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## For Whom Is Your Home Inspector Working?

by Charles Skoning of [Safe Family Home Inspection Services, LLC](#)

02-26-2006

The first thought in your mind may be that your home inspector is working for you. I hope that is the case. I have attended marketing training sessions where a well noted speaker talks about the definitions of a customer and a client. In their training the customer is, you may have guessed it, the real estate agent. The client is the person buying the home. What does this mean? I think there is a subtle conflict of interest in that the home inspector may be working for their next job and may not have your best interests in mind.

Another conflict of interest for home inspectors is payment at the close. I often have customers (in our case that is the person buying the home, not the agent) that ask if my inspection fee can be paid at the closing. I have to decline these arrangements and I offer other forms of payment like credit cards for example. In some cases the information that is revealed during a home inspection is enough for a transaction to not go through. If the home inspector is counting on the transaction to close in order to be paid, it puts into question the quality of information you receive. Information you depend on to make a qualified decision to go through with your home purchase.

Here is the best one yet. I was recently handed a brochure from a home inspection firm and the business card attached to it was the home inspector with the title of real estate agent. I don't think there is any question that there is a conflict of interest here.

I believe as a professional home inspector that loyalty is due to the person paying the bill, you the prospective home owner. In order to conduct an objective inspection and present the information in a non-biased manner the inspector needs to stay clear of subtle or outright conflicts of interest. The home inspector should subscribe to a professional code of ethics. My firm, Safe Family Home Inspection Services, adheres to the American Society of Home Inspectors Code of Ethics and we hand out a copy to the customer with every home inspection report. I also offer them to the customer before each inspection along with the Standards of Practice.

Number one in the ASHI Code of Ethics is:

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***“Inspectors shall avoid conflicts of interest or activities that compromise, or appear to compromise, professional independence, objectivity, or inspection integrity.”***

To prevent a possible conflict of interest I also advise that the only industries in which the inspector participates are home inspection related. Your home inspector should only inspect homes or provide environmental testing like radon, mold, or asbestos testing. The inspector should not participate in remediation or mitigation services for environmental problems. I also am not sure you can get an objective opinion about your furnace if the home inspector sells new furnaces.

Make sure your home inspector knows who the customer is; make sure it is you.

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*Charles Skoning is a graduate of Northern Illinois University with a Bachelor's of Science in Engineering Technology. For the last fifteen years he has been involved in the inspection of medical imaging equipment and real estate. Charles is licensed and practices in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa. As a licensed radon measurement specialist he also provides radon testing for real estate transactions. Charles attended one of the nation's largest home inspection schools and is certified by the American Home Inspection Training Institute. He is also the founder of Safe Family Home Inspection Services, LLC and operates from three locations: Madison, WI, Dundee, IL and the Quad Cities, IL and IA. Visit his company website at <http://www.safe-family-home-inspection.com/>, send him an [E-mail](#), or call his office at (608) 658-3561 for more information.*