



MARCH 2022

# REPORTER

INSPECTION NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS, INC.

WHAT'S THE BEST LADDER FOR  
HOME INSPECTORS? P6

RENEWING THE FIGHT  
AGAINST RADON P16

10 WAYS TO BETTER MARKET  
YOUR BUSINESS P22



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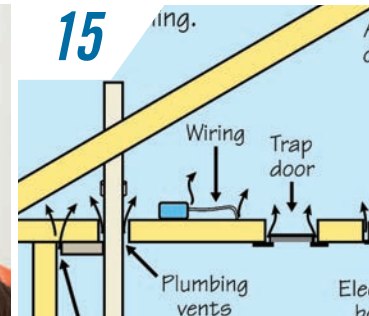
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*To set and promote standards for property inspections  
and to provide the educational programs needed to achieve excellence  
in the profession and to meet the needs of our members.*

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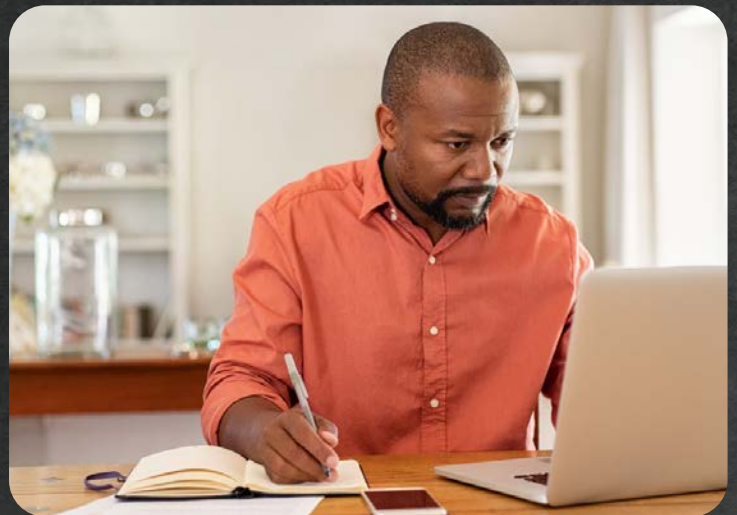


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## Managing Risk

### WHAT'S THE BEST LADDER 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 [www.inspectorproinsurance.com/ashi-advantage](http://www.inspectorproinsurance.com/ashi-advantage).*





**OF MORE THAN 1,100 HOME INSPECTORS SURVEYED, ABOUT 90% OF THEM REPORTED USING ALUMINUM LADDERS.**

**Note:** 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.

*The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of ASHI. The information contained in the article is general and readers should always independently verify for accuracy, completeness, and reliability.*

**W**hen it comes to home inspection equipment, few items are as essential as ladders. Needed for most roof inspections, ladders are an important tool. But when ladders come in so many materials, lengths, duties, and varieties, it can be tough to determine which is best for your business.

What's more, choosing a ladder is about more than convenience. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 500,000 people seek medical help for ladder-related injuries each year. Additionally, about 300 of those individuals die from their injuries, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Such accidents are why, in 2017, the US and the American Ladder Institute deemed March National Ladder Safety Month.

In this article we share research, including our survey of more than 1,100 home inspectors, to help you choose the right ladder and stay safe while using it.

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT LADDER

SEVERAL FACTORS CAN HELP DETERMINE THE MOST APPROPRIATE LADDER FOR YOU AND YOUR JOB, INCLUDING:

1. MATERIAL
2. LENGTH
3. DUTY RATING
4. LADDER VARIETY
5. CONDITION

We explore each of these considerations in more detail below.

### MATERIAL

Manufacturers primarily produce ladders out of wood, fiberglass, and aluminum. For carrying and transporting ladders across inspection properties, aluminum ladders are a lightweight and convenient option.

### LADDER MATERIAL

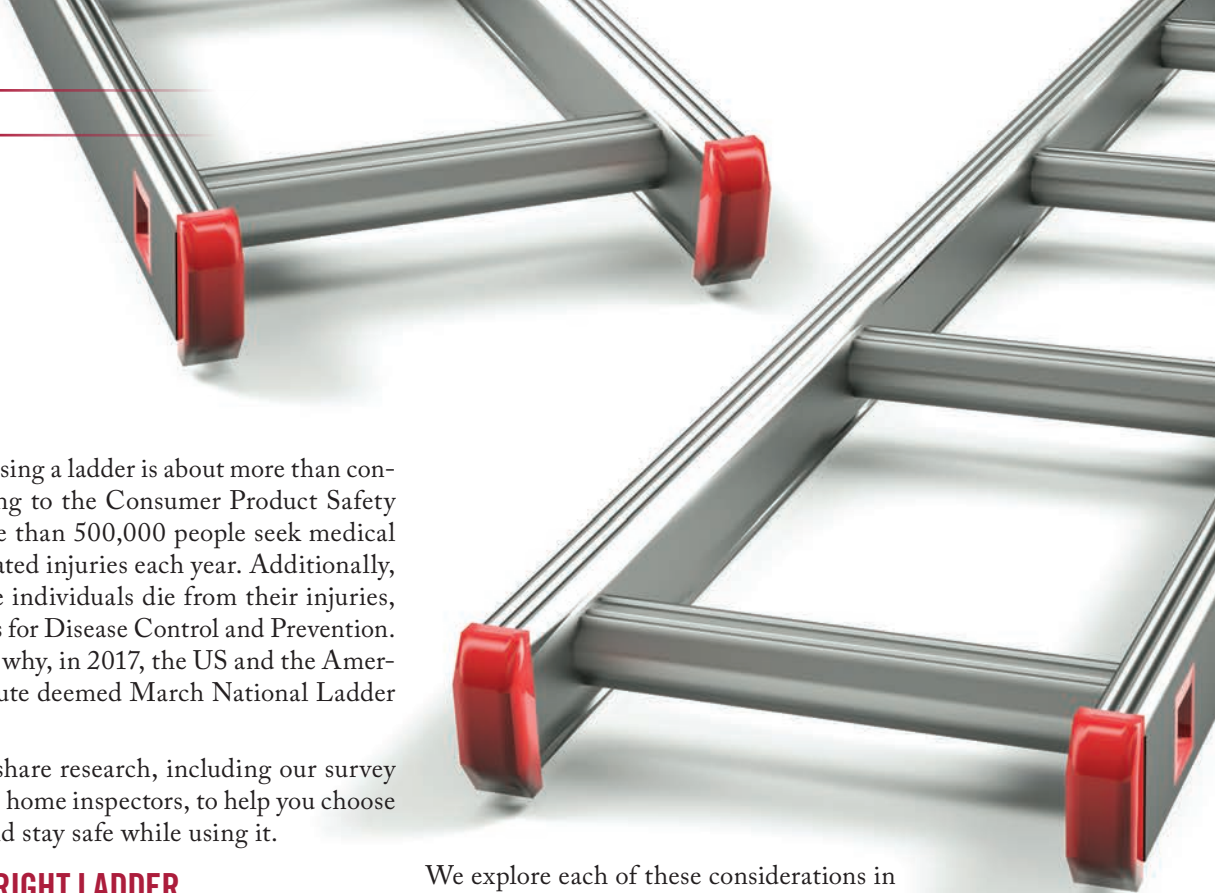
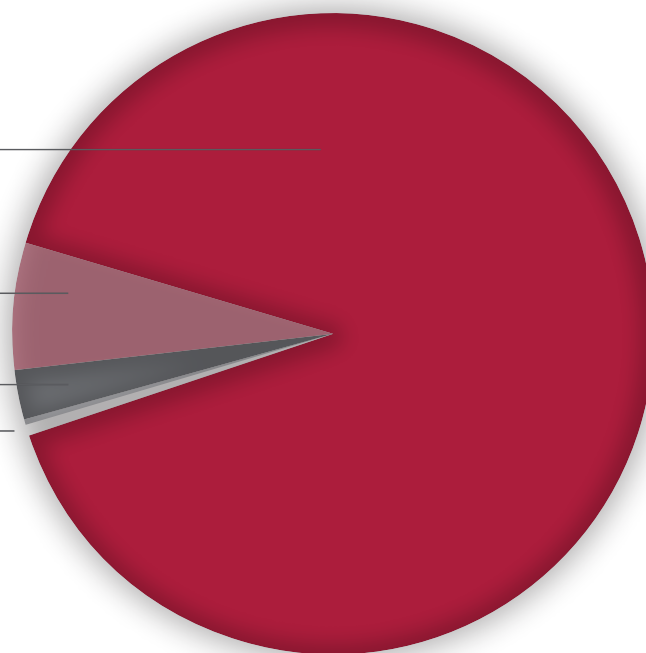
**ALUMINUM**  
90% (1,032)

