

EBPHI® Position Paper on Measuring Home Inspector Competence

History of the Examination Board of Professional Home Inspectors

In the 1990's, as states throughout the country moved to regulate the home inspection profession, it became apparent that a nationally recognized and independent high stakes competency exam was needed as part of the regulatory process. Individual states investigating the cost of developing, maintaining and administering a state specific exam found the cost associated with this to be high and in most cases not practical. In response to this need, the Examination Board of Professional Home Inspectors (EBPHI®) was formed in 1999 as an independent, not-for-profit organization to create, maintain and administer the National Home Inspector Examination (NHIE®), a psychometrically sound and legally defensible competency examination for home inspectors nationwide.

Some states that originally developed their own exams soon elected to substitute their exam with a recognized national exam. Today, the NHIE® is the recognized and accepted examination testing home inspector knowledge in 37 states across the country as well as in several Canadian provinces. The NHIE® is the original exam for the home inspection profession and the only independent, psychometrically-sound home inspector exam in the United States that has also achieved independent accreditation.

Why an Examination?

While there are many variables necessary for evaluating the competency of home inspectors such as education, training and experience, at the core should be a valid, reliable knowledge-based examination. A valid and reliable public protection examination is central to any meaningful regulation, credentialing and licensing. Passage of an examination meeting accepted and recognized standards assures the state and, more importantly, the public that credentialed individuals have met a level of competence, knowledge and practice sufficient to protect the consumer.

Public Protection Examination

To ensure public safety and trust, an exam must follow established standards for its creation, upkeep, and administration. A valid test measures what is supposed to be measured. A reliable test indexes how accurately the test measures a candidate's skills and, as such, is legally defensible for the states using such an exam. The scientific methodology applied to generate such an exam is called "psychometrics".

The examination meeting these standards is developed pursuant to accepted psychometric standards promulgated by the American Education Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Council on

Measurement in Education (NCME). These three organizations jointly publish “Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing”. Other organizations also set standards, including the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Buros Center for Testing.

The examination must be administered and proctored by an approved and recognized testing organization at a physical location to ensure both the security and integrity of the examination.

The National Home Inspector Examination (NHIE®) developed and administered by the Examination of Board Professional Home Inspectors (EBPHI®) meets the standards for a psychometrically sound, legally defensible home inspector examination.

- Since its inception, EBPHI® has conducted six independent role delineation studies (i.e., job task analyses).
- Every year, EBPHI® conducts item writing workshops using practicing home inspectors from across the country. These subject matter experts are trained in elements of quality exam question development by professional psychometricians.
- Each question is reviewed and edited by similar subject matter experts. Questions are referenced by authoritative and published sources.
- Each question is validated for importance, criticality, relevance and field tested as an unscored item prior to inclusion as a tested item.
- EBPHI® contracts with professional testing companies at more than 300 locations around the country to provide convenient and affordable access to test takers at no cost to the states. These test facilities ensure the security and integrity of the NHIE®.
- Pass/fail scores are established scientifically to determine minimum competency to perform home inspections.
- EBPHI® is governed by an independent volunteer board of directors composed of professional home inspectors and public members. It is not affiliated with any home inspector association. Its only purpose is the development, maintenance and administration of a sound, reliable and legally defensible home inspector competence assessment test.