

GUIDELINES FOR TEST INSPECTIONS WITH PEER REVIEW (TIPR)

A Guideline for the National Certification Authority and TIPR Examiners

Note: This document is being updated to strengthen the role of Regional Deputy Examiners in the review and evaluation of applicants. While the Chief Examiner will 'sign off' on applicants, this will be based on the review and recommendations of the Regional Deputy Examiners.

An Overview of the TIPR Process

The **Guidelines for the Test Inspection and Peer Review** are the express property of the Canadian Association of Home Inspectors (CAHPI) and the National Certification Authority (NCA). This document provides the critical structure to administer TIPR's. This program was developed and is intended to be coordinated with the "background review" of applicants participating to become National Certificate Holders.

What is a TIPR? Test inspections with peer review are proven "best practices" that formally evaluate what home inspectors do as part of their occupational task on a day-to-day base. TIPR provides home inspection associations and its members with a powerful assessment tool that can improve overall inspection quality. Its purpose is to test and improve the inspection procedure and the home inspector's communication skills. Undergoing the process of a TIPR can provide home inspectors with a level of accountability and professionalism that sets them apart from a large portion of the "others" in the inspection business. Test inspections with peer reviews are performed during the associate stage of the national certification process in order to mitigate or help reduce the potential for future "risks", which often result in a claim against the inspector. This can be accomplished by assessment of the applicant's practical skill sets in the performance of a home inspection, along with a review of his/her inspection knowledge and communication skill.

What are the expectations? Experienced and well-seasoned practitioners are by and large able to identify potential problem areas against national standards of practice. The TIPR process simulates not just the onsite inspection itself, but also the common concerns and expectations demanded of home inspection clients.

TIPR Examiners are trained and responsible for evaluating applicants in a number of predefined specific skill set areas. As such it is critical that all applicants must be evaluated under a set of predefined terms of review, in this case a set of guidelines. Guidelines serve as an authoritative document offering the requisite levels of performance or adequacy. Guidelines outline a recommended course of action. Unlike standards that carry the weight of a rule, guidelines describe measures to help examiners consistently meet the requirements of a standard.

The Success and Sustainability of TIPR

Test Inspections with Peer Review shall be conducted in a manner that meets the procedure set out by this set of guidelines. These guidelines refer to the standards and specifications that shall be adopted when conducting a TIPR. The National Certificate Holder process is recognized as a national standard for those applicants undergoing background reviews to become accepted as proficient in meeting the National Occupation Standard for home inspectors in Canada.

Who are the TIPR Examiners? The success and sustainability of the TIPR program relies heavily on the involvement and participation of home inspection members who have expressed their interest in becoming examiners and who have successfully completed their test inspection and peer review. TIPR examiners are trained in all of the key areas of the TIPR process including but not limited to understanding the role of the examiner, the history and process of the TIPR, understanding the use and function of TIPR evaluation forms, and they are provided an opportunity to gain the experience of conducting a peer review through job shadowing the Chief Examiner or his approved representative. As noted earlier, a TIPR examiner must successfully complete a Test Inspection with Peer Review. In addition, examiners must meet and maintain the requirements outlined in the specific obligations, descriptions and characteristics required to be a TIPR Examiner.

What is the role of the Chief Examiner? The primary responsibility of the Chief Examiner is to coordinate the staffing requirements and activities such as training required to conduct TIPR's. The Chief examiner oversees the TIPR process and procedures from a national perspective. The Chief Examiner will maintain all records pertaining to TIPR's, be responsible for reviewing and updating procedural guidelines, maintain a roster of participants, and periodically report the status of participants that have undergone a TIPR to the National Certification Authority.

What is the purpose of these guidelines? The procedural guidelines set out in this document provide the critical requirements for examiners conducting TIPR inspection and evaluation sessions. Based on the list of applicants established from the National Registrar, the National Chief Examiner will recommend the organizing of a TIPR session in a province or region where the number of applicants "reasonably" supports such an event. Examiners in that region will be contacted by the National Chief Examiner/ and or where directed by the Provincial Chief Examiner.

