



Introduction

- What do you hope to take away from class today?



Introduction

- My background
- International Code Council (ICC)
- Your background
- Codes, Standards and Specifications
- Skills are transferable



Inspector Skills

- What does the term “inspector skills” mean to you?
- Which one is the most important?



Definitions

Hard Skills:

Specific, teachable abilities that can be defined, observed, quantified and measured. For an inspector, these are the technical skills required to perform the job.



Inspector Skills – Purpose

- To raise awareness of the importance of soft skills
- Provide guidance on recognizing and improving soft skills
- Reinforce positive behaviors
- Identify some pitfalls



Definitions

- **Soft Skills**
 - Personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that enhance an individual's interactions and job performance.
- **In our list of inspector skills, which are soft skills?**



Job Description

- Employers recognize importance of soft skills
 - Interaction with public
 - Provide service to the public
- **Are any soft skills listed in your job description?**
 - Customer service
 - Communication



Cedar Rapids Gazette - October 19, 2014

Soft skills hot commodity among employers



Inspector Skills

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Soft Skills

- Equally important to hard skills
- Elevate inspector from good to excellent
- Accomplish goal of safe buildings
 - Public acceptance of department mission
 - Inspections benefit community
- Success depends on buy-in from the public. (How can we get public “Buy-In”?)



Inspector Skills

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Foundation

- Solid technical knowledge
 - Construction methods and materials
 - Code provisions
- The codes serve as the basis for the decisions and actions of the inspector.



Inspector Skills

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Support from Jurisdiction

- Builds confidence in decision making
- Inspector is able to work independently
- Signals the inspector’s work is
 - Worthwhile
 - Beneficial to the community



Inspector Skills

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Support from

- Managers
- Director
- City manager/ County Manager
- Elected officials



Principles of Code Administration

- Code Department is charged with five (5) broad functions- Chapter 1:
 - 1) Take permits
 - 2) Review- interpret, evaluate alt's.
 - 3) Inspections
 - 4) Appeal process
 - 5) Issue COO's, COC's



Methods of Support

- Training
- Staff meetings
- Mentoring
- Recognition
- "Engaging" work
- Incentives



Principles of Code Administration

- Chapter 1
 - Minimum requirements
 - Interpretation
 - Alternatives



Minimum Requirements

- Intent
- Consensus
- Balance
- Practical limits
 - Feasibility
 - Affordability



Interpretation (Continued)

- Interpretation and applying intent requires developing skills in:
 - Critical thinking
 - Independent decision making
 - Problem solving



Interpretation

- Responsibility and authority
- Performance provisions
- Multiple solutions
- Conflicts
- Meaning and intent



Alternatives

- Flexibility in codes
- Obligation to approve alternatives
- Open mind on new technology and different methods
 - (ICC ESR- Inspector Skills Appendix A, pg. 145)



Alternatives



Approach to Inspection

- Inspector's
 - Attitude
 - Behavior
 - Methods
 - Actions
- Profound effect on the outcome



Approaches to Inspection



Attitude

Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.

– Winston Churchill



Attitude (continued)

- Positive approach
- Respect, courtesy and diplomacy
- Raise bar of professionalism
- Improve image of inspector
- Makes life easier all around



Roles of Inspector

- What roles do you see the inspector filling?



ATTITUDE

- “Our Attitude governs our thoughts...
- Which controls our actions...
- Which becomes our habits...
- Which shapes our character...
- Which therefore determines our destiny!”



Roles of Inspector

- Ambassador
- Educator
- Facilitator



Ambassador

- Who is the first point of contact?
- At times, the Inspector is the first point of contact
- Inspector is an ambassador for the department
 - Gain public trust and support
 - Gain code compliance



Facilitator

Facilitate:

To make easier, to help bring about.



