



# REPORTER

Inspection News and Views from the American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc.

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Tips to get the most return on your investment from ASHI president Mark Goodman

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HOME INSPECTORS



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**OUR MISSION** To set and promote standards for property inspections and to provide the educational programs needed to achieve excellence in the profession and to meet the needs of our members.

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# 17TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE & EXPO



## SPEAKERS



### Charlie Silva

President of Silva Brothers Construction & Home Builder of Emmy-winning home-improvement series, This Old House



### Brent Hull

Home Historian, Owner & Founder of Hull Works



### Christian Simonelli

Executive Director of Boston Groundwater Trust



### Glenn Mathewson

Building Code Educator at BuildingCodeCollege.com



September 9 - 10, 2024



MGM Springfield,  
Springfield, MA

## AGENDA

### Day 1

- **REGISTRATION** | 7:00AM - 8:30AM
- **GLENN MATHEWSON** | 8:30AM - 10:30AM
- **BREAK** | 10:30AM - 10:45AM
- **CHRISTIAN SIMONELLI** | 10:45AM - 11:45AM
- **SPONSORS** | 11:45AM - 12:00PM
- **LUNCH** | 12:00PM - 1:00PM
- **SPONSORS** | 1:00PM - 1:15PM
- **GLENN MATHEWSON** | 1:15PM - 3:15PM
- **BREAK** | 3:15PM - 3:30PM
- **CHARLIE SILVA** | 3:30PM - 5:30PM
- **RECEPTION** | 5:30PM - 6:30PM

### Day 2

- **REGISTRATION** | 7:00AM - 8:30AM
- **DILLAN SKRYBEWEAR** | 8:30AM - 10:30AM
- **BREAK** | 10:30AM - 11:00AM
- **BRENT HULL** | 11:00AM - 12:30PM
- **SPONSORS** | 12:30PM - 12:45PM
- **LUNCH** | 12:45PM - 1:45PM
- **SPONSORS** | 1:45PM - 2:00PM
- **BRENT HULL** | 2:00PM - 3:30PM



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# Client Communication Skills for Home Inspectors

BY STEPHANIE JAYNES, MARKETING DIRECTOR, INSPECTORPRO INSURANCE



**Stephanie Jaynes** is the Marketing Director for InspectorPro Insurance, which offers ASHI members exclusive benefits through its program: InspectorPro with the ASHI Advantage. Through risk management articles in the ASHI Reporter and on the InspectorPro website, InspectorPro helps inspectors protect their livelihood and avoid unnecessary risk. Get peace of mind and better protection with InspectorPro's pre-claims assistance and straightforward coverage. Learn more at [inspectorproinsurance.com/ashi-advantage](https://inspectorproinsurance.com/ashi-advantage).

**A**s a home inspector, client communication skills aren't a nice-to-have; they're a need-to-have. Fail to have effective communication with customers, and you are more likely to face insurance claims, like this home inspector:

While installing a new HVAC system in a duplex, a contractor noticed widespread charred rafters and evidence of repairs in the attic. When the contractor reported his observations, the clients reviewed their four-month-old inspection report only to find no mention of the rafters or repairs.

As an insured of ours, the home inspector forwarded us the email. Upon reviewing the inspector's report, we found his description of the attic sparse. He said he inspected "from the attic access and with thermal imaging," but there were no photos of the attic in the report or in the inspector's personal archives. While he mentioned the framing and sheathing types, he made no notes of damage or repairs.

Upon our request, the inspector returned to the duplex to re-inspect. The attic access hatch had been painted shut. The inspector guessed he hadn't opened the hatch or seen the damage during the original inspection because he deemed the attic inaccessible. However, he didn't say so in his report. He didn't tell the client, either. The claim against him settled for a refund of his inspection fee.

---

## **The Importance of Client Communication Skills**

Effective communication with customers answers these questions and more, going beyond providing services to keep clients informed and anticipate their needs, explains SaaS company FuseBase. In the inspection industry, you and your clients communicate over key information, like logistics, scope, and findings. Clients of home inspectors want to know what services you offer, what will happen during your inspection, and what the reported defects mean.

Every form of client communication—from the emails you send to what you say on the phone—tells



*The Managing Risk column with InspectorPro Insurance provides home inspectors with tips to protect their businesses against insurance claims, craft effective pre-inspection agreements, offer additional inspection services, and use new tools and equipment.*

your clients something. But are you saying what you want to say?

Psychologists like James V. Cordova of Clark University argue we miscommunicate more often than not. You may neglect to say something important, like the inspector at the beginning of this article who didn't tell his clients the attic was inaccessible. Or you may use technical jargon your clients don't understand. Perhaps you didn't use effective communication to identify client needs and expectations at the onset, so your client ends up dissatisfied with the inspection you perform.

There are lots of ways to communicate poorly. And poor communication can create serious consequences for your business, says William Chandler of Property 360 in Florida.

"Communication, reporting—that's where the rubber meets the road," Chandler said. "You can be an excellent inspector, but if you're not competent in verbal and written communication, you'll struggle to grow your business, or you'll find yourself on the wrong end of a claim."

But the good news: Professional communication with clients isn't a guessing game. Good communication with clients happens when you develop the customer service and interpersonal skills necessary to tell your clients what they need and want to know. In this article, we explore common client communication problems and the client communication skills you need to combat them.





*One surefire way to confuse your clients is by using technical words they don't understand.*

## Common Client Communication Problems

How to communicate risk to clients is no easy feat. On one hand, communicating bad news to customers can be awkward and frustrating when buyers' and sellers' hopes conflict with your reporting obligations. Such headaches become even more complicated when communicating with difficult customers, like clients who feel entitled to certain outcomes. Frequent client communication missteps among home inspectors include:

- Failing to articulate what happens during the inspection so clients understand what you do or how long it takes.
- Not underscoring exclusions, leading clients to assume a basic inspection covers more than it does.
- Using technical words clients don't understand.
- Being inconsistent with what you say in-person or on the phone and what you write in your inspection report.
- Under or over-emphasizing issues during defect

classification, leading clients to misunderstand the severity of a problem.

(For more examples of client communication problems, check out our infographic 5 Things to Better Explain to Your Home Inspection Clients on [inspectorproinsurance.com](http://inspectorproinsurance.com), which includes quotes from recent home buyers.)

Here are some essential communication techniques for dealing with difficult clients and tough situations. Employing these client communication best practices will improve client communication, provide better customer service, and mitigate potential claims.

