Scheduling an Appointment for a Home Inspection

A question has come up recently at the Division – what are my responsibilities as an Ohio home inspector when it comes to scheduling a home inspection appointment and who can be with me during my inspection?

If you intend to inspect a property for a purchase, your client, if unrepresented, or your client's agent (buyer's agent) should make the appointment with the seller of the property or the seller's agent (listing agent). As an inspector, you just need to ensure that you receive confirmation that has happened and that the seller/seller's agent has knowledge of your presence and consents to you conducting the inspection on that date, at that time. Keep in mind, at this point in the real estate transaction, the seller is still the property owner of record and may still occupy or have personal possessions in the property. The last thing you want to do is access the property without their knowledge or consent, and have the seller be present in the property, unaware of your presence in the property. We've seen some unfortunate situations such as this involving real estate licensees. An agent seeks to access the property, usually through a lockbox, but the seller was at the home and was unaware of their presence in the property, which resulted in, among other things, embarrassing and potentially dangerous misunderstandings.

Likewise, if an unlicensed trainee will accompany you let the buyer/buyer's agent know to gain permission from the seller/seller's agent. Should the buyer(s) or buyer's family member(s) wish to be present during the inspection, the buyer’s agent, if there is one, should be present during your inspection. If the buyer’s agent is not able to be present for your inspection, s/he must seek prior approval from the seller or the seller's agent (listing agent) for the buyer to be with you during the inspection.

As a best practice, when scheduling your appointment to inspect the property, it is recommended you obtain confirmation that the seller/seller's agent is aware and has granted permission for all requested individuals to be present in the property during your inspection. In fact, some purchase contracts now include such permissions and a copy of the purchase agreement showing that would be good to have in your file, if available. Such written documentation will be very helpful if you are questioned during your inspection or a complaint is filed against you. You should also retain this documentation in your records in compliance with Ohio Revised Code Section 4764.11(B).