Educator

- Skilled inspector is committed to education
- Outreach efforts of department
- Informational handouts
- Website
- Plan review
- At jobsite



Facilitator (continued)

- Change public's perception
- Facilitator rather than regulator
- Resource rather than adversary
- Work to find solutions
- Beyond a simple duty of enforcing rigid rules

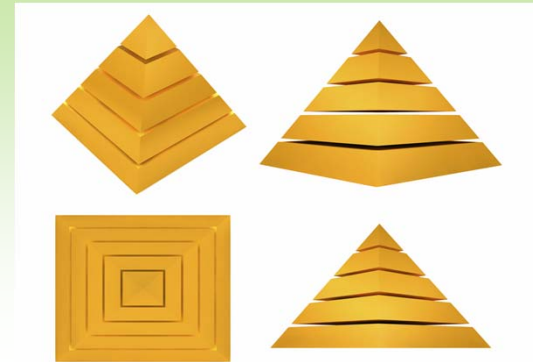


Public Trust and Acceptance

- Promotes adoption of codes
- Improves public safety



Perspective



Decision Making

- Checklist?
 - Much more than a checklist
- Challenging and complex
- Within framework and spirit of the code
- Code is the basis for decisions
- Open mind



Perspective


| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Flexibility <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Explores alternatives•Intent of the code•Meets minimum standards•Open mind | Boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none">•What is required?•Where does the code end?•Don't ask for more than code requires |
| Precision <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Level of precision varies•Not an exact science | Consistency <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Consistent and fair |

Problem or Issue



Perspective


| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Flexibility | Boundaries |
| Is 3.75 inches close enough for a house number? The code says ≥ 4 inches. | |
| Precision | Consistency |



Inspector Skills 37

Consistency


- Consistency and fairness in the application of the code helps to
 - build credibility
 - gain the respect and trust of the public
- Policies and procedures
- Public information



Inspector Skills 39

Perspective

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Flexibility | Boundaries |
| How do you measure fire separation distance from a lot line? | |
| Precision | Consistency |




Inspector Skills 38

Finding Solutions

- Problem-solving approach
- Help people navigate hurdles
- Department seen as a resource

There's no use talking about the problem unless you talk about the solution.

—Betty Williams



Inspector Skills 40

Time Management Tips

- Turnoff email notification
- Handling paperwork
- Identify roadblocks
 - Procrastination
 - Indecision
 - Processes



Inspector Skills

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First Impressions

- “7/11” rule
 - 1) Cleanliness 2) Attractiveness 3) Credible 4) Knowledgeable 5) Responsive 6) Friendly 7) Helpful 8) Empathetic 9) Courteous 10)Confident 11)Professional
- a) Like b) Don't like c) Don't trust



Inspector Skills

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Professionalism

- Not easily defined
- Appearance is one small part
 - Varies based
 - role and duties
 - local expectations
 - Not offensive to public
 - (Do you see this as location dependent?)



Inspector Skills

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Professionalism (continued)

- Specialized expertise
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Respectfulness
- Effective communication
- Reliability
- Confidence
- Fairness
- Responsibility
- Punctuality
- Team-oriented attitude
- Appropriate appearance



Inspector Skills

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Getting Along



Fairness

Due process: Fairness; to respect all of the legal rights that are owed to a person; a constitutional guarantee that all legal proceedings will be fair and that one will be given notice of the proceedings and an opportunity to be heard.



Skills for Getting Along

- Respectful
- Helpful
- Open minded
- Fair
- Empathetic

Empathy: The ability to understand and be sensitive to another person's feelings on a personal level.

Sympathy: To understand another's perspective



Barriers to Getting Along

- Most inspectors get it right
- May unintentionally create barriers
 - What we say
 - How we say it
 - Actions at jobsite



Rules without reason

Remarks to avoid

I don't write the code, I just enforce it.

Negative message sent

I'm not very interested in learning the reasons for code requirements.

Correct action

Support the code and give reasons for the rules. Emphasize minimum requirements.



Authoritative

Remarks to avoid

There's a new sheriff in town. It's my way or the highway. Not in my town.

Negative message sent

I'm in charge, I decide ... just do what I say. Don't cross me or there will be consequences.

Correct action

Encourage a collaborative working relationship Avoid "I," "me" or "my". Be respectful.



Correction without cause

Remarks to avoid

That's the way we like to see it done.

Negative message sent

We make up rules based on our personal preferences because we think it's better that way.

Correct action

Require only what the code requires. Avoid the perception of enforcing rules based on personal preferences.



Fortune telling

Remarks to avoid

The code allows it and you can try it that way, but I'm telling you now that it will fail inspection.

Negative message sent

You're not skilled enough to pull this off ... I'm going to fail inspection. Then, you will have to do it my way.

Correct action

Remain objective - stick to facts - what the code says. Give instructions in a positive and helpful way.



Communication



Communication

- Marcie's grocery list
 - hamb.
 - tapioca
 - wh. cr.



