

Digital Photography & Home Inspections, Part IV

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The Best Defense is a Strong Offense. Home Inspectors are subjected on a daily basis to the threat of litigation. The best defense is to record an accurate history of the properties we inspect. For years the only tools available to wage this defense, have been the performance of a quality inspection and to create a detailed report. Now an additional tool...the digital camera is available. One way to perceive this tool is as an assistant working side by side with you during the inspection as another pair of eyes.

We have all received calls from our Clients with complaints concerning conditions that were discovered after they have taken possession of the property. In most cases, the subject condition was hidden from the Inspector at the time of the inspection due to inaccessible conditions such as a garage filled with personal items or vehicles. With the utilization of digital photography, you can take a photo of that overstuffed garage to record its condition during the inspection. And then if you receive that phone call, all you have to do is show them the photo!

I know of a recent case where the Inspector received a phone call from a past Client who was upset that a heating contractor who was hired to perform routine maintenance, reported that her attic mounted furnace was one of the types that are considered dangerous and had to be replaced immediately. The Client wanted to know why the Inspector did not call this out in his report. The Inspector calmly searched his archive, pulled up the file for the inspection, and opened the photo of the furnace along with the photo of the furnace data-plate to reveal that it was a make that is not on the list of defective furnaces. Obviously this was either an uneducated or unscrupulous contractor that the Client was dealing with. But because the Inspector was diligent in his photo archiving, he was able to stop any action from happening and ease the fears of the Client.

Do your own research. Contact your E &O insurance provider and your attorney and ask their opinions regarding the use of digital photography with home inspections. I am confident that you will find that they are adamantly in favor of its use. Of course there is an initial investment, but keep a sharp eye out for bargains on the Internet and newspapers. The cost of cameras has dropped considerably over the past two years and will continue to do so.

This was the closing article of a 4 part series.

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