

Charles W. Drago, Secretary

Charlie Crist, Governor

Home Inspector Stakeholder Meeting
September 29, 2009
Tallahassee, FL

SUMMARY

In September and October 2009, Department of Business and Professional Regulation representatives held four open meetings with concerned parties to receive input concerning grandfathering, examinations, and background checks for the home inspector profession. The stakeholder meeting comments below reflect statements and recommendations of the interested parties who attended the September 29, 2009 meeting.

Grandfathering

1. It is recommended that home inspectors not be required to take an examination or be required to have 120 hours of training if they are already in business as a home inspector.
2. It is recommended that anyone with 2 years experience in home inspections (100 inspections per year) be grandfathered if he/she can pass a competency exam.
3. It is recommended that there be levels of home inspector licenses – apprentice (entry-level) and regular (full) license. Set up this “step” license program (two-tier system) for all those who aspire to become home inspectors.
4. Licensed Building Contractors are required to have over 8,000 hours of training. It is recommended that home inspectors be required to hold a license as a building contractor before they can be licensed as a home inspector.
5. Home Inspectors disagree with the requirement to hold a building contractor license as the prerequisite for a home inspector license. Being a building contractor does not necessarily qualify you as to be a home inspector.
6. Home Inspectors must already undergo a significant amount of training. It is recommended that DBPR look at the training already required and accept that under grandfathering.
7. It is recommended that the experience level for grandfathering be at least 50 – 100 home inspections performed.
8. It is recommended that the bar for qualification for this license be set as high as possible to protect the public. The 120 hours of training and examination set out in the law are inadequate. There must be some experience required as well.
9. It is recommended that there be the requirement for 5 years of experience and at least 250 home inspections performed for an inspector to be grandfathered. It is suggested that even a college degree should be required.
10. It is recommended that home inspector association certifications be factored into the grandfathering/licensing provisions. Examples include American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), National Association of Certified Home Inspectors (NACHI), or Florida Association of Building Inspectors (FABI).
11. It is noted that there may be conflicts of interest when licensed building contractors conduct inspections and also perform the repair work required as a result of the inspection. Often

contractors and home inspectors have very different perspectives on home repairs. For example, a home inspector may look for a higher standard in a certain area than simply compliance with a building code.

12. It is noted that experience is the most important factor in grandfathering those home inspectors already in business.
13. It is noted that many home inspection businesses are small and are not able to accommodate an apprentice program. Further, it is problematic to gain the experience in performing home inspections as an apprentice.
14. It is recommended that the requirements for grandfathering include 200 hours of education along with a prescribed number of inspections. Additionally, it is recommended that licensed building contractors be given special consideration for home inspector licensing since they have already undergone significant training.
15. It is recommended that one of the qualifications for grandfathering be continuous insurance coverage over a prescribed number of years while in the business of home inspections.
16. It is recommended that all those home inspectors currently in business be automatically grandfathered and issued licenses under the new law. In essence, if the home inspector is in business today, then he/she should be in business tomorrow or whenever the law is in effect (July 1, 2010). It is also referred to as a “look back” period.
17. It is recommended that experience is paramount and that not all home inspectors who just recently opened a business have adequate experience.
18. It is recommended that any home inspector in business and currently paying taxes be allowed to stay in business under grandfathering provisions.
19. It is recommended that the grandfathering be a hybrid requirement – experience and education. It is recommended that the level of experience be at least 3 years and inspectors be required to pass the examination.
20. It is recommended that all home inspectors in business be automatically grandfathered and given licenses. Then, begin licensing requirements as prescribed by law with all new applicants.
21. It is recommended that all home inspectors in business as of the date the law was signed – June 2007 – be grandfathered and granted a license. All those applying after July 1, 2010 should be required to meet all the prerequisites spelled out in the law. The period from June 2007 – July 2010 may have been intended as a “grace” period.

Examinations

1. It is recommended that DBPR use a national-level examination for licensing in Florida. Further, the exam should be work-related.
2. It is recommended that there be a composite exam with questions drawn from other nationally recognized exams.
3. It is recommended that part of the examination test the physical ability of the inspector to actually conduct the inspections.
4. It is recommended that DBPR adopt the National Home Inspector Examination (NHIE) currently utilized by some of the associations that certify inspectors.

Background Checks

1. It is recommended that inspectors currently holding a license that required a background check not have to undergo another background check.

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