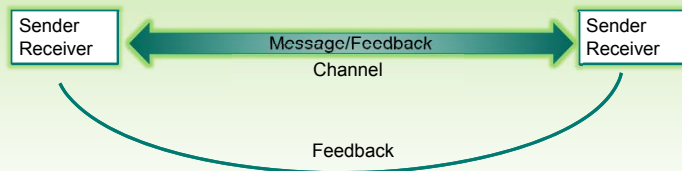
Communication

- Written
- Verbal
- Non-verbal (55% of the message)

- Delivering bad news



Communication Model



Inspector Skills

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Plan Your Communication

- Understand your objective
- Understand your audience
- Plan what you want to say



Inspector Skills

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Choosing the Right Channel

- The sensitivity & emotional content of the subject
- How easy it is to communicate details
- The receiver's preferences
- Time constraints
- The need to ask and answer questions



Inspector Skills

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Creating a Clear Message

- Understand what you need & want to say
- Anticipate the other person's reaction
- Choose words that allow the other person to really hear what you're saying



Inspector Skills

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Four truisms of communications

- 1) Unavoidable (necessary)
- 2) Can't take it back
- 3) Has a memory
- 4) May not go your way



Inspector Skills

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Telephone Communication Tips

- Answering
- Making
- Voicemail



Inspector Skills

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Communication

- **Telephone**
- Written
- E-mail
- In Person (Face-to Face)



Inspector Skills

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Telephone Communication Tips

- Answering Phone
 - Friendly, cheerful, professional
 - Focus on caller
 - Patient and helpful
 - Clear and concise
 - Verify message received correctly



Inspector Skills

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Telephone Communication Tips

- Making a call
 - Prepare
 - File and plans available
 - Introduce yourself
 - Reason for call
 - Stay on topic and be brief



Communication

- Telephone
- **Written**
- E-mail
- In Person (Face-to Face)



Telephone Communication Tips

- Voicemail
 - Short and to the point
 - Speak slowly and clearly
 - Introduce yourself
 - Briefly describe purpose
 - Give phone number and repeat slowly



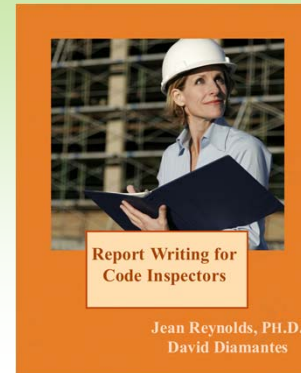
Types of Written Communication

- Inspection approval
- Deficiency or correction notices
- File notes
- Documentation
- Letter writing
 - form letters
 - templates

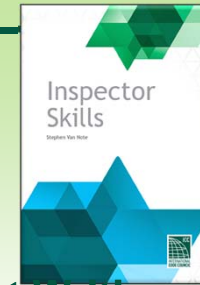


Written Communication Tips

- Point of message stated clearly and briefly
- Clear direction for required actions
- Written as if they might be read by anyone
 - Elected official
 - Judge
 - Manager
 - Reporter
 - Contractor
 - Public



Report Writing for Code Inspectors



Written Communication

- Respectful tone
- Helpful intent
- Clear and concise message



The Stages of Report Writing



- Preparation
- Drafting
- Revising



What Goes into a Good Report?

- *All* reports share some common features, and all require the same qualities:
 - Accuracy, brevity, and completeness
 - Objectivity
 - A clear description of the unsafe condition or violation
 - The required corrective action(s)
 - Elements such as the right to appeal, code or ordinance section, reinspection date or other information required by the code or by law.



Effective Word Choices

1. Sarah Wilson advised me that she left for work at 7:45 that morning.

- Is this correct?



important points to remember when you write a report:

1. Use names.
2. Be efficient.
3. Don't write statements that might be challenged.
4. Be complete.
5. Don't generalize.
6. Don't use industry slang or acronyms that may be misinterpreted.
7. Write like the professional you are.



Effective Word Choices

1. Sarah Wilson advised me that she left for work at 7:45 that morning.

- *She told you. Save advise for actual advice.*

- *Does **NOT** meet the requirements*



Effective Word Choices

2. A leaking kitchen sink was found when Ms. Wright's apartment was inspected by this inspector.

- Is this correct?



Effective Word Choices

5. Sawyer cursed and swore when he saw my identification.

- Is this correct?



