Introduction

1.1 The American Society of Home Inspectors®, Inc. (ASHI®) is a not-for-profit professional society established in 1976. Membership in ASHI is voluntary and its members are private home *inspectors*. ASHI's objectives include promotion of excellence within the profession and continual improvement of its members' inspection services to the public.

Purpose and scope

2.1 The purpose of these Standards of Practice is to establish a minimum and uniform standard for home *inspectors* who subscribe to these Standards of Practice. *Home Inspections* performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client with objective information regarding the condition of the *systems* and *components* of the home as inspected at the time of the *home inspection*. Redundancy in the description of the requirements, limitations, and exclusions regarding the scope of the home inspection is provided for emphasis only.

2.2 *Inspectors* shall:

A. adhere to the Code of Ethics of the American Society of Home Inspectors.
B. *inspect* *readily accessible*, visually observable, *installed* *systems* and *components* listed in these Standards of Practice.
C. *report* :
    1. those *systems* and *components* *inspected* that, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, are not functioning properly, significantly deficient, *unsafe*, or are near the end of their service lives.
    2. recommendations to correct, or monitor for future correction, the deficiencies *reported* in 2.2.C.1, or items needing *further evaluation*. (Per Exclusion 13.2.A.5 *inspectors* are NOT required to determine methods, materials, or costs of corrections.)
    3. reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies *reported* in 2.2.C.1, that are not self-evident.
    4. *systems* and *components* designated for inspection in these Standards of Practice that were present at the time of the *home inspection* but were not *inspected* and the reason(s) they were not *inspected*.

2.3 These Standards of Practice are not intended to limit *inspectors* from:

A. including other inspection services or *systems* and *components* in addition to those required In Section 2.2.B.
B. designing or specifying repairs, provided the *inspector* is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
C. excluding *systems* and *components* from the inspection if requested by the client.

Structural system

3.1 The *inspector* shall

A. *inspect*
    1. the *structural components* including the foundation and framing.
    2. by probing a *representative number* of *structural components* where deterioration is suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is NOT required when probing would damage any finished surface or where no deterioration is visible or presumed to exist.
B. *describe*
    1. the methods used to *inspect* *under-floor crawl space* ands attics.

2. the foundation.
3. the floor structure.
4. the wall structure.
5. the ceiling structure.
6. the roof structure.

3.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to

A. provide any *engineering* or architectural service or analysis.
B. offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any *structural system* or *component*

Exterior

4.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:
    1. *siding*, flashing and trim.
    2. all exterior doors.
    3. attached or adjacent decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings.
    4. eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
    5. vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the building.
    6. adjacent or entryway walkways, patios, and driveways.
B. *describe* :
    1. *siding*.

4.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to *inspect*:

A. screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories.
B. fences.
C. geological and/or soil conditions.
D. *recreational facilities*.
E. outbuildings other than garages and carports.
F. seawalls, break-walls, and docks.
G. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

Roof system

5.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:
    1. roofing materials .
    2. *roof drainage systems*.
    3. flashing.
    4. skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.
B. *describe*:
    1. roofing materials.
    2. methods used to *inspect* the roofing.

5.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to *inspect*:

A. antennae.

B. interiors of flues or chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
C. other *installed* accessories.

Plumbing system

6.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:
    1. interior water supply and distribution *systems* including all fixtures and faucets.
    2. drain, waste and vent *systems* including all fixtures.
    3. water heating equipment and hot water supply *system*.
    4. vent *systems* , flues, and chimneys.
    5. fuel storage and fuel distribution *systems*.
    6. drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping.
B. *describe* :
    1. water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping materials.
    2. water heating equipment including energy source(s).
    3. location of main water and main fuel shut-off valves.

6.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect:*:
    1. clothes washing machine connections.
    2. interiors of flues or chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
    3. wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment.
    4. water conditioning *systems*.
    5. solar water heating *systems*.
    6. fire and lawn sprinkler *systems*.
    7. private waste disposal *systems*.
B. determine:
    1. whether water supply and waste disposal *systems* are public or private.
    2. water supply quantity or quality.
C. operate *automatic safety controls* or manual stop valves.

Electrical system

7.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect* :
    1. service drop.
    2. service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways.
    3. service equipment and main disconnects.
    4. service grounding.
    5. interior *components* of service panels and sub panels.
    6. conductors.
    7. overcurrent protection devices.
    8. a *representative number* of *installed* lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
    9. ground fault circuit interrupters.
B. *describe*:
    1. amperage and voltage rating of the service.
    2. the location of main disconnect(s) and sub panels.
    3. presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring.