**FIBERGLASS**  
7% (75)

**WOOD**  
3% (29)

**NOT SURE**  
0% (2)

**OTHER**  
1% (7)





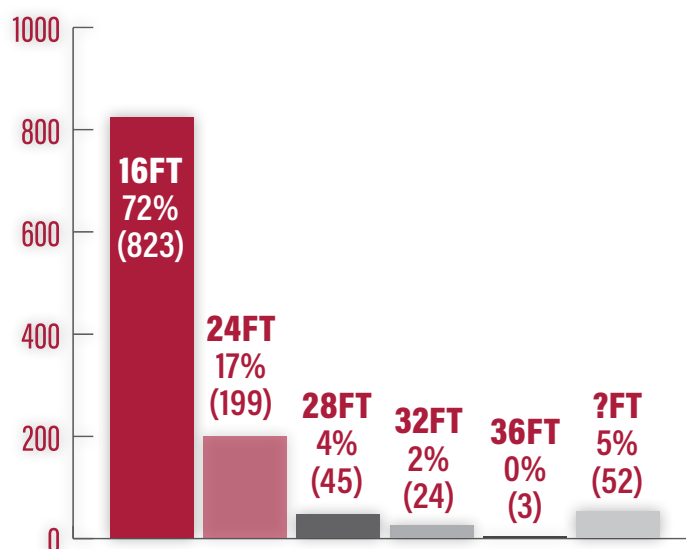
**HOWEVER, IF YOUR ROOF INSPECTION IS BESIDE AN ELECTRICAL WIRE OR OTHER POWER SOURCE, USING AN ALUMINUM LADDER CAN POSE AN ELECTRICAL SHOCK RISK.**

### LENGTH

It's important that your ladder isn't the wrong length for the job. With too short a ladder, you may be tempted to step on the top cap, which may lead you to lose your balance. With too long a ladder, it may extend more than three feet beyond the upper support point, leading the base of the ladder to move or slide out.

The following graphic shows the length of ladders our survey participants preferred.

### LENGTH NUMBER PERCENTAGE



Note that the maximum working height is about three feet less than the overall length of your ladder. So if you use a 32-foot ladder, you should expect to safely climb and inspect at no higher than 29 feet.

### DUTY RATING

A ladder's duty rating indicates your ladder's maximum weight capacity. In their article "Ladders 101," the American Ladder Institute lists the five categories of duty ratings:

### DUTY RATING MAXIMUM WEIGHT\*

	<b>TYPE III (LIGHT DUTY)</b> 200 POUNDS
	<b>TYPE II (MEDIUM DUTY)</b> 225 POUNDS
	<b>TYPE I (HEAVY DUTY)</b> 250 POUNDS
	<b>TYPE IA (EXTRA HEAVY DUTY)</b> 300 POUNDS
	<b>TYPE IAA (EXTRA HEAVY DUTY)</b> 375 POUNDS

*\*Courtesy of American Ladder Institute*

To calculate the duty rating necessary for you, the American Ladder Institute recommends the following equation:

[Your Weight] + [Weight of Clothing and Protective Equipment] + [Weight of Tools/Supplies You're Carrying] + [Weight of Tools/Supplies Stored on Ladder]

You can find your ladder's duty rating on the specifications label on the side of your ladder.

## LADDER VARIETY

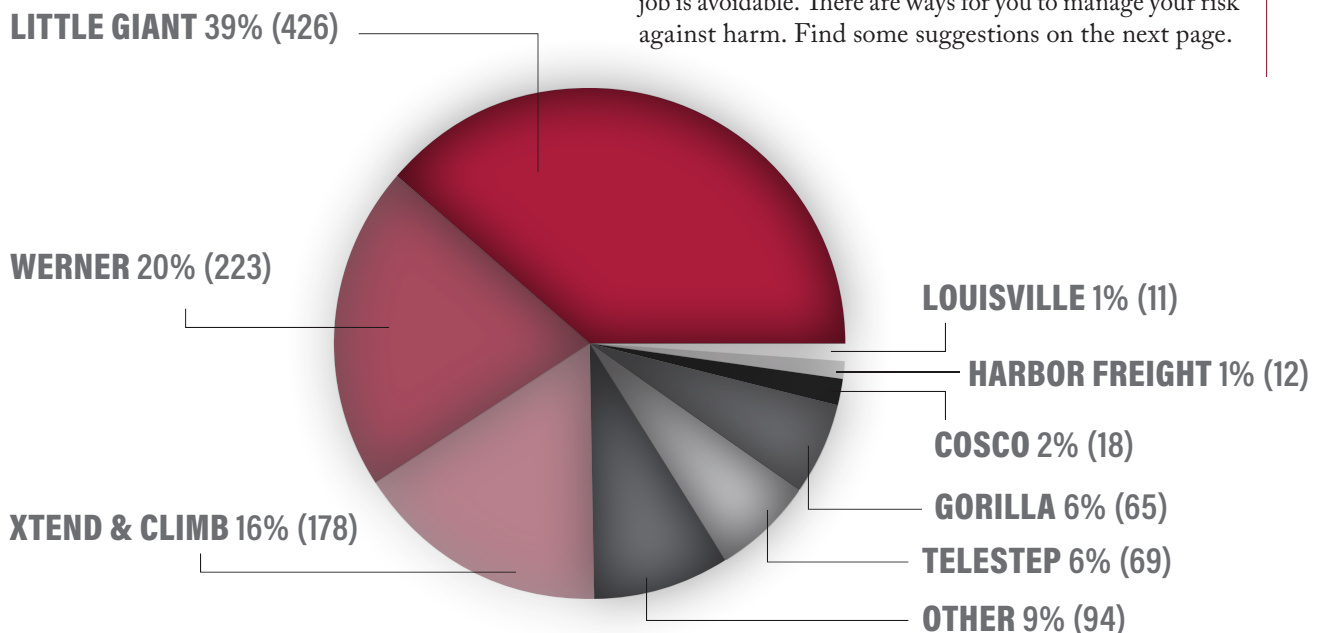
There are many types of ladders, including articulating ladders, combination ladders, and single or extension ladders. Each ladder type has different features and requires different safety measures and care.

Considering weight and portability, more than 67% of our survey participants said compactness and/or foldability were some of the most important features in a ladder. Furthermore, many of our survey participants use telescoping ladders. Unlike adjustable or extension ladders, telescoping ladders' rungs can fully collapse, leaving some of these retracted ladders shorter than three feet.

To learn more about ladder varieties, refer to the American Ladder Institute's "Ladders 101" article mentioned earlier.

**IN ADDITION TO LADDER TYPE, YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER BRANDS. THE FOLLOWING ILLUSTRATES WHICH BRANDS OUR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS FAVORED MOST.**

### BRAND NUMBER PERCENTAGE



## CONDITION

The right ladder for a roof inspection is always one that's in good condition. Inspect your ladder regularly to confirm it's safe to climb. When checking your ladder, here are a few items to examine to make sure they are present and properly functioning:

- **FOOT PADS AND FEET FOR ASSEMBLY AND DAMAGE**
- **RUNGS, RAILS, LOCK (DAWGS), ROPE, AND PULLEY ASSEMBLY (EXTENSION LADDERS)**
- **TOP CAP, ALL STEPS, SIDE RAILS, AND LOCKING BRACES (STEP LADDERS)**
- **BRACERS AND SPREADERS**

If your ladder is defective or damaged, don't use it. Replace it with a fully functioning ladder.

## LIMITING YOUR LIABILITY

While it's easy to consider yourself too good at your job to have such an accident, it can happen to anyone. In his article "Ladder Safety" for the ASHI Reporter, Rick Bunzel explained why assuming you're impervious to falls is naive.