The bottom line: This process and the requisite procedures must be clearly established and set as the standard for each and every Test Inspection with Peer Review. The process must be consistently applied at each session in every region in order to preserve integrity, fairness and equality throughout its function.

The Critical Path for Conducting a TIPR

The TIPR “Pilot Project” conducted between March to October 2006, provided an opportunity to test and also to process over 100 applicants through the exercise. The principle guidelines for “Test Inspection with Peer Review Process” were developed by a committee with the assistance of the project consultants in January 2006, and amended February 4th, 2006 after presentation and review with the National Certification Authority. The document provided the terms of reference, the process, the examination criteria, a feedback to the participant component and recommendations for the time requirements for participants and TIPR Examiners. The document also identified the details for a test house, and the role and requirements to become a TIPR Examiner and the responsibilities of the Chief Examiner.

It is assumed that names and requisite details of all applicants that require TIPR review will be forwarded to the National Chief Examiner as the main point of contact to expedite the scheduling of the test inspection with peer review.

Procedural Guidelines for a TIPR:

Organizing a TIPR

- ✓ Examiners will be contacted by the National Chief Examiner to conduct a TIPR when an area is deemed to require one – This information will be communicated to the Provincial Chief Examiner where such a position is in place
- ✓ Examiners shall contact the applicants based on the list of applicants maintained by the National Chief Examiner – Note: there must be 5 – 7 applicants for fiscal viability in conducting a TIPR. In cases where there are fewer, the applicants will be encouraged as an option to attend the next closest TIPR venue
- ✓ Examiners shall be responsible to provide a budget, and assure compliance of budget cost established in the “Examiner TIPR Budget Guidelines” document.
- ✓ Examiners shall be responsible for a “test” home for conducting the test inspection
- ✓ Examiners shall find an appropriate location to conduct the peer review of applicants
- ✓ Examiners shall set “reasonable” time lines for applicants to conduct a TIPR
- ✓ Examiners shall set up the date, time, location, etc. for the TIPR
- ✓ Examiners shall confirm the final details of the TIPR to the applicants
- ✓ Examiners shall notify the National Chief Examiner of the names of the applicants who are participating in the TIPR and also the names of those applicants who have withdrawn, and the reason if it is available
- ✓ Examiners and/or the onsite “house-sitter” shall assure that all applicants have completed the “Disclaimer and Waiver of Liability Form” prior to conducting the onsite inspection and oversee the conduct of the applicants during the onsite home inspection

Conducting a TIPR Inspection

- ✓ Examiners shall conduct an inspection and review of the test house prior to the testing of the applicants
- ✓ Examiners shall identify and establish a list of the “must find” conditions based on the CAHPI Standards of Practice

- ✓ Examiners shall set any exceptional conditions (if applicable) for the inspection of the house, such as limitations to roof or crawlspace access, or that for safety purposes – the electrical service cover panel was removed for convenience for all applicants, areas not accessible, etc.
- ✓ Examiners shall allow a time limit of up to approximately 2 hours for applicants to inspect the house
- ✓ Examiners shall provide a “house-sitter” during the specified inspection period for the applicants TIPR. A few of the key responsibilities of the house-sitter is assure that applicants sign the waiver of liability prior to inspection, and that applicants remain silent and do not discuss the inspection during their time at the test house
- ✓ Examiners shall assign responsibility for lockup and reset of the test house back to its original pre-TIPR condition