## 6 Client Communication Tips for Home Inspectors

### 1 Cater to your clients.

Some of your clients will be general contractors. Others will be hairstylists. Some will be buying their fourth home. Others will be shopping for their first. How to communicate with business clients varies based on their background. To identify the best way to communicate with clients, you need to get to know them.

For client-centered communication, begin by determining their familiarity with inspections and homes. While clients with backgrounds in construction or contracting may understand inspection jargon, others may need more explanation.

Knowing where they're from and their age can also provide different ways to communicate with customers. For Justin Simmons of Home Scope Home Inspections in Georgia, age and tech savviness play a huge role in the ways he communicates with clients. While he uses multiple forms of client communication for every customer, he knows younger clients will typically respond better to texts than the older ones, who tend to prefer phone calls. Regional differences, too, require Simmons to change how he speaks.

"What you say to people and how you say it are two different things," Simmons said. "I'm from the North where people talk a little faster. I've learned to just slow down."

**2 Tell them what to expect at every stage.**  
We've harped on the importance of effective communication to identify client needs and expectations for years. But do you know what expectations you're setting?

You can avoid surprises and complaints by explaining what's going to happen (and when). You can set expectations by anticipating and answering these common questions:

- What communication will you send before the inspection? How and when?
- When and how should they sign your pre-inspection agreement? (Hint: It's before you start inspecting!)
- How long will your inspection take?
- What will you do during your inspection? What's included? Excluded?
- Can clients attend? When should they show up?
- When will you send the inspection report? What will be in it?
- If clients have questions or concerns, how should they contact you?

**3 Keep client communication consistent across mediums and time.**

Few things will confuse clients more than contradictions. As Barry Wong of Building Specs Hawaii told us in our article on writing reports clients understand, inconsistency can arouse suspicion and lead to claims.

"You talk differently than you actually write. But the physical message going across has to be consistent," Wong said. "Inconsistencies like, 'Well, he told me this, but that's not what it says in the report' are going to get the client concerned, especially if a problem occurs with the inspection later on."

So if you say something, say the same thing every time. Whether it's verbal—on the phone or in person—or written—in a text, email, contract, or report—keep your client communication cohesive. Furthermore, strive for uniformity across clients. In your technical field, good communication with clients can boost your credibility in a lawsuit and satisfy clients.



*Say the same thing every time. Whether it's verbal—on the phone or in person—or written—in a text, email, contract, or report—keep your communication cohesive.*

**4 Give your findings context.**  
In his self-published article "What a Real Estate Agent Wants From a Home Inspector," Bill Gasset, a real estate agent at RE/MAX Executive Realty in Massachusetts, argued the primary difference between good and bad inspectors is information delivery.

"Good delivery would be someone who takes the time and actually explains exactly what the problem is," Gasset said.

Gasset said inspectors shouldn't omit information, but rather give clients the context to make reasonable decisions. Since typical clients don't understand their significance, knowing if the issue is common or easily fixed may help them determine next steps. (Check out our article on defect classification on [inspectorproinsurance.com](http://inspectorproinsurance.com) for further help.)

For Chandler, providing context in client communication is only possible if you know your stuff and have honed your delivery.

"You have to, first of all, have knowledge of what you're reporting so you can competently explain why this is deficient or needs replacement or repair," he said. "You have to practice that. It's a learned behavior. You have to be matter-of-fact and let people know if it's a routine component which, based on age or lack of maintenance, is going to need work."

## 5 Don't drown yourself out.

While maximalist interior design is trending, maximalist report writing is not. (And will not be.) Inspectors seeking to mitigate risk should avoid the temptation to create a laundry list of imperfections just to fill the report. Effective communication with customers is to-the-point, not bogged down by unnecessary details. The more unnecessary information, the more likely you are to confuse your clients.

Jim Brown of Final Word Home Inspection in Georgia suggests inspectors let the house determine the inspection results.

"I've gone into houses that've been remodeled and, whoever did the remodel job did a tremendous job. And I found very little wrong in this house," Brown said. "There was a time in my past when I would've felt the need to fill up my report with something. I've just come to a place where, if there's nothing or very little wrong in the house, then I don't put it down on the report."

David Kile of Texas Dependable Home Inspections agrees, arguing the best way to communicate with clients is without an ego that may motivate you to over-communicate.

"We're not trying to prove how good you are as an inspector. We're not trying to prove to the world how vast your knowledge is about something. What we're trying to do is convey the information to the client," Kile said.

## 6 Provide facts without judgment.

As you keep your client communication fact-focused, you respect your clients as the decision-makers and avoid potentially inflammatory comments that can lead to claims, says Linda J. Page, National Association of Realtors (NAR) Former Region 2 vice president.

"Inspectors need to be what I like to call non-inflammatory—very level, very balanced in their

approach and the way they address deficiencies in a home" Page said. "We don't want clients to overlook deficiencies, but we also don't want them to make a mountain out of a molehill."

For Kile, it helps to remember his place in the real estate transaction. He said his goal is to make clients feel more confident about the choices and decisions they make.

"Whether or not it's a good house or a bad house, I don't get involved in that," he said. "I'm trying to bridge the distance between what they do know and what they don't know. With understanding and knowledge, there's less fear."

When client communication skills aren't enough, lean on us.

You're in a profession where most inspectors face at least one claim during their careers. That's why home inspectors need to educate their clients and use client communication best practices to prevent pitfalls. Through thoughtful and clear communication, clients are more likely to understand your inspection findings. And with that understanding comes customer satisfaction and a decreased chance of future claims.

But even the most refined client communication can't deter every complaint. That's where home inspector E&O insurance and general liability coverage come in.

At InspectorPro with the ASHI Advantage, our claims team has mastered communicating with difficult customers. Whether you're already facing a lawsuit or you're nervous a client gripe might turn into one, our pre-claims and claims resources have the experience and expertise to help. Visit <https://app.inspectorproinsurance.com/application> to apply for a quote. 📞

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ASHI is taking a new approach in 2024  
by bringing InspectionWorld to the local chapters



# INSPECTION WORLD

★ ON THE ROAD ★

**Meet us in St. Louis!**  
SEPTEMBER 20TH & 21ST



**CHECK OUR  
WEBSITE  
FOR THE  
LATEST INFO!**



# Bridging the Gap

## An approach to maximizing member benefits

BY MARK GOODMAN, ACI, ASHI 2024 PRESIDENT

**S**ome people want to know what they are getting for their money when they join ASHI. Today, I want to discuss the exclusive benefits of your ASHI membership. I am going to demonstrate that you can quickly get a tenfold return on your investment as a member of the oldest and most respected Society of Professional Home Inspectors.