"Most of us believe we'll never have an accident during an inspection. However, think back over the past months about how many close calls you had. How many times did the ladder jump around while you were going into the attic? Or did the ladder shift when you stepped back onto it?" Bunzel wrote.

Thankfully, falling from your ladder or a roof while on the job is avoidable. There are ways for you to manage your risk against harm. Find some suggestions on the next page.



**WEAR THE RIGHT SHOES.**

According to the American Ladder Institute, bad footwear can cause falls. Thus, it's important to wear the right shoes when climbing ladders and inspecting roofs. Here are some characteristics industry and safety experts recommend looking for in shoes:

- **FLAT SOLES SINCE HEELS CAN GET CAUGHT IN LADDER RUNGS**
- **HEAVY SOLES TO PREVENT FOOT FATIGUE**
- **EXCELLENT TRACTION AND SLIP RESISTANCE**
- **CLEAN SOLES FOR MAXIMUM TRACTION**

There are lots of recommendations for roof inspections and roofing online, most of which point to hiking boots and skating shoes. Many caution against athletic shoes, some of which have little cleats on the soles that can damage shingles. Which shoe is best for you will depend on your budget, your feet, and the weather in your area.

**PLACE YOUR LADDER IN THE RIGHT SPOT.**

Where you place your ladder can have a significant impact on your safety. As such, it's important to take setting up your ladder seriously every time.

***"WHEN YOU'VE INSPECTED 2,000 ROOFS, YOU START TAKING THINGS FOR GRANTED," SAID KC BARTLEY OF PROFESSIONAL HOME INSPECTIONS IN TENNESSEE. "YOU JUST KIND OF THROW YOUR LADDER DOWN AND JUMP ON THE ROOF."***

Make sure you always set up your ladder on firm, level ground. There shouldn't be anything that can cause your ladder to slip at the base or top support points.

Also, look out for potential hazards in the surrounding area. If you're placing your ladder near a door, are you sure that door is locked and not going to be opened while you're using your ladder? Are there household pets nearby that could potentially run into and knock over your ladder?

When setting up your ladder, always open it completely so all the locks engage. If you're using an extension ladder, follow the four-to-one rule: For each four feet of distance between the ground and the upper point of contact—in your case, the wall or the roof—move the base of the ladder out one foot.

**TELL YOUR CLIENTS TO STAY BACK.**

Some home inspectors like it when clients attend the home inspection. They believe being present helps their clients have appropriate expectations and better understand your inspection findings. However, one area to which clients should never accompany you is the roof.

Do not allow overzealous clients (or agents or anyone else) to climb up the ladder after you. In fact, don't let them anywhere near your ladder. You may consider putting a sign on or beside your ladder to encourage others to stay back. Failure to create strict boundaries around your ladder and your roof inspection could harm you or others.

**CARRY WORKERS' COMP INSURANCE.**

If you or one of your home inspectors is injured during a roof inspection, workers' compensation benefits may be available to you.

Workers' comp insurance provides employees who suffer from work-related injuries or diseases with access to medical and wage benefits. Unlike general liability (GL) insurance, which covers inspection-related bodily injury and property damage claims for non-employees, workers' compensation looks out for you and the people who work for your company.

"One accident can not only hurt you and maybe put you out of business, but more importantly, that employee has to have a way of making a living and getting his bills paid for if it happens on the job," said Alan Grubb of 4U Home, Inc. in Maryland.

By covering job-related injury and illness costs, workers' comp protects both employees and employers. Employees work under less financial risk knowing they have on-the-job protection. Additionally, employers limit their liability and deter litigation.

"If you have any employees, they need to have workman's comp," Grubb said. "The amount that it costs for workman's comp is minor [compared] to what it could cost you or your employee if you didn't have it."

Get a quote for workers' comp for home inspectors today by completing our application on the InspectorPro Insurance website.

**LADDERS AND HOME INSPECTIONS**

Inspect roofs confidently by choosing the ladder that's right for your business and taking the necessary precautions to avoid accidents and injuries. Learn more about National Ladder Safety Month and obtain free training, flyers, and videos by visiting [laddersafetymonth.com](http://laddersafetymonth.com).

# 2021 ASHI AWARDS

## 2021 ASHI AWARDS

*The 2021 ASHI awards showcase some of our most standout certified home inspectors from the past year. Our most recent winners include years long volunteers, mentors who are always available to help new inspectors, and committee chairs who contribute across committees. You can read more about each of these ASHI Award winners in upcoming issues of the Reporter.*





### **2021 PRESIDENT AWARD WINNER: LISA ALAJAJIAN GIROUX**

*Established in 1989, the President's Award is presented annually to an ASHI Member by the outgoing ASHI President in recognition of outstanding service to the association.*

Lisa Alajajian Giroux has made significant contributions to ASHI and the profession at the local and national levels for many years. Her consistently positive approach, willingness to learn and adapt, and ability to connect with people make her a clear leader. She's also shared her years of wisdom by writing for the *ASHI Reporter*. "She was a great help to me during my presidential term, and I hope to return the favor during her term. I have every confidence that she will be a great ASHI President," said outgoing ASHI President Bruce Barker.



### **2021 IRONMAN AWARD WINNER: JOHN CRANOR**

*Established in 1998, the Ironman Award recognizes an ASHI Member who has given time, energy, talent, and determination to ASHI over a long period of time and with little recognition. This annual award is presented by the outgoing ASHI President.*

John Cranor has served his chapter in many capacities, including several terms as chapter president. He also served several times as a national committee chair. He has contributed his knowledge to ASHI by writing articles for the *Reporter*, and he also served as president of his state home inspector association and as a member of the state licensing board. "John is also willing to learn and to adapt, and he has the ability to connect with people. I'm pleased to recognize John's contributions," Barker said.



### **2021 MONAHON AWARD WINNER: BRYCK GUIBOR**

*The Philip C. Monahon Award is an annual award that recognizes an ASHI Member who has made exceptional and innovative contributions to the ASHI membership.*

Bryck Guibor has been the face of Arizona ASHI for more than 30 years and was a charter member. He has served as Arizona chapter secretary, vice president, and president—a position he's held numerous times, and for more than five years collectively. Bryck served on the National Board of Directors from 2003 to 2006 and again from 2015 to 2018. He chaired the ASHI MRC Committee from 2019 to 2021. He was awarded the National ASHI Ironman Award in 2020. Bryck has also served as a member of the State of Arizona Board of Technical Registration Enforcement Advisory Committee—a volunteer group that reviews applications for new state-licensed inspectors as well as written complaints.



### **2021 COX AWARD WINNER: HARRY MORRELL**

*The John E. Cox Member of the Year Award is an annual award that recognizes an ASHI Member who has made exceptional contributions to an ASHI Chapter.*

Harry Morrell has been a dedicated member of the St. Louis Chapter of ASHI since early in his career. He is known for his mentorship, giving new inspectors guidance and support as they build their careers. He is a skilled educator and regularly presents at chapter seminars and meetings. Harry has served as chapter secretary, treasurer, vice president, director, and president—in some positions multiple times. He served as chapter president in 2007, 2017, and 2020. He has also served as a COR representative on several occasions. Harry has chaired the legislative committee since 2003 and served as a member of the education committee for the past 18 years.



### **2021 PRESIDENTIAL STAFF AWARD: MICHELLE SANTIAGO**

*This special award is selectively given out by the ASHI President, unlike most other ASHI awards, which are granted annually.*

ASHI 2021 President Bruce Barker has granted the Presidential Staff Award to Michelle Santiago for her service to ASHI. Michelle has been with ASHI since December 2016. She has been with The ASHI School throughout her time with the organization and was instrumental in helping to move The ASHI School from a stand-alone for-profit entity into ASHI's Education Department. Under her direction, the ASHI School experienced its most profitable year in 2021. Michelle embraces the challenges in front of her and continues to help move ASHI forward. Those who work with her know she always aims to support however she can and excel in her responsibilities. Michelle is appreciated by the many instructors she helps manage as well as the students she impacts daily. Most of all, she is respected by her colleagues and ASHI leadership.

