting money really a good use of your time?

#3 Convenience

I already mentioned the fact that by accepting payment before the inspection you are saving the hassle of taking deposits to the bank, which, we all can agree, is very inconvenient. On top of that, if you are using a home inspection software (like ISN, Home Gauge or Horizon for example), when the customer pays with a credit card the software will automatically update that invoice as being paid so, unlike cash or check, you don’t have to open the software and mark the transaction as being paid... now that’s convenient. Finally, wouldn’t it be nice, if at the end of the inspection, you could just shake their hand, thank them for their business and move on to the next inspection? It is especially convenient to have been paid beforehand on those few inspections where you found a problem with the home that you know will be a deal killer for the homebuyer (“um...Mr. Jones, we found mold in the crawl space, rot in the walls and the roof needs replaced. Now, about that \$450 you owe me....”).

#4 It’s cheaper than you think

Accepting credit cards can cost much less than you think. Right now we have card not present rates starting at 1.69% (i.e. the customer will pay via a link versus swiping a card). We have month to month contracts with no cancelation fees. Our credit card processing service integrates with most home inspection software programs, including ISN, Home Inspector Pro, Horizon, Home Gauge, ICHI and many more. Finally, if you sign up with us between now and the end of the ASHI conference in Philadelphia (we will be at booth #103) we will give you a \$100.00 credit on your account and put your name into a \$1000.00 cash drawing that will take place on the last day of the conference (you don’t need to be present to win). On top of that, if you are already processing, we will give you \$500.00 if we can’t save you money.

If you have any questions please feel free to give me a call.

Aaron Fuhriman
Owner of Guardian Small Business Consulting and Financial Services
1-800-608-7363 ext. 605

This is an article available on the state's Department of Public Health's website. This is what our clients are reading and therefore background information we should be aware of. The author missed that chimneys and direct vent exhaust lines should also be kept obstruction free. You can probably think of other items.

Department of Public Health

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless and deadly gas produced by the incomplete burning of fossil fuels used in appliances such as furnaces and portable gas generators.

As the cold weather approaches, here are some tips to prevent carbon monoxide build-up in your home:

- **Have a carbon monoxide detector in your home.** Since you can't see or smell carbon monoxide, you will need a detector to alert you of any build-up. Carbon monoxide detectors should be placed on each floor of your home near sleeping areas. If your detector is hard-wired or a plug-in model, be sure that it has a battery back-up.
 - **Replace your carbon monoxide detector** because the sensors degrade. The lifespan of your carbon monoxide detector can range from five to ten years. Be sure to check the packaging on your unit to find out how long your detector will last. It is important to look at the date stamped on the unit and review the owner's manual to determine the lifespan of your unit.
 - **Service your heating system annually.** Make sure your furnace, chimney flues, and gas appliances are in proper working order before the cold weather hits. **Place portable generators outside and as far as possible away from your home.** Gasoline-powered generators release carbon monoxide, so make sure they are far from your home. [Safety tips on using portable generators.](#)
 - **Make sure inlets and outlets for your furnace are free of snow.** Some furnaces have exhaust vents that could become blocked by snow, causing ventilation problems. Know what type of exhaust system your furnace has and where the exhaust inlets and outlets are located for your home.
 - **After a snow storm, make sure your car's exhaust pipe is clear.** A clogged exhaust pipe could lead to carbon monoxide buildup in your vehicle.
 - **Do not use portable generators, snow throwers, or other gasoline-generated equipment inside** your home, garage, shed or other partially enclosed areas, even if the doors or windows are open.
 - **Never use charcoal or gas grills inside your home or garage.** Make sure to use grills outdoors only.
 - **Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.** Symptoms for carbon monoxide poisoning often are the same as for the cold or flu. If you and your family members are experiencing cold or flu symptoms when you are at home, but the symptoms go away when you leave, this may be a sign of carbon monoxide poisoning. The symptoms for carbon monoxide poisoning are:
 - o Headache
 - o Fatigue
 - o Dizziness
 - o Nausea
- If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, leave your home IMMEDIATELY.** Call 911 from a cell phone or a neighbor's house after you have left the home. You should also call the Connecticut Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.