Effective Words Choices

- A leaking kitchen sink was found when Ms. Wright's apartment was inspected by this inspector.
 - *During my inspection of Ms. Wright's apartment I found the kitchen sink was leaking.*
 - *"I" and "me" are fine.*
 - *This isn't Dragnet!*

Does **NOT** meet the requirements



Effective Word Choices

5. Sawyer cursed and swore when he saw my identification.

- *Curse means to call down evil powers.*
- *Swear means to take an oath.*
- *Write exactly what he said.*
- *It's one of the few times you can write obscenities and not get in trouble!*
- *Does **NOT** meet the requirements*



Inspection Notices

- Don't be a critic

| Incorrect | Correct |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| This is the worst framing job I've seen in 20 years! Need lots of truss bracing. Rest of framing approved—reluctantly. | Framing corrections required: Lateral bracing on trusses ... Call for reinspection before covering. |



Inspection Notices

- Give clear instructions for required actions and follow-up:

| Incorrect | Correct |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Framing violations: Nail plates for plumbing Fireblocking Exterior wall blocking | Framing corrections—install the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List Okay to insulate, but leave these areas visible for reinspection. Please call for inspection. |



Inspection Notices

- Stick to the code requirements:

| Incorrect | Correct |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I can't approve this installation of It might meet the code now, but it's not in my best interest to approve it. I'm always going to err on the side of safety. | The ... meets the minimum clearance requirements and is approved. |



Communication

- Telephone
- Written
- **E-mail**
- In Person (Face-to Face)



E-mail Tips

- Never assume privacy exists in e-mail
- Never say in an e-mail what you wouldn't say in person
- Capture the e-mail's objective in the subject line



E-mail Tips (continued)

- Turnoff e-mail notification
- Review/respond to e-mail 1 or 2x daily
- Don't handle e-mail multiple times
- Use flags (reminders)



E-mail Tips (continued)

- Fill in the "To:" box at the end (prevent sending before you're ready)
- Don't always rely on e-mail:
 - Meet face to face or
 - Call on the phone when appropriate.



Advantages to E-mail

- Documentation for records
- Ability to distribute message to several people at once (only if necessary)
- Recipient can read and respond when convenient
- Reinforces previous verbal instructions
- Reference for the recipient in following instructions



Things to Avoid

- All capital letters
- All small case letters
- Emoticons (smiley faces)
- Text colors
- Distracting fonts
- Bold or underline text
- Backgrounds (stationary)



Written Communication Tips

| Unprofessional | Professional, courteous |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jason - not receiving truss dwg so I can check trsses btw not at job eitehr :-(\r u sending over soon????;-) | This is just a reminder that we haven't received the truss design drawings yet. Please have the supplier send us a set so we can check ... and not hold you up. |



Written Communication Tips

| Shouting, condescending | Respectful, sticks to facts and reason. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EGRESS WINDOWS ARE REQUIRED IN <u>ALL</u> BASEMENTS, <u>NOT</u> JUST BASEMENTS WITH HABITABLE SPACE!!!!!! | ... The code changed several years ago to require at least one emergency escape and rescue opening in every basement to improve the level of safety ... |



Written Communication Tips

| Critical, judgmental, imposing personal preference, fortune telling. | Accurate, respectful, helpful. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes, the code says you can do it that way, but everybody gets this wrong and so will you. ... | You are correct. Please see the attached information for the specific requirement and example of a correct installation. Let me know if you have any questions. |



Communication

- Telephone
- Written
- E-mail
- **In Person (Face-to Face)**



Inspector Skills

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Reasons for not Listening

- Already made up mind
- Hearing only what you want to hear
- Jumping to conclusions
- Lack of interest
- Being angry, upset, or worried about other things



Inspector Skills

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Receiving the Message

- Look at the person
- Pay attention to his or her body language
- Nod and smile to acknowledge points
- Allow the person to speak
- Don't interrupt



Inspector Skills

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Body Language- Informal Feedback