# INSULATION INSTALLATION FAILURE

**WE USUALLY ASSUME HOMES BUILT AROUND THE 1920S IN COLD CLIMATES WILL HAVE INADEQUATE INSULATION BY TODAY'S STANDARDS. WHEN AND HOW CAN THAT INSULATION BE CONSIDERED A MAJOR FAILURE?**

## INSPECTING OLDER HOMES

While inspecting older homes like the one shown in Photo 1, we often recommend additional insulation because they were built with limited or no insulation. If you make this recommendation, always note insulation "with proper air sealing."



*Photo 1. 1920s Home Needs Insulation*

I was called out to this home because the owner had an extensive insulation project completed and now, for the first time in 100 years, there was moisture and mold in the attic. The insulation contractor followed their contract standards for installation and believed they did not cause any problems.

## A LOOK IN THE ATTIC

This beautiful old home had a typical walk-up attic (Photo 2) with wood boards covering the floor. Wooden plugs are visible, indicating where insulation was blown under the attic floor. There's also cellulose surrounding a plumbing vent pipe at an overhang. We can't see any ventilation openings at the lower edge of the roof. We can see lots of water stains and, perhaps, mold growth.

With a closer look (Photo 3), we see extensive mold growth on the underside of the roof framing. Growth and stains appeared throughout the attic on the lower edge of the roof, with heavier growth on the north side.



*Photo 2. Plugs in Floor – Cellulose*



*Photo 3. Attic Mold Growth*

## WHAT HAPPENED?

The insulation contractor ignored the basic tenet of a thermal boundary/envelope, as shown in Illustration I008C. Homes must have a vapor barrier (or air seal/barrier) on the warm side of the insulation. This barrier prevents moist warm air from escaping the heated space.



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.

Tom Feiza has been a professional home inspector since 1992 and has a degree in engineering. Through [HowToOperateYourHome.com](http://HowToOperateYourHome.com), he provides high-quality books and marketing materials that help professional home inspectors educate their customers. Copyright © 2021 by Tom Feiza, Mr. Fix-It, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

By Tom Feiza, Mr. Fix-It, Inc.,  
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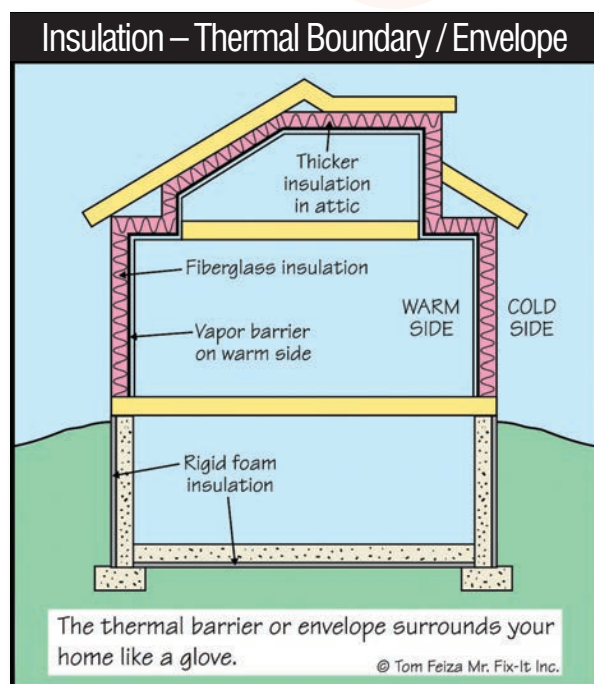


Illustration I008C Insulation – Thermal Boundary / Envelope

All homes leak lots of air through the attic, as depicted in Illustration I005C. In the 1920s, there were no vapor barriers or any attempts to seal the envelope. Lots of warm air leaked into the attic and kept it warm. Since it was warm in the attic year-round, there was no condensation. Snow melted off the roof, and there were no ice dams, but there may have been large icicles.

**SO NOW WE HAVE A WELL-INSULATED BARRIER BETWEEN THE ATTIC AND THE HEATED SPACE, AND THE ATTIC IS COLD.**

Some moisture-laden air still leaks into the attic, and moisture condenses on the cool inner roof surfaces. The combination of moisture and dirt on the wood results in mold.

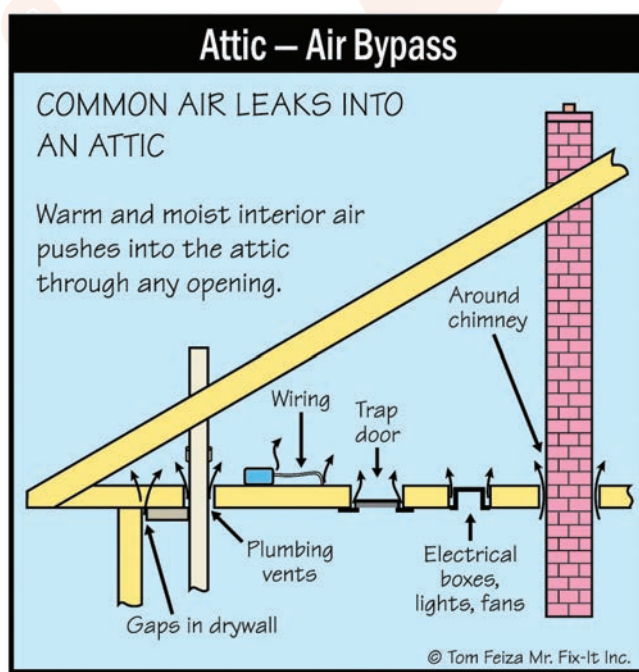


Illustration I005C Attic – Air Bypass

### THE TAKEAWAY

If you recommend additional insulation for a home, always note insulation with proper air sealing and/or evaluation by a qualified energy consultant to design a proper insulation system.

*To learn more, attend Tom's technical presentations at educational sessions for ASHI chapters and local groups. Tom can also provide his knowledge for your educational event; contact him at [Tom@htoyh.com](mailto:Tom@htoyh.com).*




# RENEWING THE FIGHT AGAINST RADON

By Peter C. Foller, Ph.D., Ecosense, Inc.



Dr. Peter C. Foller received his Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of California at Berkeley in 1979 and has enjoyed a highly varied research and development career in service of companies both large and small. He serves in board and/or advisory capacities with several San Francisco Bay Area technology startups. Among them is Ecosense, a leading supplier of consumer and professional grade radon detection equipment. Foller is a named inventor on some 50 US patents.

A woman with long brown hair is lying back on an orange lounge chair, her eyes closed and a slight smile on her face. She is wearing a white t-shirt. In the background, another person is partially visible, wearing a plaid shirt. The setting appears to be outdoors with greenery in the distance.

*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.*

**15.5% of all lung cancer cases  
may be attributable to radon.**

**A**s a certified home inspector, whether you think about it every so often or not, you are out there on the front line saving your customers from all kinds of misfortune—costly losses due to water damage, fire, personal injury, lawsuits, and even the long-term medical consequences of under-appreciated hazards that lurk below our day-to-day radar. Among the latter are the hazards of radon.

## WHAT IS RADON?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that unnaturally concentrates within homes in areas with problematic trace uranium-containing geology. Long-term exposure to elevated radon concentrations can lead to lung cancer. Seasonal and weather dependent indoor/outdoor temperature/pressure differential draws the gas into homes from the soil below.

The EPA's maps, which you can find at [epa.gov](https://epa.gov), are simply a starting point to understanding the risk. The hazard of radon in homes has only been appreciated since the 1980s, and despite the efforts of government and nonprofits to encourage the testing of homes, many homes have yet to be properly tested.

## THE NEED FOR LONG-TERM MONITORING

As important as radon assessments are, there has been confusion over the appropriate roles for short and longer-term measurements. According to a 2019 study by the University of Calgary, there is a  $R^2 = 0.805$  correlation between five-day testing and 90+ day testing in central Canada, and there is essentially zero ( $R^2 = 0.011$ ) correlation between five-day winter testing and five-day summer testing. Longer term testing across several seasons is needed for accurate radon assessments.