### PRICELESS BENEFITS

Your most valuable experiences as a home inspector and within the profession are invaluable. They contribute to your personal growth and professional development—benefits that are not financially measurable. In the ROI mindset, quantitative data is one piece of the puzzle. So, how do you measure the return on investment (ROI) when you are a member of ASHI?

To comprehend the total value of your investment in ASHI as a member and your return on investment, we must look holistically at the effect an investment has had on our minds, relationships, professional development, and businesses. Your ROI is determined by what you put into the relationship and the tangible member benefits you use while considering the intangible benefits.

With the current conditions in the housing industry and the profession—like the downward trends and the negative impact on your bottom line—the real value of belonging to ASHI is even more critical. ASHI membership provides you with a network of professionals, access to industry insights, and opportunities for professional development. It also fosters your personal growth, making you an integral part of the industry's progress. These are invaluable in navigating challenging times.

Measuring the return on investment of your ASHI membership is a crucial task that only you can undertake. Just as you would evaluate the ROI of your marketing efforts, it's equally important to assess the ROI of your ASHI membership. I want to empower you with the tools and knowledge to understand the value you're receiving and make informed decisions about your membership. We've also developed an infographic to assist you in this evaluation process (see pages 16-17).

Let's delve even deeper into some of the key benefits and the value you derive from your annual ASHI membership. These benefits are about more than saving money or gaining access to resources. They directly contribute to your professional growth, enhance your credibility, and provide opportunities for networking and learning. We will periodically highlight other benefits in additional articles and communications.



### Education

**ASHI Edge (online virtual classes):** While members can access all the courses on the Edge for free, non-members pay a variable amount per class, depending on factors such as length, state approval, topic, etc. Many of the courses provided for our education

provide continuing education credits with approval from state regulatory bodies, International Code Council, and ASHI itself. The value of a course ranges from \$29 to \$139. As a member, if you take three of the \$29 classes annually, that is worth \$87. Taking two at \$59 classes plus one \$119 class is worth \$237, valued at more than half of your annual dues.

- a. Members can also earn free digital badge courses; upon completion, you get a digital badge you can display on your website to communicate higher expertise in specific areas and inspection types. Each digital badge course is valued at \$249, and members get them for free.
- b. Members also get a reduced price on webinars, the virtual summit, and traditional InspectionWorld conferences compared to non-members.
- c. Don't forget about local educational opportunities and the excellent education from chapters and the Online Meeting Group (OMG).



## Insurance

**General Liability and Emissions and Errors:** One of the significant financial benefits of ASHI membership is the exclusive ASHI Advantage Insurance partnership with InspectorPro. By taking advantage of this, you can save an average of \$150 on your basic policy and get \$3,000 to \$4,000 worth of tail coverage for free. Additionally, you save about \$200 on your tools and equipment coverage and get double the coverage. These significant savings of up to \$4,350 annually get better coverage, giving you a sense of security and confidence in your investment. More than 40% of our members take advantage of this program.

**Health Insurance:** Did you know ASHI partners with a health insurance provider to offer discounted health insurance to ASHI members? Some members have

saved more than \$1,000 annually by working with ASHI's preferred health insurance provider, LIG Solutions.

*"The process was easy, and the agent was very patient in guiding me through the options. It became a great experience when we saved \$1,500 on our medical insurance." Roger Herdt, ACI*

## Discount Programs

You can get discounts from many vendors, services, and products, too. Here is a sample of just a few discount opportunities ASHI members have:

- Jiffy Lube (15% savings)
- Rental car discounts (10 to 30% savings)
- Tires (savings of 10 to 20%)
- Ford X-Plan (discounts on Ford and Lincoln-Mercury vehicles)
- *Journal of Light Construction* (\$26 savings)
- Plus discounts on hotels and electronics and more.

The more programs you use the higher return on your ASHI dues you get.



## Home Inspection Leads and Referrals

If a real estate agent refers six to 12 clients directly to you, you would consider them an all-star real estate agent in your referral network. Similarly, if you receive a similar number of referrals, why wouldn't you consider ASHI an all-star for referrals? Numerous members get direct referrals from the ASHI website and the *Find A Home Inspector* search engine. Let's examine a few case study scenarios.

1. Consider you have an average inspection fee of \$400 without ancillary services. Now, let's say your overhead is 40%. If that is the case and you get just



two referrals, the inspections you scheduled from the Find A Home Inspector search engine paid for your membership. Your member dues were essentially free because ASHI generated an equal value of home inspection revenue for you and your business.

2. With the same scenario, you get 10 referrals a year. Your return on investment on your ASHI dues was 500%.
3. Consider that your average fee is \$575, and you get eight referrals yearly with a 40% overhead. Your return on investment is better than 600%.

**Member Profile:** Please update your profile to get the most out of the Find A Home Inspector search engine. Keep it current, and update it twice a year.

Make the most of your profile by including keywords to help improve search visibility. Highlight your skills, experience, testimonials, and accomplishments. Use images that are current, showing you in professional attire. Include a link to your website, blog, online scheduler, and social media.

You must put an effort into creating a professional profile and keeping it up-to-date to get as many leads as possible.

*"I have tracked my leads through my CRM, and I have consistently received six to nine contacts a year from the ASHI Find An Inspector portal. Including a few commercial inspections, one a 30-unit apartment building, and another an office/warehouse building."*  
Hank Sander, ACI

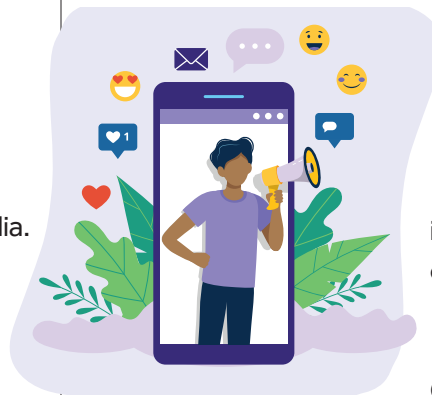
*"It is very important that you review and update your ASHI profile often. This keeps you fresh when your clients search for an inspector. I have a friendly reminder in my Google calendar to review my profile at least every quarter, update photos (mine and good field photos), and add any new services."* Henry Sander, ACI

*"One of the benefits of ASHI membership that I feel gets overlooked is the referral programs. While I may only get two to four emails a year, if one of these referrals turns into an inspection, the income from that inspection pays for my membership. That means I get the rest of the benefits of membership for free; sounds like a good ROI to me."* Frank Copanus, ACI



**ASHI Reporter**  
ASHI publishes the *ASHI Reporter* online and in print and delivers it monthly to every member's

home or business. The *Reporter* has a face value of \$4.50 per issue, which is a \$54 value. Our monthly member, education, and new chapter newsletters will also keep you updated on the latest news, trends, inspection techniques, and more. Don't forget: We are always looking for articles. You could be a published author in the *Reporter* by submitting an article to [homeinspector.org](http://homeinspector.org) or emailing [editor@ashi.org](mailto:editor@ashi.org).