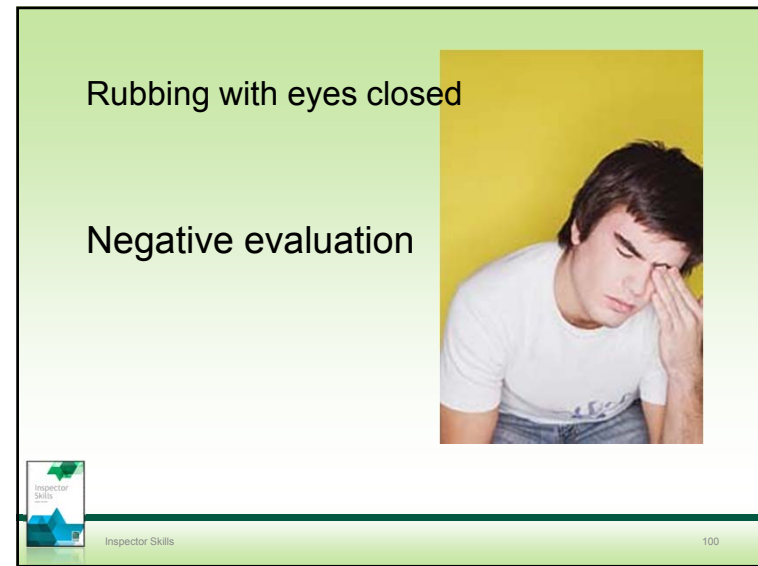
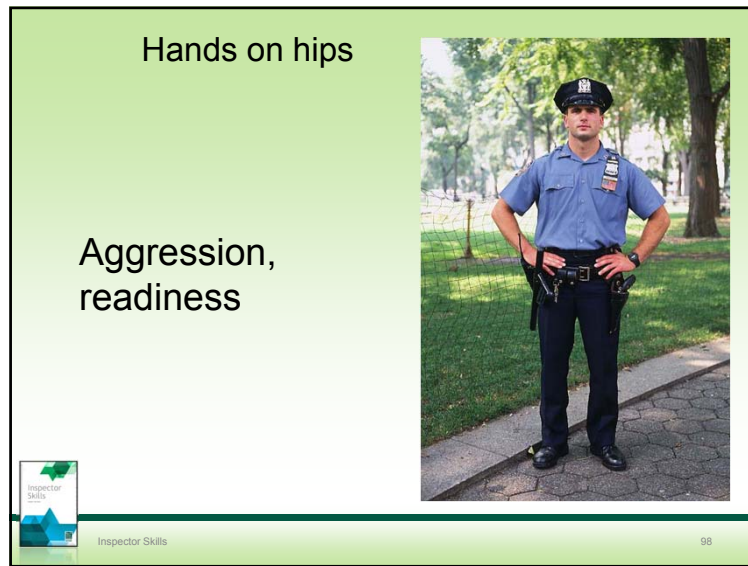
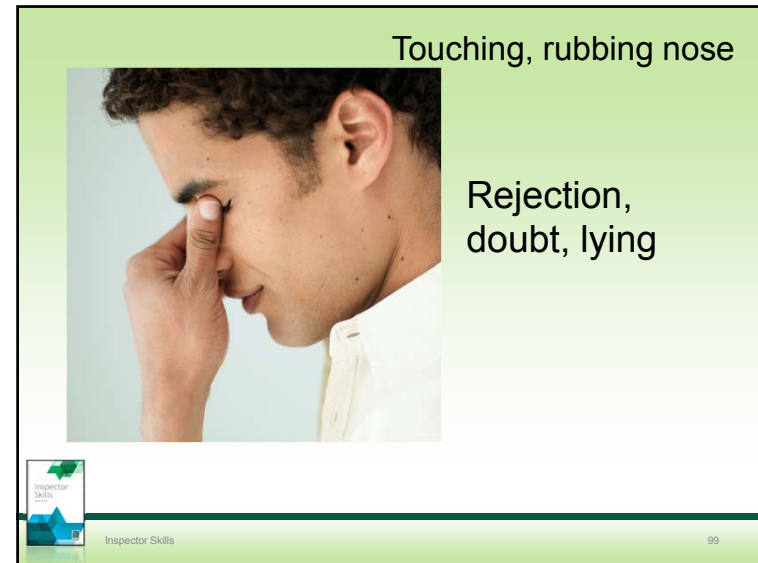
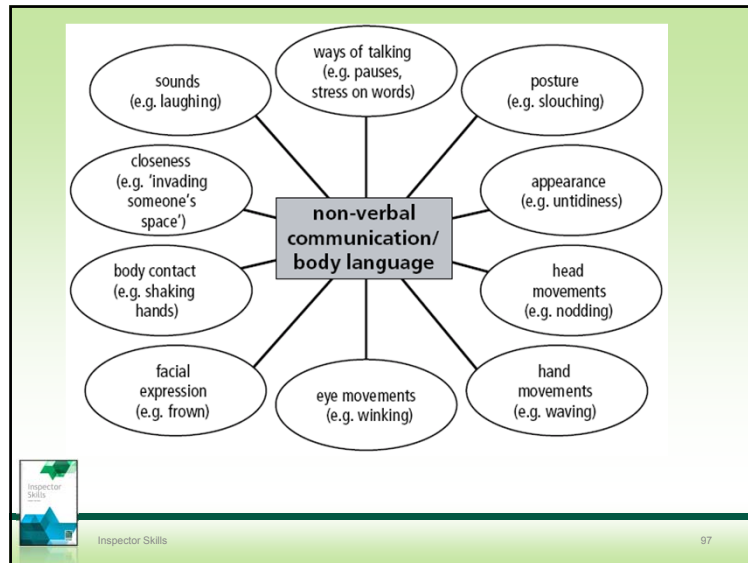
- Defensiveness
- Agreement
- Comprehension (or lack of understanding)
- Level of interest
- Level of engagement with the message
- Truthfulness