## RADON EXPOSURE IS INCREASING

Modern homes are built with more efficient and better-sealed moisture barrier membranes and a higher degree of insulation than in the past. Despite the desired improvement in energy efficiency, this has led to a lesser degree of passive ventilation. The same study by the University of Calgary points out that higher footprint homes provide more opportunity for radon intrusion, and low-rise construction promotes greater accumulation in living spaces, as does increased ceiling height. This is especially true in the case of larger basement square footage and taller basement ceilings.

Lifestyle effects are also pointed out: We now spend an estimated 87% of our time indoors, and the use of air conditioning is increasingly prevalent. Frequent opening of windows is consequently now a less common behavior. Necessary to an acceptable energy efficiency, air conditioning recirculates residential air, thus increasing the opportunity for the accumulation of radon in summer months.

## THE SCOURGE OF LUNG CANCER

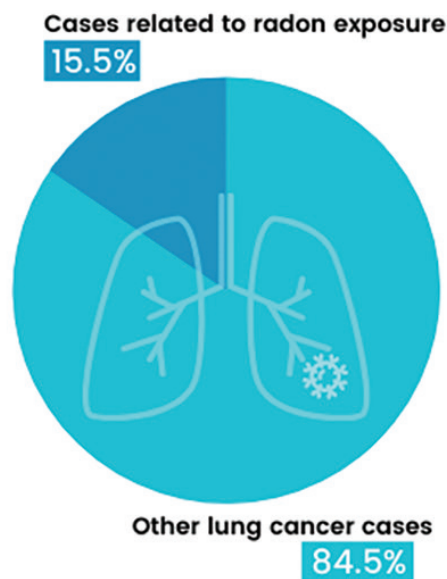
In the US, 228,820 new cases of lung cancer were diagnosed in 2019, according to the American Cancer Society. The majority of these cases were diagnosed at Stage IV. There can be few symptoms that rise to the level of seeing one's doctor early enough—a persistent cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, hoarseness, or repetitive episodes of bronchitis or pneumonia are the usual triggers for office visits.

The difficulty in treating lung cancer can be seen in comparing the number of new diagnoses in the US per year to the number of lung cancer deaths in the US per year (135,720 in 2019 according to the American Cancer Society). The National Cancer Institute's "SEER" database estimates the five-year survival rates of small cell lung cancer and non-small cell lung cancer, independent of stage, at 6% and 24% respectively, the American Cancer Society says.

The EPA has estimated that the number of US lung cancer deaths due to radon is 21,000 per year. Thus,  $21,000/135,720 \times 100$  indicates 15.5% of all lung cancer cases may be attributable to radon.

**The EPA has estimated that the number of U.S. lung cancer deaths due to radon is 21,000 per year.**

**Thus,  $21,000/135,720 \times 100$  indicates 15.5% of all lung cancer cases may be attributable to radon.**



In the US, the average lifetime cost of lung cancer diagnosis and treatment is about \$282,000 per case, according to an article on [healthpayerintelligence.com](https://healthpayerintelligence.com). There is a wide variation, depending upon the interventions recommended and their effectiveness, but if we take the number at face value, we can estimate an annual cost of radon-induced lung cancer to the US health care system:  $228,820 \text{ new cases/year} \times 15.5\% \times \$282,000 = \$10 \text{ billion/year}$ .





The result is a big number—especially for something that is to some degree preventable. So, who pays? The answer is we all do, through private insurance premiums, through the taxes we pay that support Medicare and Medicaid, and out of our own pockets in the form of deductibles, co-pays, and our charitable contributions.

### SCREENING FOR LUNG CANCER

Since diagnosis of lung cancer is most often made at later stages, to reduce overall costs, low cost non- (or minimally) invasive screening techniques are needed for use prior to the appearance of symptoms. For now, annual low-dose CT scans remain the only approved method for screening of non-symptomatic individuals. Such screening involves the risky exposure to x-ray radiation at a level (1.4 mSv) equivalent to 14 chest x-rays and the false positive rate is significant (356 false positives if 1,000 individuals are screened each year for three years).

Due to its costs and its risks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines are that low-dose CT scans are justified only for past or present heavy smokers in the 55 to 80 age bracket. Private insurance and Medicare pay (more or less) accordingly. Confirmation via visual bronchoscopy and biopsy remains necessary. Thus, for now, early diagnosis remains a difficult proposition, and we must double-down on prevention.

### PREVENTION IS OUR BEST STRATEGY

In the case of smoking—the leading cause of lung cancer—concerted anti-smoking campaigns have substantially contributed to improved public health. Though messaging on radon has been but a fraction of that devoted to smoking, public awareness of the need for testing our homes for radon is slowly growing.

Legacy testing methods (plastic track detector chips and activated carbon packets) are exposed for a period of time and then sent away to a laboratory for analysis. These are referred to as passive detection methods. Both have made important contributions to prevention, but they are generally deployed only for days to months and thus are mostly used for getting an average result readout. They must also be deployed in a single location.

Newer electronic (“active”) detection devices operate with either semiconductor-based or ion chamber-based detection technology. Both have been engineered into different device incarnations suitable for three essential roles: sniffing devices (meaning the rapid location of hot spots), certified testing devices (meaning devices suitable for professional reporting that can be re-calibrated), and consumer devices (products consumers may use to determine whether their situation warrants calling in a professional).

At both the professional and consumer level, these devices have been engineered for convenient mobile device reporting and the graphical representation of data over time. At the consumer level, these devices are particularly well suited for the long-term visualization of data across multiple seasons and in multiple locations within a home. As such, they make great “leave behinds” after inspections where radon levels are seen to be approaching action levels.

### IN CONCLUSION

The home inspector, mindful of it every day or not, has a laudable mission: to save their customers time and money while preventing losses, injury, or even life-threatening health outcomes. That sounds very close to superhero status in our book! And when it comes to all aspects of radon detection, both professional and consumer, we at Ecosense are proud to be a trusted partner in your efforts.

*Ecosense is an innovator in the radon monitoring industry—providing people peace of mind through intelligent and highly accurate radon detectors for homes, educational campuses, assisted living centers, community centers, and commercial buildings.*

***Ecosense is a proud ASHI Affiliate Member.***





# **SAVE THE DATE INSPECTION 2023!**

**IW23 will be held at  
Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino,  
Las Vegas, NV,  
Sunday, January 29, 2023 –  
Wednesday, February 1, 2023.**



# ONWORLD





# 10 WAYS TO BETTER MARKET YOUR BUSINESS

By Jameson Malgeri







*Jameson Malgeri has been an ASHI Certified Inspector since 2016 and owns Another Level Home Inspection. Based in Gloucester, Another Level Home Inspection services all of Massachusetts and includes several services like thermal imaging and pest inspections as part of their comprehensive inspection process.*

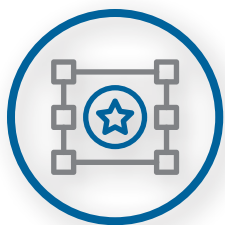
**T**he market in my area recently slowed for various reasons, including winter being a slower time of year generally. The slow season is a great time to revisit what I am putting out there as a company and fine-tune my efforts. I'm interested in pursuing some educational opportunities during this downtime, but one thing I think is important is to review things I'm already doing, to consider opportunities for improvement.

Often a busy owner throws together different marketing pieces of their business just to try something. Everything you do as a company can have an effect, and reevaluating can help to ensure you are maximizing every opportunity.





*Here are some ideas for improving things you are hopefully already doing as a company.*



### 1. HAVE A PROFESSIONAL LOGO.

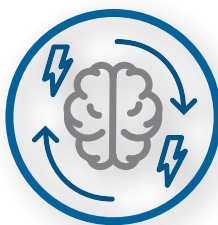
We deal with clientele from all walks of life. It's safe to say many are business owners, marketers, or work in image-related careers. You may not think too much about your logo yourself, but it can elicit an instant, most likely negative, reaction if it looks unprofessional or cheap. People often judge you visually rather than read the content you give them, so your logo must relay the same message and professionalism as your company.



### 2. HAVE A GREAT WEBSITE.

Websites don't have to be complicated. People make decisions quickly online, and you don't need 50 pages of lengthy content. You need a modern website, and I'd say what you see on the home page before you start scrolling is the most important part.