Deposition Preparation

A deposition is recorded witness testimony given under oath to be used in court at a later date. Inspectors, like any other professionals whose job subjects them to a certain amount of liability, are occasionally sued and deposed. Deposed witnesses should learn testimony strategies that will make their success in court more likely.

Facts About Depositions:

- They are usually held in a less formal setting than a courtroom, although the testimony provided is just as significant as that given in court. The version of events offered by a witness during a deposition essentially binds the witness to that version.
- They are designed to allow the opposing counsel to gather evidence against the defendant or plaintiff.
- Present at depositions are the defense attorney, the plaintiff's attorney, a court reporter, and the party to be deposed.
- The court reporter will record every spoken word, with the exception of "off the record" conversation, and later transcribe it into writing.
- Depositions can be long and grueling, sometimes lasting in excess of four hours. Questions asked during a deposition may not be asked in any apparent order and may seem irrelevant. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the witness to answer every question unless their lawyer instructs them otherwise.



Before the Deposition:

Meet with your lawyer to review all relevant documents, especially interrogatory responses. These responses are written answers to questions that were previously provided.

At the Deposition:

- Do not lie. Inspectors should know that lying under oath is criminal perjury. If you get caught lying, your entire testimony will be discredited. President Clinton lost his license to practice law and was impeached for lying under oath.
- If you arrive at the deposition before your lawyer, do not speak about the case with anyone, especially the plaintiff's attorney.
- Dress in a professional manner. Although no pictures will be taken, the opposing party's impression of you is important. If you arrive unkempt, they might think you will not appear credible to a jury, and the plaintiff will be less likely to settle out of court.
- Do not be intimidated by the opposing lawyer. Unlike in a courtroom, where a judge and/or jury is watching, lawyers may try to antagonize you so that you give up additional information. Recognize such behavior as manipulative tactics, to be brushed aside, rather than as personal attacks.
- Similarly, do not be put at ease if the opposing lawyer is strangely pleasant or easygoing. Assume that everything they say and do is intentional and designed to influence your response.
- Speak slowly and deliberately. Remember that everything spoken during a deposition – including stuttering or faltering – is recorded. Slow and deliberate speech will make your testimony appear more professional and credible when it is read later by a judge.
- Do not bring any documents with you unless you were specifically told to do so. You do not want to provide the opposition with any information that they do not already have.

- Always pause after each question before answering. This way, you have time to consider the question, and you will be sure that the question has ended. There is no real time limit for answering a question, so take as much time as you need. Answering questions quickly might also encourage the opposing lawyer to ask more questions than they otherwise would, which will work against you. Also, permitting a pause before answering will allow your attorney the chance to object to the question. It is too late to object after you have begun to answer.

- Do not volunteer information. Answer exactly what is asked and nothing more. Attorneys may also continue to look you in the eyes long after you've completed your answer in hopes that the uncomfortable silence will cause you to continue talking.

- Always ask for clarification if you do not fully understand the question. Never guess the meaning of a question.

- Do not speculate. If you do not know the answer to a question, say that you do not know the answer.

- Request breaks whenever you feel you need one.

- Do not be afraid of questions that require a “yes” or a “no” answer, even if you think you will sound bad. You do not need to defend yourself at a deposition with a lengthy explanation.

Do not attempt to memorize answers to anticipated questions. You will not sound natural and there is no way to know in advance what you will be asked.

In summary, inspectors who are deposed should prepare themselves for the unfamiliar environment in which they will provide sworn testimony.