## ASHI Marketing Advantage

We all know there is a difference in inspectors. ASHI inspectors are some of the best inspectors you can find. The ACI Credential (ASHI Certified Inspector)

carries a lot of weight, especially in some markets. Our third-party credentialing agency, the NCCA, backs ASHI Inspectors. The NCCA is the same credentialing agency that provides NCCA-accredited programs, which certify individuals in a wide range of professions and occupations, including nurses, automotive professionals, respiratory therapists, counselors, emergency technicians, crane operators, and more.

ASHI inspectors must also take the National Home Inspector Exam, which is a third-party exam, not one we own. It is the exam used by most licensed states and, of course, ASHI Certified Inspectors must complete 250 fee-paid peer-reviewed inspections to confirm compliance with the ASHI code of ethics. I know ASHI inspectors know this, but why not use it as a marketing tool?

ASHI has an agreement with Easy Home Inspector Marketing to offer their services to ASHI members at a significant discount for automated social media content/posting and email marketing at a reasonable

price. Members who participate in the program will also receive bonus ASHI content. ASHI will soon have downloadable marketing assets to aid your efforts, too.

Are you just getting started or want to rebrand? ASHI also has a free logo design service we offer to members. To get a professionally designed business logo elsewhere could cost anywhere from \$100 to thousands of dollars.

ASHI also has memorandums of agreements to work with ICC (International Code Council), CSIA (Chimney Safety Institute of America), NADRA (North American Decking & Railing Association), EBPHI (Examination Board of Professional Home Inspectors), FABI (Florida Association of Building Inspectors), CRIEA (California Real Estate Inspectors Association), and many more. Our partnerships with organizations like these only lend to your credibility as a member of the ASHI, which created the home inspection profession's first home inspector standard of practice in 1976. This Society of Home Inspectors is led by its elected members and is a place where you have a voice in the future of our professional organization.



## IT ADDS UP

In summary, ASHI has more free classes, CE courses, inspection referrals, and discount programs than we can count, plus many other benefits I haven't even touched on. So, what's your ROI? That's really up to you; the sky is the limit. However, it can easily result in more than a 1,000% return on your investment when you are an ASHI Member.

Here is a sample summary of one member's ROI: By taking three classes on the ASHI Edge (\$237), he gets

three oil changes a year and saves \$90, and subscribes to the *Journal of Light Construction* and saves \$26. He bought tires and saved another \$100. He purchased business insurance using the ASHI Advantage and saved \$3,300. He gets the *ASHI Reporter*, a face value of \$54. He received 11 leads from Find a Home Inspector tool, generating \$2,970 in profit. Plus, he attended several webinars at a discount and got two free digital credentials. What is his ROI? Between savings, deals, and revenue generated, he saw \$6,881 in return for his ASHI member dues investment of \$449. That is more than a 1,500% return on one year of dues.

Clearly this is quite a value, and we still need to discuss the intangibles and intrinsic value of ASHI membership. ASHI is a well-respected organization in the home inspection world. Your membership can enhance your professional reputation and credibility. With ASHI, it's not just about the past. As we move to the future, ASHI will be the most relevant organization in the space.

## COMMUNITY

As a member of a trade association or society, you'll also find camaraderie and networking opportunities to develop relationships with other home inspectors and mentors. New and experienced inspectors can benefit from mentorship opportunities and support from other members. This is one of the most underutilized tools in the ASHI arsenal; this support and the opportunities were not available a dozen years ago as they are now.

You can also get involved by joining or starting a chapter or meeting group, getting on a committee, or being involved in chapter leadership.

At the national level, we have many committees and task forces where you can be part of ASHI's stewardship of the profession, gaining new perspectives from practicing home inspectors across the US and Canada.

ASHI is unique in the home inspection professional space as the only society led by our members. The membership elects our leaders to lead as directors or officers on the ASHI Board of Directors. Getting involved gives you a voice and an opportunity you won't find elsewhere. 🌟



# Membership Benefits AND YOUR ROI

The benefits and value you derive from your annual ASHI membership are about more than saving money or gaining access to resources. They provide opportunities for learning and networking, enhance your credibility, and directly contribute to your professional growth.



## EDUCATION

ASHI EDGE online classes (valued at \$29 to \$139 each) are free for members and provide CEC from states, International Code Council, and ASHI. Members can also earn free digital badge courses (valued at \$249 each), which boast higher expertise in specific areas and inspection types.

**PLUS:**

You get reduced prices on webinars, ASHI Virtual Summit, and InspectionWorld; as well as local educational opportunities from chapters and the Online Meeting Group (OMG).

## LEADS & REFERRALS



## INSURANCE OFFERINGS & DISCOUNT PROGRAMS

The ASHI Advantage Insurance partnership with InspectorPro can save you up to \$4,350 annually — with exceptional coverage. More than 40% of our members take advantage of this program. ASHI also partners with LIG Solutions, a health insurance provider, which has saved some members more than \$1,000 annually.

**PLUS:**

You can get discounts from many vendors, services, and products, such as

- Jiffy Lube (15% savings)
- Rental car discounts (10 to 30% savings)
- Tires (savings of 10 to 20%)
- Ford X-Plan (discounts on Ford and Lincoln-Mercury vehicles)
- Annual subscription to *Journal of Light Construction* for \$14 (a \$26 savings)
- Discounts on hotels, electronics, and more

## ASHI REPORTER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF ASHI

COVERING THE  
"NEWS AND VIEWS" FROM  
ACROSS THE HOME INSPECTION  
INDUSTRY AND BEYOND



Members get direct referrals from the ASHI website and the *Find A Home Inspector* search engine, which can offset the annual cost of an ASHI membership in as little as two successful referrals. If you get 10 successful referrals in a year, the return on investment (ROI) on your ASHI dues could top 500%. (See pages 13-14 for a detailed explanation of specific case studies.)



