



**California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA) Press / Media Information**  
**Latest Press Release: CREIA Cautions Regarding Non-Permitted Work Done On Homes**

*Courtesy of the California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA)*

August 2005 (Palm Springs, Calif) — The California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA) advises homeowners and homebuyers that building an addition or remodeling a home without a permit is a not only a violation of law but is a situation that will need to be disclosed in a home sale.

Although the process associated with securing building permits may be time consuming, you will save greater grief in the future. While some buyers may be willing to close escrow with the presence of non-permitted work, others may not.

Non-permitted work is frequently performed by unlicensed individuals. Few unlicensed individuals are competent in all areas of building and safety, especially where electrical wiring is concerned.

Professional home inspectors see countless non-permitted additions and report most have significant problems. The best approach is to play it safe. Non-permitted additions and remodels are commonplace because people unwisely forego the proper permitting process to save a few dollars, or to avoid dealing with building inspectors. Although the finished projects may appear satisfactory, defects and code violations of various kinds often belie an attractive finished surface. A professional home inspector will raise the issue of improperly performed work and recommend further investigation to determine whether it was permitted and approved.

If you are the owner of property with a non-permitted addition you can continue to inhabit your home. When you decide to sell your home, simply disclose to your agent and to prospective buyers that the additions/conversions were done without a permit. Once informed, buyers have the choice to accept this condition, to request that you apply for an as-built permit, or simply to decide not to purchase the property. An alternative is to apply for an as-built permit prior to listing the property for sale — either now or at some future date. In opting for this procedure, you'll need to allow an inspection by the municipal building inspector(s). They can approve the work as is or require that you make changes to meet existing building codes. The chance you take with this process is that the municipal inspector may require removal of surface materials to enable inspection of plumbing, electrical, and structural components, which of course, can be expensive. Prior to applying for the building permit you should consider having the property inspected by a qualified home inspector to give you a general idea what defects, if any, the city or county inspector is likely to find.

Many inspectors claim to be CREIA members or claim their reports meet or follow CREIA's Standards of Practice. Do not be fooled; ask to see the CREIA badge or contact [CREIA](#) to verify their active, certified membership. At present, anyone can claim to be a home inspector. Therefore, buyers and sellers must exercise extreme care and cautious consideration before hiring just anyone. CREIA requires its members to successfully pass the California Home Inspector Exam of property systems, have performed at least 50 fee-based inspections and complete 30 hours of continuing education each year. Members can accumulate credits through various sources of education including monthly chapter meetings, conferences, and other approved activities. CREIA keeps records to ensure that members are complying with the requirements. Educational topics cover a variety of technical subjects including updates and advances affecting the profession of real estate inspection. CREIA is dedicated to consumer protection and education.

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*Since 1976, the California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA), a non-profit voluntary membership organization has been providing education, training, and support services to the real estate inspection industry and to the public. Inspectors must adhere to CREIA's Code of Ethics and follow the Standards of Practice developed by the association. These Standards of Practice have been recognized by the State of California, and are considered the source for home inspector Standard of Care by the real estate and legal communities.*