



News and Notes for North Central Ohio's Premier Home Inspectors

July 2008

How to Deal with Difficult Realtors And the Requirements of Disclosure

by Justin Watts of American Dream Home Inspection

Some realtors do not understand that we are doing our job as home inspectors to disclose defects we encounter and to educate our clients on a properties condition is our duty. Home inspectors do not kill deals, buyers and sellers failing to negotiate the terms of the sale is what kills the deal.

As a home inspector in Southern California, it is in the nature of our profession to encounter difficult realtors, the ones that do not believe in full disclosure when it comes to discovering defects on a property. It is important to educate realtors on the ethical and legal requirements to disclose defects when we are inspecting and reporting them to our clients. Many realtors do not understand the legal ramifications for not reporting defects when observed, and real estate is a very litigious business. There are constructive methods with handling difficult realtors, here are some examples and actual conversations with some realtors....

Realtor's question: "The Sellers House was constructed in the 1950's and GFCI outlets were not a code requirement then, why are you stating in your report they should be installed?"

My answer: My clients' safety is my number one priority, and although a home inspection is not a code-compliance inspection, I always recommend the latest new construction code safety requirements including GFCI's on every property and year of construction. It is my duty to inform my client of these safety features, so they can make their own decisions.

Realtor's question: Why are you reporting on moisture stains on the garage ceiling that appear to old and are dry and this is going to cause problems for my deal?

My answer: It is my duty to my client and the buyer to report moisture stains that could imply a previous roof or plumbing leak, and they should have any suspicious stains further evaluated by a licensed specialist or obtain information from the sellers regarding any previous repairs, etc. It is my job as a home inspector to observe and report. Stains on drywall may also require destructive testing, meaning removing the drywall to determine the cause of the leak and additional moisture intrusion damage or mold could be present.

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Tech Gadgets on a Budget

If keeping your costs down is a concern, you'll sacrifice some features but still stay productive with these selections.

Notebook Computer: For just \$399, Dell's bulky Vostro 1000 is the entry model in this line. Its features include an AMD Sempron 2GHz processor, Windows XP Home edition, 1GB of RAM, a 15.4-inch screen, 80GB hard drive, combination CD burner and DVD player, and WiFi g card. If your budget's flexible, Dell offers many upgrades.

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SAVE THE DATE

September 17

FALL SEMINAR

Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens
714 N Portage Path
Akron, Ohio

Details to Follow

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Deck Safety

Visit www.ASHI.org to see the 7+ minute video segment featured on ABC's Today Show with ASHI President Frank Lesh.

Dealing With Realtors

Continued

Realtor's question: You stated in your report, that all the Asbestos ducts confirmed tested and present should be removed from the home and be replaced with newer ducts, this is going to kill my deal!

My answer: My clients safety is my priority, and because asbestos is such a litigious issue, I always recommend that they be further evaluated by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor. The Environmental Protection Agency states that if asbestos is not damaged or duct material is not friable then it (may) be safe. Since I am not a licensed asbestos contractor, I am unable to make this determination and it is my opinion as a home inspector to recommend the replacement of asbestos ducts for obvious safety reasons. It is my clients discretion and choice to decide what should be done.

In summary, always advise realtors that the buyer is also your client and you have a duty to protect them and protect "everyone" in the transaction. Failure to disclose defects plagues the real estate industry with lawsuits that will result in costly damages that can far surpass any commission. Choose to do business with ethical realtors, ones that prefer full disclosure and whenever in doubt... Just remember these magic words... Disclose, Disclose, Disclose!

Inspection FAQs

What will it cost?

The inspection fee for a typical one-family house varies geographically, as does the cost of housing. Similarly, within a given area, the inspection fee may vary depending on a number of factors such as the size of the house, its age and possible optional services such as septic, well or radon testing.

Do not let cost be a factor in deciding whether or not to have a home inspection or in the selection of your home inspector. The sense of security and knowledge gained from an inspection is well worth the cost, and the lowest-priced inspection is not necessarily a bargain. Use the inspector's qualifications, including experience, training, compliance with your state's regulations, if any, and professional affiliations as a guide.

Tech Gadgets

Continued

Smart phone: The Palm Centro (\$99 with a service contract) runs on Palm's operating system and handles contact and calendar management along with voice calling, e-mail, and text and instant messaging. Despite its compact design, it still features a mini-keypad and touch-sensitive color screen. It's available through AT&T Wireless and Sprint.

Digital camera: A basic camera, the \$149 Canon Powershot A580 will handle your essential photography needs. Its features include an 8 megapixel image sensor, 4X optical zoom lens, and 2.5-inch LCD. For wide-angle shots, you use included software to stitch images together.

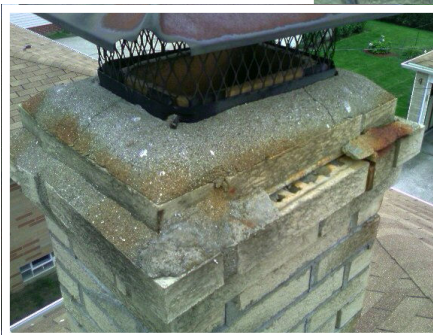
GPS: Both Microsoft's Streets and Trips 2008 with GPS Locator and DeLorme's Earthmate BT-20 unite software with a GPS receiver for \$99. Tethered to your notebook by cable or Bluetooth technology, these make the computer a fully functional navigation system with detailed street-level maps and spoken turn-by-turn directions.

ASHI Online Forum

Are you taking advantage of the revamped members only forum on the ASHI website? If not, check it out! Have access to the 5,000+ members who can post questions and answers to their colleagues. You have to first log in as a member, then click on **Discussion forum**.



D'OH! OF THE MONTH



Submitted By: Bob Margiotti, Century Home Inspections

If you have a good picture for a future D'OH! Of the month, please send it to Bob Margiotti at Century@wowway.com