The ACI Credential (ASHI Certified Inspector) is highly regarded in the industry and backed by the NCCA, the same credentialing agency that certifies individuals in many occupations, including automotive pros, nurses, and therapists.

ASHI inspectors must pass the National Home Inspector Exam, a third-party exam used by most licensed states; and ACIs must complete 250 fee-paid peer-reviewed inspections to confirm compliance with the ASHI code of ethics.

ASHI offers members a free logo design service; a professionally designed business logo elsewhere could cost anywhere from \$100 to thousands of dollars. ASHI will soon have downloadable marketing assets to aid your business development efforts, as well.

**PLUS:**

ASHI affiliate member Easy Home Inspector Marketing offers automated social media content/posting and email marketing to ASHI members at a significant discount.

The print *Reporter* (valued at \$4.50 per issue, \$54 annually) is delivered monthly to every member's home or business, and is also published online.

**PLUS:**

Two monthly digital newsletters (membership and education) and chapter newsletters keep you updated on the latest news, trends, inspection techniques, and more.



## MARKETING ADVANTAGE



## IT ADDS UP!

The ROI on your ASHI membership is really up to you; it can easily be 1,500% — or more. See page 15 for specific examples. The financial benefits are clear, and that's not even factoring in the intangibles and intrinsic value of ASHI membership. ASHI is a well-respected organization in the home inspection world. Your membership can enhance your professional reputation and credibility. As we move to the future, ASHI will be the most relevant organization in the space. Not to mention, it's a fantastic community to be a part of!





*Remembering*  
**CARL**  
**FOWLER**

Longtime ASHI Member, Affiliate, and supporter

BY TOM LAUHON, ACI







***Tom Lauhon, of Midwest Inspectors Institute, has been in the home inspection business since 1989 and has been an ASHI member since 1992. He is the Great Plains Chapter Member Past President and received the Iron Man Award in 2016.***

It was with great sadness that we learned that Carl Fowler—a supporter of ASHI and the inspection industry for more than 30 years—passed away Tuesday, May 28, 2024 after a hard fought battle with cancer.

Like many of us, Carl started out as a home inspector. His career began in 1986. He loved inspecting homes—especially for first-time home buyers. Also like many of us, he did not love the hours spent writing reports. He felt there had to be a better way and, always interested in a project (and a challenge), he was determined to find one. With the help of Charles Cubbage, a teenage computer whiz, Carl found his solution. The two worked together to create software that would allow Carl to write detailed, professional inspection reports in a fraction of the time.

It didn't take Carl long to realize this report writing solution could help other home inspectors, and that is why many of you know him as the face of 3D Inspection Systems Report Writing Software. Some would even say he was the heart and soul. In truth, he was so much more.

If you saw Carl at Inspection World, or any number of regional gatherings of home inspectors, you'd see him in his suit and tie, but as soon as things closed up for the day he'd quickly change into something casual and comfortable (comfort was important) and was ready for what he considered the best part of any travel—adventure and connecting with people. To Carl, connecting with people, really getting to know them, was what mattered (even over making sales). As many of you saw at ASHI conferences over the years, he always had a smile and a warm greeting. I am not sure he ever met anyone he disliked—including his competitors.

Carl wholeheartedly believed life was not to be taken too seriously. When he told me he had Stage 4 colon cancer and would receive chemo every two

weeks for the rest of his life, you'd have thought he was telling me nothing more than it was going to rain tomorrow.

He enjoyed laughter and seeing others smile. I talked with him days before his passing and he was still making jokes. Carl wore a different costume to each chemo treatment. After a while, other patients started wearing costumes, too.

If you had the opportunity to meet or to know Carl, I'm sure none of the above surprises you. Inspection World was like a reunion of friends for him. It was always the people he was excited about.

I personally met Carl (and Kathy) at an ASHI conference in 1992, when I was looking for a better way of generating inspection reports. With the features of 3D, back in the DOS days, it wasn't hard for him to sell me on the software. I've been known to have a tech issue or two, and at the time, I'd call Carl—a lot. As a result I got to know him well, and I count myself lucky to have been his friend. Even more lucky to have had him as a personal friend for more than 30 years. I'm still working on the not taking life too seriously part, but Carl never gave up on me.

I'm told 3D will continue going strong, as his son takes over. Donna Fix and Heather Johnson, who have been with 3D for decades, will continue to support the team as well. 🌟



*Everyone who knew him was a friend of Carl's.*  
Here are some of our colleagues' comments on hearing of his passing.

A very special  
goodbye and farewell  
to Carl Fowler. Thanks for all  
you did for our little industry.  
You were a true friend, a great  
supporter, one of our first partners,  
and just a good dude!  
Rest in peace, you earned it.

P. NATHAN  
THORNBERRY

Very sad to hear this.  
Yes, Carl was a great guy  
and in integral part  
of the growth of the  
inspection industry.

BRIAN HANNIGAN

Great guy  
and good friend  
to all he knew.

DAN HOWARD

Carl and I met back in 1992  
at the FABI conference in Orlando.  
He was introduced to me by  
Evered Rawlings. I found Carl to be a very  
wise inspector and extremely involved with computers.  
I was a rookie at the time and learned a lot from meeting  
and talking to him at various conferences. He was very  
giving of his time and knowledge, and I appreciate all the  
help he provided me as a courtesy to the new inspector.  
He was a computer whiz, and I was very impressed and  
happy to make his acquaintance. Although I never used his  
3D software, he went out of his way to help me and others  
with their home inspection software and reports. He would  
come down to South Florida and do presentations  
to our ASHI Chapter now and then,  
and many of our colleagues started  
using his software.

JOEY CABALLERO

He had the best  
inspection software  
you could buy.  
He will be missed.

HANK BLACKMAN

Very sorry to hear  
of the passing of Carl. He  
was a pioneer in the inspection  
software community. Carl always had  
a story or an adventure to share. At the  
Inspection World conferences, he'd often  
listen to my rants about inspections and  
was always willing to give guidance on how  
to better myself and be more efficient.  
Carl, rest in peace. You will be  
truly missed by inspectors  
around the country."