If your website is outdated, start by refreshing your home page. If your website is strong, focus on this landing page and optimize your primary content. Think about the process you want a user to go through on your website and make it a user-friendly experience.



### 3. UNDERSTAND YOUR STRENGTHS.

You should know the 10 things that make you stand out from your competitors very well. You want to differentiate yourself because every inspector says they are thorough and educational. Focus on what makes you different. Do you speak a second language? What is your background? Do you have more extensive experience? Maybe one of your strengths is something you learned before becoming a home inspector, something that taught you to be an excellent communicator or have strengths that apply to this job.



### 4. GET GREAT HEADSHOTS.

Like it or not, people are looking for the best inspector. You need to market yourself properly because you're selling yourself. I use headshots in introductory emails, my website, and social media to brand myself. If I only had photos of myself in a non-work situation or a low-quality image, people may think this reflects my ability to do my job or run a company.

***You should be available after the inspection to make asking follow-up questions easy. And don't forget to make it super simple to leave a review.***



#### **5. HAVE A STRONG BUSINESS CARD.**

Your business card should reflect your professionalism, your branding, and represent the quality of your work. Look at your website's theme and incorporate it into your card. Having thoughtful marketing materials makes you look more professional.



#### **6. CLEAN UP YOUR LOOK.**

We all get dirty during our inspections, especially if we do our job well. We need to arrive looking professional, even if we just came from an inspection. You can look professional regardless of your style with a little effort. If you look sloppy, people may associate that with laziness.



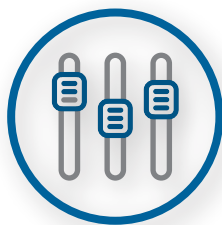
#### **7. EVALUATE YOUR EQUIPMENT.**

Do your tools look professional? What about your vehicle? You probably paid a lot for your equipment, so display it and carry it professionally. Try to keep your car clean, and consider putting your company information on it. Most of our effective marketing happens during the inspection. Everything your client and the agents take in during the inspection is part of your inspection experience.



#### **8. HAND YOUR CLIENT (AND MAYBE AGENTS) SOMETHING.**

Consider getting a home maintenance guide, brochure, other marketing material, or at a minimum your business card in your client's hands every time. There are many print items to consider, and when you make sure they're helpful, there is a better chance the client will hang on to them and remember you.



#### **9. STREAMLINE YOUR PROCESS.**

This is a big one. Your client should have a great experience on your website where they can book online and, if they do reach out to you, feel confident after speaking to your company. They should receive a confirmation email, and every step of the process should be smooth and easy.

Make paying, signing the agreement, and communicating inspection needs as easy as possible. You should be available after the inspection to make asking follow-up questions easy. And don't forget to make it super simple to leave a review. Companies spend significant amounts of time and money perfecting the user experience, and we should constantly evaluate our processes to improve it. Perfecting my template and user experience are probably the two things I invest the most time in for my company.



#### **10. HAVE A ROUTINE.**

Many inspectors know what to do for marketing; they just aren't consistent. Setting up a schedule can be a lifesaver. Establish a time when you want to post on social media, when you will blog, when you will work on your website, when you will look at point of sale advertising, and when you will evaluate the million other ways to get new business. Without a schedule, you will start marketing ideas and never execute them. It's all in the follow-up.

As business owners, how you do one thing is how you do everything. Having a constant presence, a consistent feel for your advertising, and focusing on making every part of your inspection great will result in quality, memorable experiences for clients and agents. Put your effort into all aspects of your business and maintain your professional demeanor. This is an excellent starting point before starting any new marketing efforts during the slow season.

***You can look professional regardless of your style with a little effort. If you look sloppy, people may associate that with laziness.***



# WHAT TO SAY—AND HOW TO SAY IT

## A GUIDE TO BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH POTENTIAL HOMEBUYERS AND AGENTS

By Laura Rote, Editor



It can be hard to say what you mean. Even harder still to confirm whether the person you're talking to understands what you say.

How do you, the professional home inspector, communicate to your clients? How do you explain defects in a house in layperson's terms, for example, or set expectations before a home inspection ever begins?

I talked to Todd Thuss of Integra Inspection Services ([integrainspect.com](http://integrainspect.com)) about what he's learned in his first few years as a professional home inspector—from being a better writer than talker to striking a balance between being helpful and overexplaining. Thuss' inspection business covers parts of Alabama and Tennessee.



Todd Thuss  
Integra Inspection Services

***"I'm an introvert and have had technical writing classes as part of my engineering training, so I'm probably not the typical example. I'm not good at thinking on my feet, and I do better when I have time to craft a response, then edit it down so it's clear and simple,"—Thuss said.***

## HERE ARE SOME OF THUSS' TIPS HE'S LEARNED OVER THE YEARS.

### IT'S ALL IN THE REPORT

Thuss tells clients upfront that the report is the primary output of the inspection, and any verbal discussion they have is provided as a courtesy. "It's essential that they read and understand the report for several reasons," he said. "One is that they're going to remember about 10% of what I tell them verbally. Another is that, legally, the report is what matters if something goes south."

However, a person can be a great inspector and, if they don't capture an inspection clearly in a report, that skill is meaningless. "We inspectors collect data at the inspection, interpret it, and output that info as communication. That chain is no stronger than any of those three links. Great inspecting skills and knowledge will not make up for the inability to clearly report it to the customers, which are clients and agents," he said.

### TEMPLATING COMMUNICATION

Thuss has spent hundreds of hours crafting the narratives he uses, and many inspections require a new narrative based on a defect he hadn't encountered yet.

"My narrative library grows slowly each week," he said. "That library, a reporting template, is the essential core of my practice. In it I get the chance to carefully craft a comment about an observation or defect. I write and rewrite these narrative comments for clarity, consistency, and brevity. That library, my template, is a never-ending work in progress."

### BE CLEAR AND CONCISE

You've probably noticed writing these days is only getting shorter. "It's interesting to read Victorian-era literature. Speakers would take 10 paragraphs to say the sky is blue. We've evolved, or devolved, to the opposite extreme," Thuss said. "I've had agents complain that they didn't like my report because they 'don't want to read' and just want a single sentence for each defect. My narrative comments were a short paragraph or so."

Thuss has taken that feedback and crafted a way of writing comments so the most crucial information is summarized in the first sentence—what the problem is and what needs to be done about it. The text that follows includes additional info, if the reader wants to read it, such as what the result will be of ignoring the defect, background on the defect, and so forth.

Thuss said most reporting software doesn't handle that approach well, though. "I like to shape my reports like an iceberg: the small, visible top is what everyone sees first. If more information is wanted, they should be able to drill down and get more, but the bulk of it remains out of sight such that the report is clean and concise at first glance. A page or two could potentially expand into 120, if necessary."

**Attention spans—and with them, time—are increasingly at a premium, and home inspectors must find ways to say more in fewer words, "while still covering our behinds."**

*—Thuss said.*

Home inspectors should also remember to report only what is required to be reported. "Don't waste precious bandwidth on non-essential information. Stick to reporting what your Standards of Practice, whatever they may be, require," Thuss said. "Put everything else in an appendix. Clients don't care, at this initial stage, that the hardwood flooring is tongue-and-groove or that the house is French Provincial. But a (very) few might months or years later."

### PLAIN LANGUAGE

Thuss said the biggest challenge in relaying home inspection issues in layperson's terms is avoiding using words that might be unfamiliar to the customer. "You wind up having to substitute words so what you're saying doesn't get lost in translation, but this needs to be done carefully so as not to insult the intelligence of the person you're speaking with. I don't talk the same way to a client that worked as a general contractor as I do with a school teacher."

Thuss likes to learn the background of the client he's working with, like what they do for a living, when he can, as that's helpful in communication. "Some clients have built houses while others don't own a screwdriver," he said.

No matter what, he makes sure to stop and ask periodically if what he has said was clear or if the client knows a term he used, such as GFCl. "Again, carefully, to avoid insult."

### WORKING AS AN INTROVERT

Being an introvert in the field and constantly meeting new people is a stressor for Thuss, but he understands that regularly talking with people comes with the job. Plus, he said clients often appreciate the in-person communication that accompanies the report.