PRIVATE DRINKING WATER IN CONNECTICUT

Produced by The State of Connecticut Department of Public Health
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As kids we can all recall that cellar was not necessarily an inviting place with its shadows and strange sounding devices. As adults we recognize that most of the time this is where key water appurtenances exist. Let's describe what might be in your cellar today.

Well Pressure Tank-If you have a well for your source of water supply you will likely have a pressure tank in your cellar. It not only stores water for use it also controls the activation of your well pump through its pressure switch. It will either be of the modern bladder type (e.g. Well-X-Trol, Challenger) or the older non-bladder galvanized tank, usually 80 to 120 gallons in volume.

In the non-bladder tank type the air charge has to be periodically recharged as the air charge is gradually absorbed into the water and the tank becomes waterlogged, as evidenced by the well pump's continual cycling and low water pressure. You will note an air valve on the top of this tank for this purpose. These types of tanks also may develop leaks sooner than bladder type tanks. As the draw down water (water used between well pump cycles) inside the tank goes up and down, the internal tank surface is wetted and dried cyclically. This migration of water (wet/dry-wet/dry) accelerates corrosion and pinhole leaks will likely develop in this area. Large leaks that cause tank failure usually occur in tanks that are wrapped in an insulating blanket and the small pinhole leaks are not noticed early because they are not easily seen. Do not wrap insulation around your cold water tank unless it is essential to keeping the tank from freezing or that you find condensation of the tank's exterior is a problem.

Bladder type tanks are precharged at the factory and should hold their factory charge as the water is physically separated from the air charge. Water logging of these tanks only occurs when the internal bladder/diaphragm fails. This can be determined by tapping on the tank top and a hollow "thud" is heard.

One of the biggest drawbacks of this type of tank is the limited storage volume as, depending on the operating pressures of the tank, most of the volume is air. The higher the pressure settings (30-50psi vs. 20-40psi) the smaller the volume of stored or draw down water. A small Well-X-Trol series 100 tank will have as little as 1 gallon of useable water, which means the well pump is continually cycling on/off-on/off. This "short-cycling" severely limits the life of the well pump as well as not addressing the water demands for the home.

Keep in mind also that the addition of larger pressure tanks with an increase in storage volume can make up for a low yielding well. The tanks should be flushed **semi-annually** to remove accumulated sediments by Page 2 of Publication No. 30: Home Cellar Dwellers fully opening the tank drain valve. Hopefully the tank drain valve has been installed 12 inches off the floor to facilitate flushing & draining with a garden hose connection or possibly future water quality sampling.

These sediments could harbor and shield harmful microbes from chlorination should the well and home plumbing system require disinfection.

Hot Water Heaters- unless your hot water comes from the coils located in your oil fired furnace you will have a stand alone hot water heater, either electric or gas fired. Regardless of the heat source hot water tanks will have similar components. They are as follows:

☒☒ Dip Tube-the dip tube directs cold incoming water to the bottom of the tank so there is no premature mixing of the cold and the outgoing hot water. If the heating efficiency of the tank suddenly drops off and you find white and granular plastic-like particles in your faucet aerators and dishwasher screens the dip tube probably has failed and has broken off inside the tank. To regain heater efficiency a new dip tube must be installed ideally one with a curved outlet to enhance the flushing of bottom sediments that accumulate over time.

☒☒ Drain Valve-this valve enables the tank to be flushed of sediments on a **semi-annual basis**, improving efficiency and operation.

☒☒ Sacrificial anode-the sacrificial anode is a magnesium or aluminum rod that helps the metal tank from corroding. Modern water heaters are glass-lined to prevent corrosion, but assuring 100% glass coverage protection is impossible, especially since cracks in the lining may develop when the tank is in service.

To prevent tank corrosion when small cracks & voids appear in the glass coating, these long anodes are inserted into the tank to provide cathodic protection. It does this by electrolysis eating away at the anode and releasing Magnesium (Mg) or aluminum (Al) electrons to coat the exposed metal surface. All metals fall somewhere on the galvanic scale of reactivity. When 2 metals are placed in water the nobler, i.e. less reactive metal, will remain intact while the more re-

active one corrodes. Mg and Al are less noble than steel, which is why they are used for anode rods and in essence “sacrificial”. The anode will be consumed over time and it should be inspected annually. Standard plumbing practice advises if more than 6” of the core wire is exposed at either end, the anode should be replaced. Be advised softened i.e. more aggressive water, will consume the anode at a more accelerated rate.

Some waters containing high levels of sulfates will develop a “rotten egg” smell as certain bacteria metabolize the sulfate. A magnesium anode exacerbates the problem. Replacement of the magnesium anode with one of zinc should eliminate the problem. Simple removal of the anode may work but be advised that removal of the anode may void the manufacturer’s warrantee on the tank and shorten the tank’s useful life so check the warrantee, and consult with your licensed plumber.

☒☒ Thermostat-this device controls the temperature range of the water in the tank. Factory settings are usually set at 130°F maximum to avoid scalding burns. If the hot water becomes malodorous due to microbial activity setting the thermostat higher to 160°F to kill off any noxious non-thermophilic bacteria and result in cleaner laundry and dish-ware. When there are young children in the house reset the thermostat back to its lower setting after a few hours. This can be done a recurring basis if the noxious odors return.

☒☒ High Temperature/High Pressure (HTHP) Valve-as the name implies this is a safety release valve that prevents tank explosion under extreme operating conditions. These valves should be activated **semi-annually** to assure that the valve and valve seat do not become fouled and prevent proper closure.

Be advised of the scalding hazard from the water as the valve is activated. If an improperly maintained HTHP valve activates and fails to reseal your cellar will become flooded! If the device appears to activate and close on a repeating basis, high-pressure fluctuation may be evidenced and should be investigated by a professional plumber.

If you are unsure that the size of your water heater is adequate to serve the needs of your family, generic plumbing Guidelines offer the following:

Family Size First Hour Rating Requirement *

2 People 45-55 Gallons

3 People 55-65 Gallons

4 People 65-75 Gallons

5 People 75-85 Gallons

6 People 85-100 Gallons

7+People 100+ Gallons

The amount of actual water that will be heated (determined by the thermostat setting) before water temperature decrease.

Humidifiers/Dehumidifiers- Because of improper or lack of sanitary maintenance these units often become the source of noxious smelly odors due to mold growth. Depending on your tap water quality, sunlight may promote to growth of algae in the tank. If iron-bacteria is present in the tap water and the water has no free chlorine residual these microbes can flourish and clog the wetting drum/rollers.

There are several simple remedies to prevent this from occurring. Ideally distilled water should be used in ultrasonic humidifiers. This will eliminate the deposition of scaling components in/on the units moving parts and lessen the deposition of a fine white powder on horizontal surfaces in close proximity to the unit.

Thorough regular flushing of the tanks and wetting drums/rollers should keep the unit from developing noxious smells. Do not just keep adding fresh water to the tank. Depending on the size of the tank, a few drops of household bleach or Pine-Sol will help deodorize and to some extent disinfect the units. In forced air heating systems, don’t forget the automatic humidifiers located in air duct coming out of the furnace.

Cleaning and deodorizing these units is just as important if not more as the air is circulated throughout the house and not just in one room. The problem of odors with dehumidifiers is not as pronounced but the condensate tanks should be flushed on a regular frequent basis. If the unit runs continually and no condensation is evident in the tank the compressor is bad or needs coolant recharging. These suggestions and descriptions are offered to the homeowners as handy reference. If one has any doubts please contact your local licensed professional.

For more information please click on the following links:

EPA Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water

<http://www.epa.gov/ogwdw/>

EPA New England

<http://www.epa.gov/region01/>

The CAHI Board of Directors
wishes all members and their
family a very.....

Happy Thanksgiving!



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