RANDY SIPE

He was  
a good guy,  
and he was  
a friend.

LARRY SMYJ

Always  
enjoyed seeing  
and speaking with him  
over the years.  
He got me using 3D  
when it was in DOS.

SCOTT PATTERSON

# Inspecting the Roof

## NRCA on the importance of roof inspections twice a year

BY LAURA ROTE



Adobe ©SashaMagic

**R**egular maintenance is imperative when it comes to making sure a residential roof system is performing as it should, according to the National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA).

All too often, problems are found after leaking or other serious damage is witnessed, NRCA said. The association points to biannual inspections as a way to uncover cracked, warped, or missing shingles; loose seams and deteriorated flashings; excessive surface granules accumulating in the gutters or downspouts; and other visible signs of problems. Indoors, NRCA said inspectors should look for cracked paint, discolored plasterboard, and peeling wallpaper as signs of damaged roof areas.

“A warranty does not replace the need for regular inspections,” said Mark S. Graham, vice president of technical services for the NRCA. “Get on and walk the roof; one can never take too many photos, and be safe. A roof cannot be truly inspected from the ground or a ladder.”

And if there’s one thing Graham would like to share with home inspectors, he said that’s not to estimate remaining service life.

Graham said more homeowners seem to be prioritizing roof appearance and curb appeal these days, as they seek high-end architectural shingles, metal products, and specialty products. Thousands of roofing products exist on the market, and many look similar, but it’s important for inspectors to stay in-the-know about what’s being used.

Below are some of the most popular offerings, according to NRCA. You can find more roofing resources and greater detail at [nrca.net](http://nrca.net).

---

### ASPHALT SHINGLES

NRCA reports that asphalt shingles are the most common roofing material in the US steep-slope roofing market and can be reinforced with organic or fiberglass materials.



**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN OUT IN THE FIELD  
AND SEEN SOMETHING THAT MADE YOU  
STOP IN YOUR TRACKS AND THINK ...**

# **WHAT THE HECK?!?**

*What  
the  
puck?*



*Precision  
carpentry!*



**WHETHER IT'S INTERESTING,  
EDUCATIONAL, OR LOOKS LIKE IT'S  
STRAIGHT OUT OF A COMIC BOOK ...**

***SEND IT TO US!***

EMAIL PHOTOS OF YOUR FUN FINDS TO [POSTCARDS@ASHI.ORG](mailto:POSTCARDS@ASHI.ORG).  
INCLUDE YOUR NAME, CITY, STATE, AND A FEW WORDS TO  
POTENTIALLY BE USED AS A CAPTION. THEN KEEP AN EYE OUT  
FOR "POSTCARDS" IN FUTURE ISSUES OF THE REPORTER.

***YOU JUST MIGHT SEE YOURSELF!***

Their resistances are categorized by Class A, B, or C. Class A signifies the most fire-resistant; Classes B and C denote less fire resistance. Generally, most fiberglass shingles have Class A fire ratings, and most organic shingles have Class C ratings.

Asphalt shingle products are available in laminated (architectural) grades that offer a textured appearance. Copper-coated granules also can be applied to asphalt shingle products to protect against algae attack—a common problem in warm, humid parts of the US. You can get asphalt shingles in a number of colors, too.

NRCA recommends use of shingles that comply with ASTM D3462, “Standard Specification for Asphalt Shingles Made from Glass Felt and Surfaced with Mineral Granules.” Not all asphalt shingles comply with this standard. If a shingle complies, it typically will be noted in the manufacturer’s product literature and on the package wrapper.

## WOOD SHAKES AND SHINGLES

Wood shakes and shingles are made from cedar, redwood, Southern pine, and other woods, and their natural look is popular in California, the Northwest, and parts of the Midwest, NRCA said.

Wood shingles are machine-sawn; shakes are handmade, and their surfaces are rough.

Some local building codes limit the use of wood shingles and shakes because of concerns about fire resistance. Many wood shingles and shakes have Class C fire ratings or no ratings at all. However, Class A fire ratings are an option for certain wood shingle products that incorporate a factory-applied, fire-resistant treatment.

## TILE

Clay or concrete tile is a durable roofing material with a long history. Mission and Spanish-style, round-topped tiles are popular in the Southwest and Florida, and flat styles are also available to create French and English looks. Tile is beloved by many in part for its plentiful color and finish options.

One thing to note, NRCA said, is that tile is heavy, so those who replace another type of roof covering

with tile need to verify that the home can support the added load.

## SLATE

Slate is available in different colors and grades depending on its origin. NRCA said slate is “virtually indestructible,” and it’s more expensive than other roofing materials. Many older homes, especially those in the Northeast, have been protected by this long-lasting roofing material for a long time. Applying slate does require special skill and experience.

## METAL

Residential metal roofing is one of the fastest-growing segments of home improvement, according to NRCA. Metal roofing is available as panels and shingles, with many possible panel shapes and configurations. Metal shingles are typically intended to simulate traditional roof coverings like wood shakes, shingles, and tile.

Metal roofing can be counted on to have a long life, NRCA said, while metal shingles are relatively lightweight and have a greater resistance to adverse weather while having aesthetic benefits. Some have Class A fire ratings—the highest rating available.

## SOLAR

Solar roofing materials, or photovoltaic (PV) roofing materials, are also growing in popularity as homeowners look to decrease dependence on local electricity grids and take advantage of tax credits. Solar roofing material can come in the form of shingles, tiles, or panels, and installation requires familiarity with electrical systems, according to NRCA.

## SYNTHETIC ROOFING MATERIALS

Synthetic roofing materials simulate various traditional roof coverings like slate and wood shingles and shakes, but they don’t necessarily have the same properties, according to NRCA. As such, they should be researched thoroughly to make sure they meet a project’s needs. 🌟



# Are you ready to take your skills to the next level?

**ASHI Edge** is our online education platform with a comprehensive course catalog that will earn you continuing education credits for both ASHI and specific state licensing requirements.