"All of my reviews have come from inspections where I've patiently walked the client through the report, making clear I'm in no hurry to clear out. Most people appreciate the effort in explaining things to them," he said. "It's essential that the client walks away with a full and clear picture of the condition of the home, what steps need to be done, and the likely severity—money, disruption, et cetera—of the problem."



# ASHI CHAPTER NEWS & EVENTS

## **NNEC-ASHI WINTER EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR**

**WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2022**

**8:30 AM  
REGISTRATION AND MORNING REFRESHMENTS**

**9 AM TO 4 PM  
EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR AND LUNCH**

**BRISTOL-PLYMOUTH REGIONAL TECH SCHOOL  
PURITAN CONFERENCE & EVENT CENTER**  
245 HOOKSETT RD MANCHESTER NH

### **STANDARDS OF PRACTICE (SOP) AND CODE OF ETHICS**

The presentation will review the SOP, a core requirement for license renewal and at the same time will share the years of experience by viewing the numerous "repetitive type problems" that home inspectors encounter daily. The standards list each system to be observed, identified and reported on but not the knowledge behind them. Such problems are learned through continuing education, training, experience and discussion with fellow inspectors.

A code of ethics by professional organizations, government authorities and the public as an expectation on honesty, objectivity, integrity and the performance of duty without the conflict of interest. He will provide the required annual review needed for professional competence and training.

**EDUCATIONAL CREDITS: MA-5, NH-5 AND ASHI-6**

**PRESENTED BY  
BOB MULLOY MA ASSOC HOME INSP  
TRAINEE PROGRAM**

*IT HELPS US TO KNOW YOU ARE COMING!*

**NNEC MEMBERS FREE  
NON-MEMBERS \$125**

**RESERVATION REQUIRED BY WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH 2022**

TELEPHONE KAREN AT (781) 789 7040 OR  
NNEC.ASHI.2016@GMAIL.COM

## **ST. LOUIS ASHI SPRING SEMINAR 2022**

**FRIDAY, MAR. 11, 2022.**

**8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

**ST. LOUIS REALTORS CONFERENCE CENTER**  
12777 OLIVE BLVD., CREVE COEUR, MO 63141

**SATURDAY BONUS DAY OF EDUCATION -  
TO BE ANNOUNCED**

### **EDUCATION SESSIONS:**

**FLAT ROOFS/PARAPET WALLS AND ISSUES  
WITH FLAT ROOFS (2 CES)  
OLD PLUMBING (2 CES)  
UNIQUE ROOFING MATERIALS (4 CES)**

## **ASHI OHIO CHAPTER EVENTS**

**MARCH 5, 2022**

**VIRTUAL**

**DAY 2 OF THE OHIO CHAPTER  
ANNUAL INSPECTION EXPO**

**SPEAKERS AND SUBJECT MATTER COMING SOON  
(6 ASHI/STATE CES)**

**VISIT THE OHIO CHAPTER OF ASHI WEBSITE AT  
OHIOASHI.ORG**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TIMES AND  
FEES FOR THESE EVENTS,**

**EMAIL OHIOASHI@YAHOO.COM, OR**

**CALL 614-907-5406.**

*ALL OHIO INSPECTORS ARE INVITED.*



## FORTY-FIVE YEARS

John Heyn  
JJ Consultant

## THIRTY-FIVE YEARS

James Jagger Juknialis  
Buckeye Home Inspections

## THIRTY YEARS

Avi Korine  
Korine Associates Home Inspection

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Jim Breer  
Better Home Inspections

Dave Day  
Dave Day Professional  
Home Inspections, LLC

Daniel Rogers  
Final Analysis Property Inspections

## TWENTY YEARS

Guy Becker  
Florida Home  
Inspection Professionals, Inc.

William R. Gorgoroso  
W.G. Home Inspection Services LLC.

## FIFTEEN YEARS

Robert R. Barnes  
Best Home Inspections LLC

Jeff Carlson Inspecta-Homes

Michael A. Frerichs

Brett R. Hodgdon  
Kanawha Valley  
Home Inspections, LLC

Chris McDougall  
Apex Home Inspection

Michael Page  
Property Inspections Inc.

Tyrus Parrish  
Safe & Sound Home Inspections

James Porter Elder  
Elder Home Inspections, LLC

David Tabor  
American Home Inspectors &  
Engineering Assessments

Brian Thompson  
King Home Inspection, LLC

Mike Walkup  
Creekside Property Services

Paul Wancata  
Inspections Unlimited

## TEN YEARS

Alex Abreu  
Property Inspection Service

Patrick Arnold  
Arnold Home Inspections LLC.

Brent Cannon  
HomeGuard Incorporated

Michael Coppola  
Northeast Home Inspections LLC

Daniel Davy  
Us Inspect

Lawrence Englehart  
Global Property Inspections

Robert Erenberg

Daniel Lewis  
A+ Home Inspections NCO Inc

Charles McCracken  
CFM Home Inspections, LLC

Dean Phillips, Jr.  
HomeGuard Incorporated

Paul Lane Tyson  
Tyson Home Inspections

Andy Zubilewich  
Newmark Home Inspections

## FIVE YEARS

Jeffrey Bennett  
Full Service Home Inspections LLC

Eric Benson  
Valley Home Inspection Services

Michael Boyd  
Pillar to Post -The Kastberg Team

David Carter  
Carter's Home Inspections, Inc

Dennis Castellano  
Pillar to Post

Quinten Coe  
BPG Inspection LLC

Jesse Cravens  
Selkirk Inspections, LLC

Philip Dahl

Richard Dankovic  
Elite 1 Home Inspections LLC

Darrell Dennison  
DD Professional Home Inspections

Jason Epp  
Jason David Epp, Inc.

Alexander Fleming  
WIN Home Inspection

Greg Forrister  
Greg's Home Inspection LLC

Tommy Gasaway  
Gasaway Home Inspections, Inc.

Edward Hansalik  
Valid Home Inspections, LLC

Bill Haughery  
Precise Inspecting

Russell Hews  
HHI Hews Home Inspections

Robert Hrouda  
Tip Top Home Inspections, LLC

Abe Kazimierek  
Inspection Excellence, LLC

Sherif Khalifa  
Pillar to Post

Walter Kruger  
Atrium Inspection Services, LLC

Austin Ledy  
Eagle Eye Home Inspections

Steve McGriff  
Assured Integrity Home Inspection

Jorge Menendez  
BPG Inspection LLC

Melvin Mohn  
BrickKicker

Michael Murdock  
Valley View Home Inspections, LLC

Raymond J. O'Brien  
US Inspect

Darrell G. Pitts  
Yellowhammer Inspection Services

Adrian Ramos  
AmeriSpec Inspection Services NM

Dean Rankin  
WIN Home Inspection

Brent Rice  
BPG Inspection LLC

Tim Roberts  
Roberts Home Inspection, LLC

James Roese  
Jim Roese Home Inspections LLC

Tony Rollins  
Rollins Certified  
Home Inspections Inc.

Michael Sullivan  
American Dream  
Home Inspections LLC

Lee Sundin  
FourSquare Inspection

Brandon Thompson  
HomeTeam Inspection Service -  
Memphis

Paul Tittsworth  
Focused Property Inspections

Todd Valentine  
Apple Inspections, LLC

Esteban Vasquez  
HomeGuard Incorporated

Carl Vos  
Guardian Inspection Services

Stephen Wanner

Adam Weber  
Inside and Out Home Inspections LLC

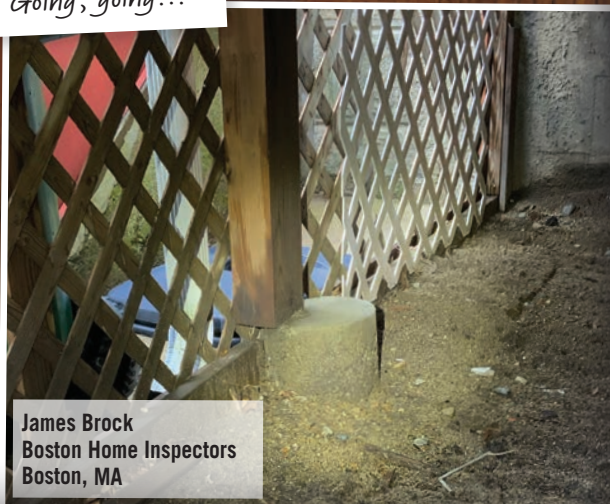
Bobby Whipp  
Whipp Home Inspections

Chris Ziehler  
OMNI Home Inspections LLC



# Postcards from the Field

Going, going...



