



Ontario Association of Home Inspectors

Established by the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors Act, 1994

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December 7, 2007

Mr. Claude Lawrenson, President
Inspection Support Services Inc.
c/o 396 Old Tecumseh Rd.
Tecumseh-Windsor ON N8N 3S8

Re: Your November 4, 2007 Letter - Report Verification Concerns

Dear Claude,

The Board of Examiners would like to respond to your concerns, and those of your Applicants.

You indicate receiving feedback in a number of cases in which applicants' reports using your reporting system failed verification. This report is the first instance of a complaint from your company or users of your system, and only one of a handful that has been received in the past 6 years. Our records for 2007 indicate that 17 sets of reports using the ISS reporting system were processed and only two sets were judged unacceptable, a comparatively low failure rate while the overall failure rate for all reports was higher at 15%.

Applicants should understand that reports are judged according to the criteria set out on the OAH Verification form, as attached and also available from the OAH web site. A report must meet all ten of the criteria to be acceptable. The OAH is only concerned with how the Applicant uses the reporting system he/she has chosen or designed to communicate findings to the client, and that the report meets the Standards of Practice. Applicants whose reports are not accepted should understand that there are significant deficiencies related to their reporting skills rather than the reporting system, that are likely to result in complaints or claims, if not corrected.

You raise the issue of whether the association is verifying against a higher standard of care, rather than the standard of practice. We do not require an Applicant to contract nor perform services that are beyond the standards of practice. We do however expect an Applicant to be able to describe in writing a significant condition that would affect a client's decision and provide appropriate recommendations, where that condition falls within the scope of the standards of practice. We also stress that some patently obvious conditions that have become a recent concern to the public that are beyond the standard of practice, such as mold and vermiculite should at least be identified and

referred to experts for further evaluation where discovered, and be appropriately reported to avoid liability. The importance of such new issues is evident based on the information and links provided on sites such as yours, and in continuing education seminars sponsored by the association.

You asked if there has been any policy change regarding the determining a pass/ fail for the verification and whether there is an official stand on exceeding the standards of practice. The answer to the first question as noted above is that the verification policy is unchanged. The answer to the second question is that the standard of care will always be evolving beyond the control of the association, based on the current practices of the practitioners, the rulings of the courts, and the current public concerns.

Any official stand on accessing a closed attic hatch, for example is now redundant given the ruling in the Li versus Baker Street decision. Applicants should understand that they should follow the standards of practice, but that it may be difficult to perform an inspection which does not exceed the minimum standard of practice.

Some of your concerns relate to verifier's comments regarding additional descriptions typically found in reports such as listing capacities found on equipment rating plates. Please note that reports verified have not been deemed unacceptable by failing to provide this information, but it is the verifier's role to critique reports, to identify weaknesses and provide constructive comments to assist the Applicant and avoid future complaints.

Whether the reporting system selected by the Applicant provides space for this information to be reported is of no concern to the verifier or association. It may however be helpful to advise your Applicants what to expect from the verification process.

I trust that this information will assist you.

Yours truly,

Ontario Association of Home Inspectors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Dixon".

Andrew Dixon, Co-Chair
OAH Board of Examiners

Encl.

Important Notes

1. Reports submitted for verification should include at least one significant condition which has been identified and reported to the client, in either official language.
2. Many complaints and law suits against home inspectors are the result of the home inspector identifying and reporting a deficiency, but not recognizing the significance of the situation and providing an inappropriate recommendation that results in financial loss to the client.
3. Where the property inspected has visible deficiencies which are beyond the scope of the inspection, the OAH standards or the inspector's expertise, the home inspector should at a minimum advise the client to obtain further advise in advance of their purchase decision.

Systems and Descriptions required by OAH Standards

The inspection report must cover all of the underlined Systems and include the descriptions listed below. This list has been abbreviated for verification purposes only and does not include all of the inspection and reporting requirements of the ASHI Standards of Practice as adopted by the OAH.

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|---|-----|---|--|
| <u>Structure</u>
Describes foundation type
Describes floor structure
Describes exterior wall structure
Describes roof structure
Reports methods of observing attic/
crawl spaces
Reports presence or absence of water/
condensation | | | |
| <u>Exterior</u>
Describes exterior wall cladding | | | |
| <u>Roof</u>
Describes type of roof covering materials
Reports methods of observing the roofing | | | |
| <u>Plumbing</u>
10. Describes supply, drain waste and vent piping materials
11. Describes water heating equipment
12. Describes location of main water and main fuel shut-off valves | | | |
| | 13. | <u>Electrical</u>
Describes service amperage and voltage rating of the service | |
| | 14. | Describes location of main disconnect and distribution panels | |
| | 15. | Describes distribution wiring materials | |
| | | <u>Heating</u> | |
| | 16. | Describes energy source | |
| | 17. | Describes heating equipment and distribution type | |
| | | <u>Central Air Conditioning</u> | |
| | 18. | Cooling equipment type | |
| | | <u>Interior</u> | |
| | | <u>Insulation and Ventilation</u> | |
| | 19. | Describe insulation and vapour retarders in unfinished spaces. | |
| | | <u>Fireplaces and Solid Fuel Burning Appliances</u> | |
| | 20. | Describes fireplaces and wood burning appliances | |