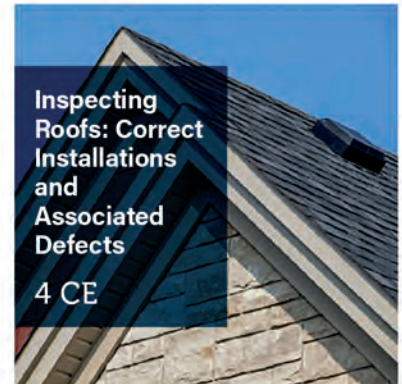
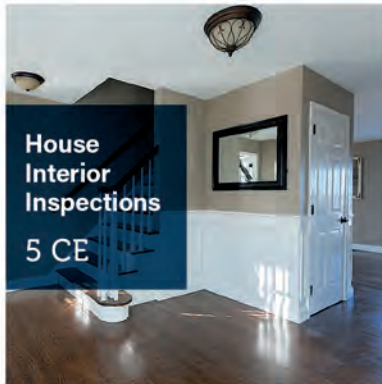
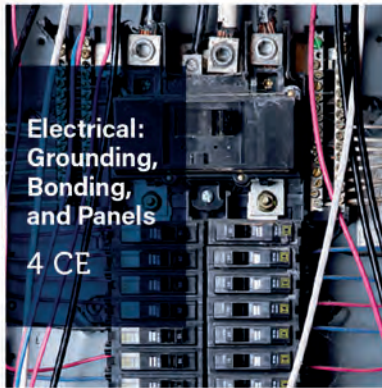
As we announced a few months ago, ASHI has partnered with the **International Code Council (ICC)** to expand resources and membership opportunities for our members. The ICC is the leading global source of model codes and standards and building safety solutions, including product evaluation, accreditation, technology, training, and certification.

**We are excited to announce that ICC has approved these courses so that you earn ASHI and ICC credits.**

**So, what are you waiting for?**



Scan the code or visit [bit.ly/403hptD](https://bit.ly/403hptD) today and take your career to new heights.



**ASHI EDGE**  
ELEVATE YOUR EDUCATION

# KNOW YOUR WORTH

Setting business rates for home inspection services

BY HENRY SANDER, ACI



Adobe ©Dmytro

**E**stablishing the right rates for your home inspection business is essential to achieving profitability and growth. Striking a balance between competitive pricing and sustainable business practices is key. Let's dive into how to set your business rates effectively.

This is a question we have all asked ourselves in this business, new inspector or seasoned professional: "Are my inspection services priced accordingly?" Here are a few tips to consider refining your pricing structure.

**Evaluate your operating costs.** Include fixed costs like office rent or even your home dedicated space,

utilities, all insurances, and professional licenses fees, as well as variable costs like transportation, advertising, recurring or replacement equipment costs, and maintenance. Don't forget to account for labor costs, including employee wages and benefits. Knowing your total expenses helps ensure your rates are sufficient to cover these costs and allow for a reasonable profit margin. I believe this is the best model for a business.

**Do your market research.** Market research is crucial to understanding the competitive landscape. Investigate the rates charged by other home inspection service companies in your area.

*Opinions or statements of authors are solely their own and do not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of ASHI, its agents, or editors. Always check with your local governmental agency and independently verify for accuracy, completeness, and reliability.*





***Henry Sander is president of the NIC ASHI Chapter. He has been a professional home inspector since 2012 and ASHI instructor/field trainer since 2020. He owns Heartland Home Inspections and has completed more than 4,000 inspections.***

This gives you an idea of the average rates for home inspections in your region and helps you identify how your service stands out, such as through superior report quality or additional services offered. Don't underestimate your experience, training, and knowledge. This research enables you to set rates that are competitive yet still offer value to your clients.

**Choose the right pricing model.** Choose a pricing model that aligns with your business goals and meets your clients' expectations. Options include a flat rate for standard inspections; you can base it on size or square footage, the age of the home, or some calculate by number of bedrooms and bathrooms—always with additional fees for other services.

A combination of above and tiered pricing with additional services or varying levels of combination services and corresponding price points can be a package deal, if you will, with easy picking, like a fast-food drive-through window.

**Determine your hourly rate.** An hourly rate can be used based on the estimated time spent on each inspection. I call this the one-third, one-third, one-third model. One-third is your take, your pay for your service, one-third is for your entity, your business, and one-third goes to operating costs, or your wear and tear or replacement and upgrading of tools and equipment, gas for the vehicle, office supplies and so on. This model is easier to configure but may not be the most consistent and accurate.

Adding value to your services can enhance the appeal of your pricing and differentiate your business. Consider upgrading your software so you have comprehensive, easy-to-understand reports with clear, actionable insights for your clients. Offering additional services like radon testing, sewer scanning, energy audits, or mold inspections can also increase the perceived value of your company. Educate your clients by sharing homeowner resources and information about the inspection

process, home maintenance tips, and help them make informed decisions.

Once you've calculated your costs, researched the market, and established your pricing model and value additions, set your rates. Make sure your rates cover your costs and provide a reasonable profit margin. Profit margins vary across the country and usually range from 20 to 40%. Always remain competitive and fair for your clients. Your rates should reflect the level of service and expertise you provide. Use your experience, training, and tool chest as your backbone to be your Unique Selling Point (USP).

Clear communication is the most important thing—vital when conveying your rates to potential clients, ensuring clients understand what's included in your services and any additional fees they might encounter.

Regularly review and adjust your rates to maintain competitiveness and profitability. Keep an eye on changes in your costs, market conditions, and business goals, and be prepared to make adjustments as necessary.

By following these steps, you can set business rates for your home inspection service that strike the right balance between profitability and competitiveness. Stay flexible and responsive to market trends and client needs to ensure the ongoing success of your business. 🌱

## NEW MEMBERS

### ALABAMA

Brian Gentry | Prattville

### ARIZONA

Angelina Hanna | Sahuarita

### ARKANSAS

Tony Brickey | St. Charles  
Rick Dybas | Fayetteville

### CALIFORNIA

Daniel Otts | Pleasanton

### COLORADO

Randall Hoepker | Trinidad  
Jeffery Emmett | Evergreen

### ILLINOIS

David Perez | Chicago

### MARYLAND

Mason McClew | Cumberland

### MICHIGAN

Richard Pack | Clio

### MONTANA

Tristan Costa | Crow Agency  
Roy Frazier | Whitefish

### NEW YORK

Harry Jewan | Queens

### OREGON

Justin Rogers | Klamath Falls

### PENNSYLVANIA

Michael Parfomak | East Stroudsburg  
Jamel Ross | Wyncote  
Robert Korwek | Yardley  
Patricia McGee | Bushkill

### TEXAS

Heidi Mitchell | Austin

### UTAH

Jeff Walton | Heber City

### VIRGINIA

Daniel Callahan | Springfield

### WASHINGTON

Joseph Kim | Tumwater

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

## New England Chapter ICC B1 Class

B1 Certification Test Academy

9am EST, Aug. 19

This course will take place live, in-person.