Inspector Skills

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Inspector Skills



Inspector Skills

Hands clasp behind head/back

Anger, frustration, apprehension



Inspector Skills 101

Biting nails


Insecurity, nervousness



Inspector Skills 103

Head resting on hand


Boredom




Inspector Skills 102

Smiling, expressive, open arms

Excited




Inspector Skills 104



Arms crossed
on chest


Defensiveness



Inspector Skills 105

Formal Feedback


- Ask questions
- Repeat in your own words



Inspector Skills 107

The most important thing in
communication is to hear what
isn't being said.


Peter Drucker



Inspector Skills 106

Difficult Conversations

- Giving bad news
 - Empathy
- Difficult people
 - Exception rather than the rule



Inspector Skills 108

Difficult Conversations

- Prepare
 - Gather your thoughts
 - Know what you want to say
 - How you want to open the conversation
- Begin and end on a positive note



Angry People

- Counting to 10
- ABC
 - Ask
 - Breathe
 - Choose



Difficult Conversations

- Deliver focused and clear instruction
- Invite comment
- Listen
- Thank the customer for listening



Avoid “I” and “You”

I want you to do this.

The code requires this.



Avoid “I” and “You”

You always do this. OR
You don't understand.

This department handout will
be helpful in understanding
the code requirements



Communications Recap

- Plan your communication
- Create the message
- Choose the right channel
- Feedback
 - Body language
 - Questions



Avoid “I” and “You”

Why didn't you do it this
way? OR That's for you to
figure out.

There are a number of
ways that would satisfy
the code requirements.



Communications Recap

- Difficult conversations
- Prepare, prepare, prepare
- Things to avoid
 - ie: email etiquette



Customer Service



Inspector Skills

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Customer Service

- First Impressions
- Expectations
- Listening
- Choosing words carefully
- Complaints
- Honesty



Inspector Skills

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Who are our Customers?

Associates Technicians
 Property owners
Installers
 Homebuilders
Designers Coworkers
 Contractors
Home owners
 Those in other departments



Inspector Skills

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First Impressions

- **“7/11” rule**
 - 1) Cleanliness 2) Attractiveness 3) Credible
 - 4) Knowledgeable 5) Responsive 6) Friendly
 - 7) Helpful 8) Empathetic 9) Courteous
 - 10) Confident 11) Professional
- a) Like b) Don't like c) Don't trust



Inspector Skills

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First Impressions

- Greet
- Identify yourself
- Have a positive attitude
- Be courteous and respectful
- Be cheerful and friendly



Inspector Skills

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Customer Service

- First Impressions
- Expectations
- Listening
- Choosing words carefully
- Obstacles
- Complaints
- Dealing with difficult people



Inspector Skills

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First Impressions

- Be helpful
- Be fair
- Keep an open mind
- Be punctual
- Smile



Inspector Skills

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Expectations

- Accurate information
- Answers to inquiries
- Follow-up when promised
- Punctuality
- Courteous behavior



Inspector Skills

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Meeting Customer's Expectations

- Be courteous and punctual
- Follow through
- Research
- Be accurate and honest
- Return phone calls and e-mails promptly
- Under-promise and over-deliver



Inspector Skills

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Customer Service

- First Impressions
- Expectations
- Listening
- Choosing words carefully
- Complaints
- Dealing with difficult people



Inspector Skills

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Expectations

“Customers don't expect you to be perfect. They do expect you to fix things when they go wrong.”

Donald Porter, VP with British Airways



Inspector Skills

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Listening

- Listener is Listening 25% of the time.
- Listener is Thinking up a response 75%.

- Spoken words approx. 180 wpm
- Brain can process spoken words @ approx. 500 wpm
- Brain can visually process @ approx. 80,000 wpm



Inspector Skills


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Choose Words Carefully

Avoid—I don't know.

Better—That's a good question. Let me check and get back to you.

Comment—It's OK to not know the answer, follow up by researching and communicating to the customer.




Inspector Skills 129

Choose Words Carefully

Avoid—NO!

Better--The code doesn't allow that because...but here is a suggestion.

Comment—Turn a negative into a positive




Inspector Skills 131

Choose Words Carefully

Avoid—You can't do that. You'll have to...

Better--There are a number of ways to accomplish this and meet the code requirements.


Comment—Keep an open mind, be flexible and look at alternatives or solutions. Make helpful suggestions



Inspector Skills 130

Choose Word Carefully

- Frequently
- Often
- Seldom
- Never



Inspector Skills 132

Customer Service

- First Impressions
- Expectations
- Listening
- Choosing words carefully
- **Complaints**
- Dealing with difficult people



Inspector Skills

133

Handling Complaints

- Avoid arguing
- Offer a resolution
- Know when further discussion will not be beneficial
- Document and follow up



Inspector Skills

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Handling Complaints

- Listen
- Keep a good attitude
- Be open to suggestions
- Try to understand (put yourself in the customer's shoes)
- Restate what the customer said



Inspector Skills

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Customer Service

- First Impressions
- Expectations
- Listening
- Choosing words carefully
- Obstacles
- Complaints
- Dealing with difficult people



Inspector Skills

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Why are People Difficult?

- People
 - Are rushed – not enough time
 - Feel insecure
 - Feel angry
 - Have some need or interest
 - Are stressed



A Difficult Person can be

- Hostile-Aggressive
- Know-it-all
- “Yes” person
- Whiner
- Never say a word
- Indecisive staller
- “No” person



Conversations with Difficult People

| DO | DON'T |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Defuse | Escalate |
| Stay calm | Argue |
| Listen | Interrupt |
| Let them vent | Blame |
| Speak quietly | Raise your voice |
| Be objective | Criticize |
| Remain confident and positive | Take it personally |



Hostile aka “The Tank”

- Bullies their way
- Belittles you
- Tries to convince you that you are doing a bad job
- “I pay your salary”



Dealing with “The Tank”

- If possible, get them to sit down
- Don't back down
- Let them vent
- Identify the issue....the facts
- Explain the benefits of your point
- Allow aggressor to “save face”



Inspector Skills

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Dealing with the Know-It-All

- Know your facts....be prepared
- Listen carefully and paraphrase the main points
- Use questions to raise issues



Inspector Skills

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The Know-It-All

- Controls people and events by dominating
- Tries to find flaws in everything



Inspector Skills

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Yes Person

- Answers “yes” to everything
- Seeks approval and avoids disapproval



Inspector Skills

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Dealing with the Yes Person

- Work to get to the underlying issue
- Tell how much you value their opinion
- Listen for hidden messages



Dealing with the Whiner

- Don't respond if they are blaming you
- Make sure facts are correct
- Ask them to propose solutions



Whiner

- Avoids taking responsibility
- Wants sympathy
- Has negative view of the world
- If you ignore them, they increase protests



Never say a word aka “The Clam”

- Timid, uncomfortable and uncertain
- Wants to avoid conflict
- Feels angry because “the wrong decision was made”
- Some can't relate authentically



Dealing with the Clam

- Discuss non-threatening topics
- Ask open-ended questions
- Wait for a response.....calmly



Inspector Skills

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Dealing with the No Person

- Work to get to the underlying issues
- Find out the reason for disagreement
- Show the other side
- Show the benefits
- Find the common ground for “Yes” answers.



Inspector Skills

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No Person

- Able to defeat big ideas with a single syllable-----NO
- Deadly to morale



Inspector Skills

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Most heard comments

- I've been doing it this way for years.
- Why don't they have to do that?
- You are not welcome on my land.
- You're just making me spend more money.
- I moved here because I didn't want rules.
- **What comments have you heard?**



Inspector Skills

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Coping Techniques

- Don't take it personally
- Write down details of what annoys you
- Think about why it annoys you
- Which of your buttons does this person push
- Why do you respond to them the way you do?