Conducting a TIPR Peer Review

- ✓ NOTE: There shall be a minimum requirement of two examiners present to conduct a peer review – there may be more, but the fee compensation allocated in the TIPR Budget Guidelines shall be redistributed and shall not exceed that amount unless receiving prior approval by the NCA and Chief Examiner. There may be only one examiner present to conduct the peer review in the circumstance where an applicant or examiner claims a conflict of interest, and where it is mutually agreed upon that the peer review can conducted with such a condition.
- ✓ Examiners shall allow approximately 50 minutes for the applicants inspection report and question-answer period
- ✓ Examiners shall allow a 10 minute private discussion period at the end of each applicant peer review to discuss and formulate their report on the applicant
- ✓ Examiners shall conduct peer review of the applicants at the preset time following the onsite home inspection – Note: Examiners must take into account some additional time for travel and preparation of the applicants report prior to the peer review
- ✓ Examiners shall collect all required TIPR documentation from the applicant including “Disclaimer and Waiver of Liability Form” and completed inspection report if available a the time of the peer review
- ✓ Examiners shall briefly outline the process and procedures to the applicant with respect to the peer review
- ✓ Examiners shall through oral examination - have the applicant report the “significant defects and near end-of-life components/systems and health and safety” issues; in addition the examiner shall obtain and forward a copy of the applicants completed “Applicant Summary Inspection Report”

- ✓ Examiners shall through oral examination - evaluate the applicants inspection knowledge and communication skills in responding to 20 pre-defined questions respecting home inspection in general and/or 20 questions related to the onsite inspection conducted that day
- ✓ Examiners shall confer and come to mutual agreement on the preliminary scoring of the applicant – on the issues of must find items and responses to the 20 pre-defined questions – these score sheets must be sent to the National Chief Examiner
- ✓ Examiners shall not indicate in any manner to the applicant the outcomes (such as pass/fail) or standing of the inspection and peer review conducted

TIPR Closure

- ✓ Examiners shall expedite the delivery of all pertinent evaluation and examination documents to the National Chief Examiner. The National Chief Examiner will house all examination documents.
- ✓ National Chief Examiner shall be responsible to provide the final review and evaluate the home inspection reports and the Examiners evaluation forms
- ✓ National Chief Examiner shall provide a report to the National Certification Authority on the results of the TIPR applicants examination and review for confirmation and coordination with the applicants status/standing
- ✓ Results and confidential information and proprietary reports must be kept confidential.

TIPR Appeal

- ✓ Applicants shall be entitled to appeal the results of a TIPR based on the TIPR Appeal Process. This process permits an applicant to submit an appeal of the TIPR examination results. An appeal is sent to the Chief Examiner who will assess the grounds for an appeal and execute the process to address issues documented.
- ✓ The appeal may be based challenges include but are not limited to: Technical accuracy of the exam questions; Relevance of exam to the job function; Relevance of exam to a geographical region; Assignment of the passing score – for example: based on error
- ✓ Appeals must be received within the specified time limits, and must be accompanied with a statement of claim and a \$107.00 deposit fee.

TIPR Costs

The cost associated with conducting a TIPR is outlined in the document entitled "Examiner TIPR Budget Guidelines". It is intended to provide the cost guidelines for conducting a TIPR under the "pilot project". The costs associated for an applicant to perform a TIPR are the sole responsibility of each and every applicant. Applicants are not eligible for reimbursement of any expenses related to their own TIPR sessions.

TIPR the Critical Points

These guidelines show the necessary steps required to conduct a *Test Inspection with Peer Review*. The examiners' tools and support documents are provided on the TIPR online website. TIPR Examiners will assist the National Chief Examiner and help identify and prioritize the issues and the criteria on which evaluation decisions will be made.

The TIPR guidelines, examiner tools and support documents and evaluation decisions have been tested throughout the period of March to October 2006 in the "Pilot Project" for the TIPR process.

The appointment of TIPR Examiners shall be a mutually acceptable responsibility entrusted between the National Certification Authority and based on the acceptable completion of TIPR Examiner Training and recommendations by the National Chief Examiner. Regional CAHPI associations will be consulted about individuals in their regions who have applied to be Examiners. This is a consultative process only and does not include any provisions for veto rights on the appointment of any Examiners. In addition, all examiners shall be responsible to assure compliance with the laws respecting privacy, personal information, freedom of information and also adherence to the CAHPI Code of Ethics.

The intent of establishing and documenting the TIPR guidelines is to provide the National Certification Authority and all TIPR Examiners with content of a consistent type and style that will maximize the viability, integrity and portability of the content on a national scale and for functional purpose at the provincial/regional level.

Confirmation and acceptance of these guidelines:

Signed:

Dated:

Signed:

Dated: