



Home Tips®



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 3697 HABERSHAM LANE, DULUTH, GEORGIA 30096, 770-849-0920 • MARCH 2005 •

Q & A

10 Questions To Ask Your Home Inspector

by The Georgia Association of Home Inspectors

1: ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANY PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS?

The Georgia Association of Home Inspectors (GAHI) has the most rigorous membership requirements of any professional inspectors association in the United States. Numerous groups, associations and societies exist that require only payment of the membership fee and possibly an initiation fee while others require that the inspector attend the organization's training.

2: WHAT CODE CERTIFICATIONS DO YOU HAVE?

The most qualified inspectors should have either the Council of American Building Officials (CABO) One and Two Family Dwelling Inspector Certification or the International Code Council® (ICC) Combination Residential Inspector Certification as a minimum. However, some inspectors obtain only the residential building certification (omitting the plumbing, electrical, and mechanical sections) and then pass themselves off as code certified. These are certifications issued by an independent third party organization and are recognized as requiring significant professional knowledge in residential construction codes to obtain a passing score. The word "certified" does not necessarily indicate CODE certified. A CODE certified home inspector's credentials can be verified at ICC's website: <http://www.iccsafe.org/e/certsearch.html>. This site allows you to search by the inspector's last name.

3: WHERE DID YOU RECEIVE YOUR CERTIFICATIONS?

The Southern Building Code Congress International (SBCCI) and International Code Council (ICC) are the two model code organizations that provide the requisite certifications for inspectors in Georgia.

4: HOW MUCH CONTINUING EDUCATION DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN EACH YEAR?

The minimum should be 20 hours per year in classes designed to further enhance the home inspector's knowledge of new codes and building practices.

5: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PERFORMING HOME INSPECTIONS?

While it is useful to gauge the experience level of an inspector, this question is not as important as verifying the qualifications and certifications stated in point #3 above. An untrained home inspector who has done thousands of inspections that do not conform to a stringent Standard of

Practice may not be equivalent to several hundred inspections that are performed properly by a well trained CODE certified inspector.

6: HOW LONG SHOULD MY INSPECTION TAKE?

The inspector may ask you for some information about the home you are purchasing before answering this question. Generally, inspections take at least 2 to 3 hours for a small home while larger or significantly older homes can take much longer. Some factors which may affect the length of the inspection include the age of the home, size, general condition (i.e. distressed properties will require more time), and the presence of a basement or crawlspace..

7: DO I NEED TO BE PRESENT AT THE HOME INSPECTION?

Most inspectors will want you to participate in the inspection if you have time. Being present for the inspection will give you a better understanding of the condition of the home. At a minimum, it is beneficial to be present for at least the last hour.

8: WHAT TYPE OF REPORT DO YOU PROVIDE?

Some inspectors may provide a handwritten on-site checklist / summary report with comments. Others might offer an on-site, computer-generated report or one that is provided after they return to their office. Beware of a very brief report (i.e. one to two pages) or one that consists of only checklists. Some reports may be extensive but contain a considerable amount of generic information that may not be specific to your home.

9: CAN I CALL YOU IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AFTER THE INSPECTION IS COMPLETED?

The answer should be YES!!! Most good inspectors rely on referrals from satisfied clients for future business. Answering follow-up questions is a great way for them to stay in touch with clients.

10: HOW MUCH WILL MY INSPECTION COST?

This is a question best posed at the end of your interview with the home inspector. The inspector may ask specific questions about the number of heating and cooling systems, or whether or not the home has a crawlspace or basement. These factors may affect total cost. Generally, home inspections cost between \$300 and \$400 for a basic three bedroom, two bathroom home. Larger, more complicated homes and homes more than twenty years old may be more expensive to inspect. Bargain priced inspections may result in rushed and incomplete inspections. Important elements such as crawlspaces, attics and electric panels might be missed. Generally, veteran inspectors will quote higher prices as they have more experience and may often need more time to perform a thorough inspection. More knowledge does not necessarily result in quicker inspections.

Termite Retreatments?

Ever since Chlordane was replaced with shorter-lasting insecticides such as Larshan and Dursban, it has been necessary to reapply termite treatments every five years. To reach the perimeter soil under a slab-on-grade floor, you have to drill holes at 12 to 15 inches on center around the entire inside floor perimeter and inject pesticide into the soil. That means you damage or destroy the floor finishes and have to patch or replace them (awfully expensive if it's nice tile or hardwood). Are there any other good solutions?

Entomologist Bert Snyder of Palmetto Exterminators in Charleston, S.C., replies: In most cases, professional exterminators should be able to drill around a slab perimeter without damaging floor finishes. Our crews do it every day. However, the most modern termite control methods can provide complete long-term protection without any slab drilling.

My company has had good success with a combination of two treatments in new homes.

While the frame is exposed, we spray the framing and sheathing with Bora-Care, a low-toxicity borate solution (Nisus Corp., Rockford, Tennessee; 800/264-0870, www.nisuscop.com), up to a height of two feet. We're careful to spray all exterior walls and all interior partitions — any wood that touches the foundation must be treated. Bora-Care has a very low toxicity and is safe to use on a house. It protects wood permanently as long as the wood is kept dry — no reapplication is needed.

After the house is finished, we apply Termidor, one of the new "nonrepellent" termiticides (www.termidoronline.com), to the perimeter soil in a 2- to 3-inch trench around the whole foundation. We think Termidor may prove to be even more effective than Chlordane was — not because it's more poisonous but because the termites don't know it's there. They don't try to avoid it or bypass it. Instead, they make contact with it and transfer it to each other. Termidor has shown 100% effectiveness against termites so far (six years in

use and counting). Of course, we provide annual inspections, and we apply spot treatments any time we see disturbed earth or other signs of termite activity. And every five to seven years, we routinely re-trench and re-treat; but there's no need to drill slabs.

Source: October JLC 2004 <http://www.jlconline.com>

If you have a question, change of address, comment, home tip or would like to send Home Tips to your clients, send your letter to Home Tips, Christian Building Inspectors, Inc., 3697 Habersham Lane, Duluth, Georgia, 30096-6111. You can also E-Mail your questions to us at rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com/.

Quote Of The Month

"HAVING SOMEPLACE TO GO IS A HOME. HAVING SOMEONE TO LOVE IS A FAMILY. HAVING BOTH IS A BLESSING."

UNKNOWN

A Tip Of The Hat To:

Tony Trainer
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Thank You

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