Doing the Right Thing (Ethics)



Coping (continued)

- How would you like to respond
- Monitor yourself
- Give yourself positive feedback
- You are not going to change someone else
- Q-TIP!

OTHER WAYS?



Doing the Right Thing

Whenever you do a thing, act as if all the world were watching.

- Thomas Jefferson



Doing the Right Thing

- Job subject to public scrutiny
- Good inspectors welcome that scrutiny
- Embrace ethical principles of honesty and lawfulness
- To benefit society
- Apply rules fairly and objectively with no vested interest



Inspector Skills

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Slander

The Gazette October 25, 2014
Eastern Iowa's independent, locally owned newspaper
www.thegazette.com \$1.00

COURTS
Jury: Council member slandered builder

\$140,000 in damages awarded; city will pay

By Rick Smith, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — As a City Council member in 2011, Dan Karr slandered a home-builder during a vigorous council debate on the construction of pier-built homes, a Linn County District Court jury decided late Friday afternoon.

The verdict in the weeklong civil trial awarded builder David Stutzman \$140,000 in total damages — \$50,000 for damage to reputation, \$40,000 for loss of income and \$50,000 for emotional distress.

Mayor Ron Corbett said last night the city represented Karr at the trial because Karr's comments came at a City Council meeting, and city taxpayers will pay the \$140,000 slander award, the mayor said.

"As far as what does this mean for public debate and public discourse, I think elected officials most of the time are pretty guarded about what they say," Corbett said. "And this probably will just make everyone even more guarded."

Stutzman, 51, said he was pleased with the jury's verdict, adding that Karr's comments cost him three years' worth of business.

"If the jurors say that's worth \$140,000, I'll have to take it and run and keep going," Stutzman said. As for damage to his reputation, he said, "I'm Czechoslovakian."

Dan Karr
Former City Council member

► **SLANDER, PAGE 10A**



Inspector Skills

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Grabbing Headlines

LOCAL ■ REGIONAL ■ STATE

COURTS

'Enforcer' vs. 'educator'

Marshal: Inspector 'overly aggressive'



Inspector Skills

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Conflict of Interest

- Any situation where the inspector is in a position to benefit personally from a decision.
- Causes the public to lose trust in the objectivity and fairness of the inspector.
- Regulations must be applied consistently and equitably.



Inspector Skills

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Ethical Decisions

- Butterfly Test
- Authority Test
- Public Scrutiny Test



Inspector Skills

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What would you do?

You discover a \$500 error in your paycheck, in your favor. Would you call it to payroll team's attention immediately or wait for payroll personnel to discover it?



Inspector Skills

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What would you do?

You inspect what you consider to be poor quality work by a local contractor. You call the homeowner to report that there were an unusual number of deficiencies, that you've had problems with this contractor in the past and you just wanted the homeowner to be aware of some workmanship issues. Is that appropriate?



Inspector Skills

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What would you do?

You have a little side business unrelated to your position. You need copies made now and then so you use the copier at work. Is this ethical?



Inspector Skills

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What would you do?

During a rental housing inspection you find violations. You give the building owner your personal business card and let them know that you do work on the side, to just call and you would be happy to fix the violations. Is there an issue?



Inspector Skills

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Fact or Myth?

- Success of a building department depends on buy-in from the public.
- The inspector is an ambassador for the building department in gaining the public trust.



Inspector Skills

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Fact or Myth?

- The codes serve as the basis for the actions of the inspector.
- Inspection is following a checklist
- The general public enthusiastically values the work of inspectors



Inspector Skills

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Fact or Myth?

- Customer service does not apply to code enforcement.
- The success of an inspection can be measured by the number of violations identified.



Inspector Skills

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Fact or Myth?

- Inspectors are educators.
- The inspector needs to make reasonable decisions in following the intent of the code.



Inspector Skills

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Thoughts?

- **DID WE COVER YOUR EXPECTATIONS?**
- Any items/ thoughts about the seminar?
- Thank you for your participation!
- (Go forth and be “skillfully” soft!)



Inspector Skills

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Fact or Myth?

Soft skills are specific, teachable abilities that can be defined, observed, quantified and measured.

Soft Skills are personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that enhance an individual's interactions and job performance.



Inspector Skills

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Thank you for participating

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Inspector Skills

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