450 Totten Pond Road, Waltham, MA 02451

[shop.iccsafe.org](http://shop.iccsafe.org)

## InspectionWorld On the Road: New England

The New England Chapter of ASHI

Sept. 9 & 10, 2024

MGM Springfield, MA

[ashinewengland.org](http://ashinewengland.org)

## InspectionWorld On the Road: St. Louis

Sept. 20 & 21, 2024

Machinists Hall Inc., Bridgeton, MO

[stlashi.org/best-conference-ever](http://stlashi.org/best-conference-ever)

## InspectionWorld On the Road: Silicon Valley

Oct. 4 & 5, 2024

More information to come soon!



# 2024

## AUGUST MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

### 30 YEARS

**Eric Carpenter** *US Inspect*

### 25 YEARS

**David Dalfino** *Dalfino & Assoc. dba Pillar to Post*

**Dan Martin** *Martin's Home Inspections*

**Edward Piper** *Piper Inspections*

**William Broderick** *Advanced Home Inspections*

**Bruce Monaco**

**Roger Skaggs** *Inspect-It 1st Property Inspection*

**Scott Lunsford** *Pillar to Post*

### 20 YEARS

**Ronnie Blankenship** *Complete Home Inspectors*

**Steven Udelle** *Detailed Home Inspections*

**Steven Haldeman** *Tuscany Home Inspections*

**John Terribilini** *Safe Side*

**David Levan** *BPG Inspection*

**Joseph Peterka** *BPG Inspection*

**Janni Juhasz** *Janni's HOMTEC*

### 15 YEARS

**Rob Smith** *Rob Smith Property Investigations*

**James Linke** *Gateway Home Inspection*

**Al Gindt** *BPG Inspection*

**Mark Fulmer** *Home Inspections by the Fulmer Group*

**David Millican** *Pillar to Post*

**Tim Poss** *LunsPro Home Inspections*

**Kevin Dunkle** *Henry's Home Inspection*

**Osh Bitar** *Merit Home Inspectors*

### 10 YEARS

**Mohamad Ghazi** *BPG Inspection*

**Nathan Shorette** *Candid Home Inspection Service*

**William Kent** *Clearview Home Inspections*

**Michael Maxwell** *Maxwell Home & Property Solutions*

**Scott Broussard** *ProTec Inspection Services*

**Nicholas Onega** *Onega Inspection Services*

### 5 YEARS

**David Moon** *Certified Home Inspections*

**Cary Cooper** *Atlanta Property Inspections*

**Wynn Henry** *Enlightener Home Inspection*

**Carl Harris** *Fanatic Inspection Services*

**Michael Hammock**

**John Houk** *Shorlock Home Inspections*

**Brian Peterson** *Greystone Inspection Services*

**Eddie Whiting** *Pillar to Post The Chad Borah Team*

**Timothy Hoffman** *Peoples Choice*

**Nalu Bustillos**

**Joshua Frost** *GCIS*

**Dustin Budzynski** *Atlanta Property Inspection*

**Jeremy Patterson** *Atlanta Property Inspection*

**Justin Chandler**

**Brandon Barger** *Welcome Home Property Inspections*

**Angela Johnson** *Pillar to Post Home Inspectors*

**Samuel Minassian**

**Jason Brown** *On Point Home Inspections*

**Charles Hoelscher** *Pillar to Post Home Inspectors*

**Marion (Will) Hodges**

**John Clarke** *John Clarke*

**Greg Bucci** *LunsPro Home Inspections*

## REPORTER

Here's a look at some of the topics we'd love to cover in upcoming issues of the Reporter. To be considered, submit your articles to [editor@ashi.org](mailto:editor@ashi.org) within these areas before the deadlines below.

#### OCTOBER:

Exteriors

Deadline: August 11

#### NOVEMBER:

Indoor Air Quality

Deadline: September 15

#### DECEMBER:

New Construction

Deadline: October 13

#### JANUARY 2025:

Setting Business Goals

Deadline: November 15



*Custom light  
switch cover*

James Brock | Boston Home Inspectors  
Boston, MA



*You  
might  
have a  
rodent  
issue.*

Chris McDougall | Apex Home Inspection  
Aromas, CA



*The Better  
mousetrap  
(spring traps glued  
to glue traps)*

Patrick Lyons | Buyer's Inspector  
Ann Arbor, MI



*A basement  
sink was  
always  
on my  
bucket  
list!*

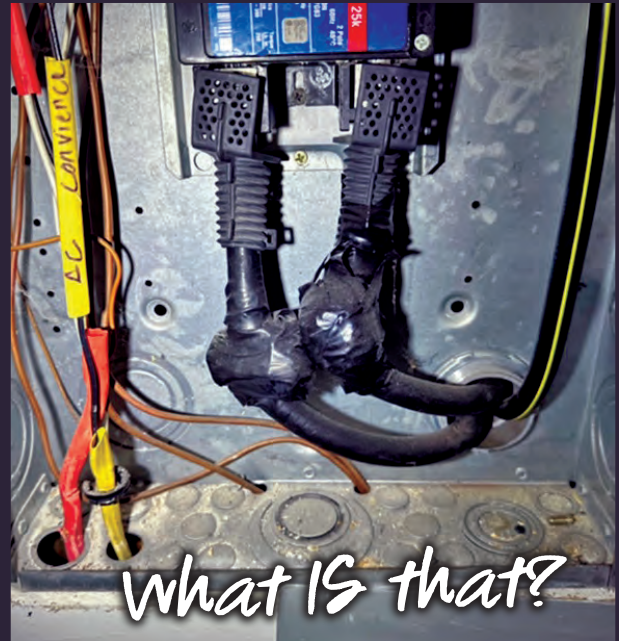
Doron Bracha | Accent Home Inspection  
Brookline, MA



Extra waterproofing, where's the harm in that?



Michael Sutton | Ocean Home Inspections  
Oakhurst, NJ



What IS that?

Michael Ashburn | Ashburn Inspections  
Pittsburgh, PA

Textured stucco?



Robert Flaherty | Be Sure Home Inspections  
Okatie, SC

This didn't "register" with the "qualified" installer.



Nick Boese | Iron Gate Inspection Services  
Indianapolis, IN

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This postcard was mislabeled in the July 2024 Reporter.



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