James Brock  
Boston Home Inspectors  
Boston, MA

So much effort to make it so wrong.



James Brock  
Boston Home Inspectors  
Boston, MA

I think I'll take door #2.



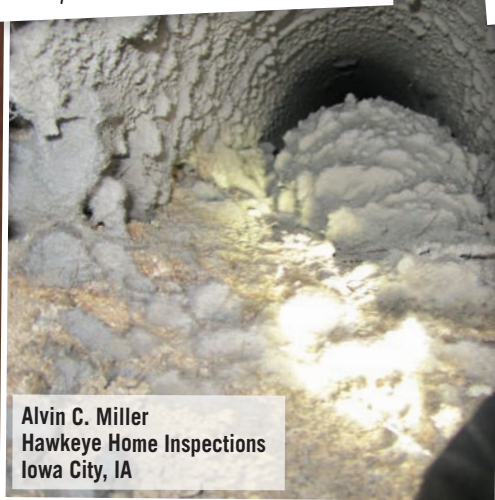
Jeffrey Johansen Sr.  
Peace of Mind Home Inspections  
Strongsville, OH

Crawlspace tetris



Patrick Hester  
Quality Home Inspections  
Prattville, AL

It may take more than a HEPA filter to filter this air.



Alvin C. Miller  
Hawkeye Home Inspections  
Iowa City, IA

How to easily convert any two-prong outlet into a three-prong. Step 1: Drill bit.



Patrick Hester  
Quality Home Inspections  
Prattville, AL



**NEW POSTCARDS EMAIL!** Please send your name, city, state, photos, headings & captions to: [postcards@ashi.org](mailto:postcards@ashi.org)

Note: By sending in your postcard(s), you are expressly granting ASHI the right to use the postcard and your name with it in the ASHI REPORTER and in other publications ASHI may select.

The records on this seller's house show the last name Darwin.



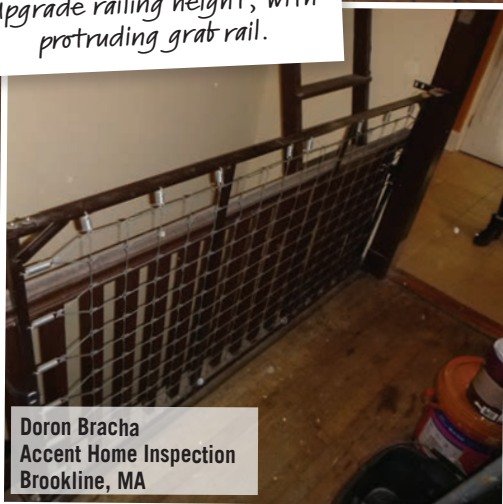
Patty Maples  
Mirowski Inspections  
Springfield, MO

This is why end nailing is not acceptable.



James Brock  
Boston Home Inspectors  
Boston, MA

Upgrade railing height, with protruding grab rail.



Doron Bracha  
Accent Home Inspection  
Brookline, MA

Another relative of the Darwins.



Alvin C. Miller  
Hawkeye Home Inspections  
Iowa City, IA

Soft water at the TPR discharge pipe, check.



Martin Lenich  
Inspect-It 1st  
Greater Phoenix Metro, AZ

Strike 1-2-3 bad footings, you're out.



James Brock  
Boston Home Inspectors  
Boston, MA

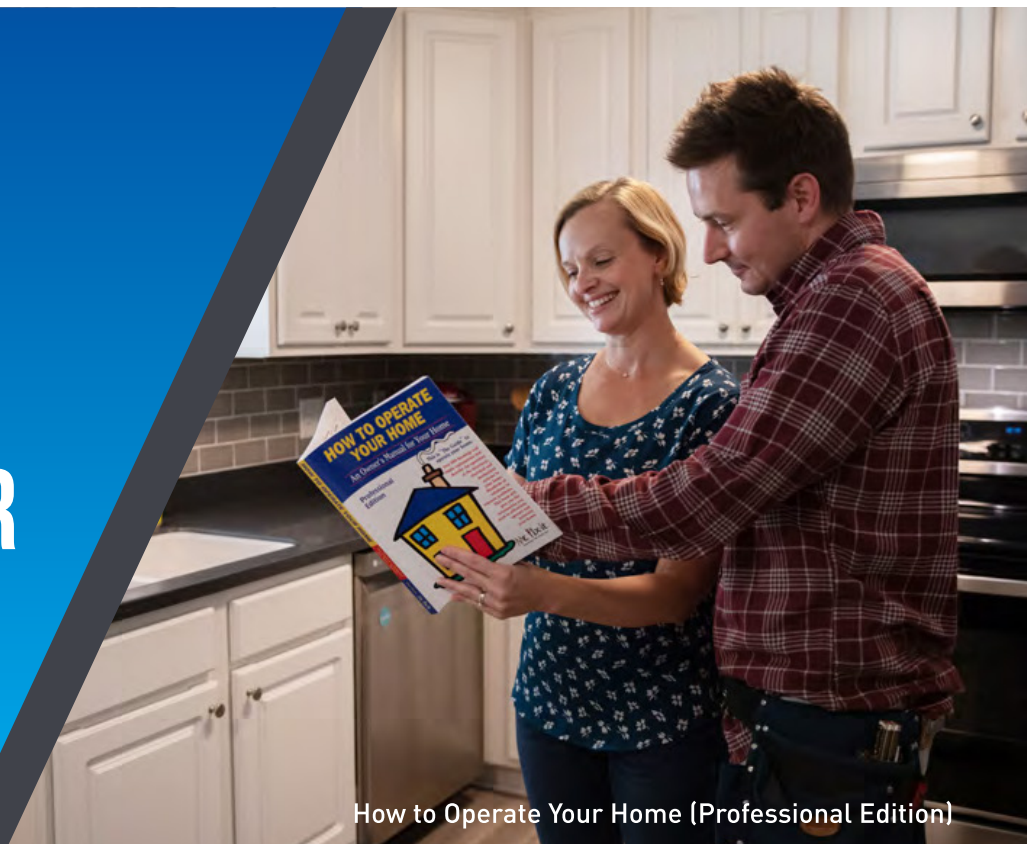




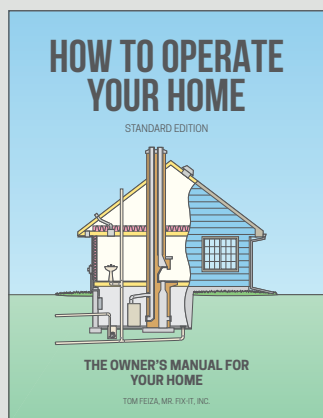
# How to Operate Your Home

How to Operate Your Home has the ultimate marketing services that will take your home inspection business to the next level

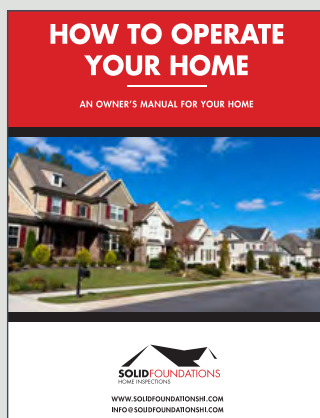
# EDUCATE YOUR CUSTOMERS. PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS.



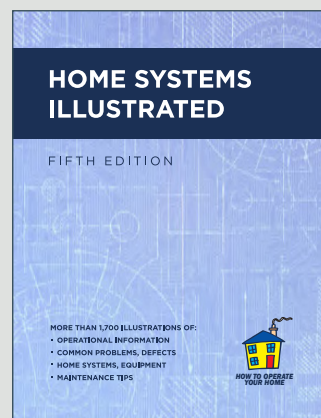
How to Operate Your Home (Professional Edition)



New cover designs, for  
the most highly regarded  
homeowner guides



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to build your brand and  
boost your business



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