

## We're From The Government And We Have Come To Help You.

By George Porter

"We're from the government and we have come to help you", is a line from an old joke. How could anything be more ridiculous than expecting the government to help you? We are talking about the folks who bring us the IRS and OSHA. These two agencies alone can cause grown men to scatter like quail if they should walk into a room and announce their presence. Thank goodness for the new congress that is going to eliminate the federal government's intrusion into our lives.... maybe.

Let's reflect for a moment why we have a government at all. In the beginning it was a form of protection from foreign intrusion, it ran the army, negotiated treaties, had departments that did what needed to be done for the good of all, like the postal service, weather bureau, fire and police. It collected taxes to protect its citizens from themselves and other countries and almost everyone was glad they had it. An effective government is a very good thing but when a government or a part of it gets confused or is running on ignorance then it is time to do one of two things, fix it or get rid of it. With the possible exception of some very militant weirdo's I don't think anyone believes we do not need a government, so we better fix it.

The reason I am bringing this up is because this summer it seems that I have been doing more expert witness work in installation lawsuits all over the nation than at any time in the last six years. In 9 out of 10 cases if there were a state agency that oversaw the industry and enforced good installation regulations there would never have been the problem to begin with. 85% of the problems are related to site preparation, footing sizing, or ridge beam support. In a proper inspection process these things would have been found and fixed. Unfortunately in 60% of the cases there was an inspection process with fees paid and paper work filled out and they had no idea what they were looking at. This brings us back to the question of government, do we need these guys or not? In my opinion, YES. Do we need to have them so uninformed? NO

What good is an inspector anyway? Well, for one thing a good one would have saved these folks this summer a lot of money, in one case over \$200,000.00! You may think that all these guys (and girls too) do is tell you what you did wrong. Sometimes you could be wrong and they could be right. Isn't that something worth knowing? You do make mistakes once in a while don't you? It seems to me that could save you some trouble down the road but that is not the #1 advantage a good system. They can also prove you did it right by passing the inspection. Without this how would you prove you were right or that the customer messed it up after you were gone? That's easy, you just call a lawyer and pay him to prove it. Now doesn't that sound good? Just about everybody I know has had to re-level some home at least once because a customer decided to "improve" on the job they had done. This doesn't happen with a good inspection agency overseeing your work.

These inspectors also level the playing field and the "fly by nighters" will have to find a new place to cheat their customers. If you don't have inspections these folks are your competition, do you really want to compete with them? You really can't and still do a good safe job for the

money and time that they will do it for. A bad inspector is worse than none at all, but a good inspector is way better than none at all. He could help you even if he is from the government.