4. presence or absence of smoke detectors.
5. *wiring methods*.

7.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect* :
   1. remote control devices.
   2. *alarm systems* and *components*.
   3. low voltage wiring *systems* and *components*.
   4. ancillary wiring *systems* and *components* not a part of the primary electrical power distribution *system*.
B. measure amerage, voltage or impedance.

Heating system

8.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. open *readily openable access panels*.
B. *inspect*:
   1. *installed* heating equipment.
   2. vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys.
C. *describe*:
   1. energy source(s).
   2. heating *systems*.

8.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect*:
   1. interiors of flues or chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
   2. heat exchangers.
   3. humidifiers or dehumidifiers.
   4. electronic air filters.
   5. solar space heating *systems*.
B. determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance.

Air conditioning system

9.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. open *readily openable access panels*.
B. *inspect*:
   1. central and through-wall equipment.
   2. distribution *systems*.
C. *describe*:
   1. energy source(s).
   2. cooling *systems*.

9.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect* electronic air filters.
B. determine cooling supply adequacy or distribution balance.
C. *inspect* window air conditioning units.

Interior

10.1 The *inspector* shall *inspect* :

A. walls, ceilings, and floors.
B. steps, stairways, and railings.
C. countertops and a *representative number* of *installed* cabinets.
D. a *representative number* of doors and windows.
E. garage doors and garage door operators.

10.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to *inspect* :

A. paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments.
B. carpeting.
C. window treatments.
D. central vacuum *systems*.
E. *household appliances*.
F. *recreational facilities*.

Insulation and ventilation

11.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:
    1. insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.
    2. ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
    3. mechanical ventilation *systems*.
B. *describe*:
    1. insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.
    2. absence of insulation in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces.

11.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to disturb insulation.

Fireplace and solid fuel burning appliances

12.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:
    1. *system components*.
    2. chimney and vents.
B. *describe:*
    1. fireplaces and *solid fuel burning appliances*.
    2. chimneys.

12.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect*:
    1. interiors of flues or chimneys.
    2. firescreens and doors.
    3. seals and gaskets.
    4. automatic fuel feed devices.
    5. mantles and fireplace surrounds.
    6. combustion make-up air devices.

7. heat distribution assists (gravity fed and fan assisted).

B. ignite or extinguish fires.
C. determine draft characteristics.
D. move fireplace inserts and stoves or firebox contents.

General limitations and exclusions

13.1 General limitations:

A. The *inspector* is NOT required to perform any action or make any determination not specifically stated in these Standards of Practice.
B. Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice :
    1. are not *technically exhaustive*.
    2. are not required to identify concealed conditions, latent defects, or consequential damage(s).
C. These Standards of Practice are applicable to buildings with four or fewer dwelling units and their garages or carports.

13.2 General exclusions:

A. *Inspectors* are not required to determine:
    1. conditions of *systems* or *components* that are not *readily accessible*.
    2. remaining life expectancy of any *system* or *component*.
    3. strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any *system* or *component*.
    4. the causes of any condition or deficiency.
    5. methods, materials, or costs of corrections.
    6. future conditions including, but not limited to, failure of *systems* and *components*.
    7. the suitability of the property for any specialized use.
    8. compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.).
    9. market value of the property or its marketability.
    10. the advisability of purchase of the property.
    11. the presence of potentially hazardous plants or animals including, but not limited to wood destroying organisms or diseases harmful to humans including molds or mold-like substances.
    12. the presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water, and air.
    13. the effectiveness of any *system* *installed* or method utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.
    14. operating costs of *systems* or *components*.
    15. acoustical properties of any *system* or *component*.
    16. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties.
B. *Inspectors* are NOT required to offer:
    1. or perform any act or service contrary to law.
    2. or perform *engineering services*.
    3. or perform work in any trade or any professional service other than *home inspection*.
    4. warranties or guarantees of any kind.
C. *Inspectors* are NOT required to operate:
    1. any *system* or *component* that is *shut down* or otherwise inoperable.
    2. any *system* or *component* that does not respond to *normal operating controls*.
    3. shut-off valves or manual stop valves.
D. *Inspectors* are NOT required to enter:

1. any area that will, in the opinion of the *inspector*, likely be dangerous to the *inspector* or other persons or damage the property or its *systems* or *components*.
2. *under-floor crawl spaces* or attics that are not *readily accessible*.

E. *Inspectors* are NOT required to *inspect*:
1. underground items including, but not limited to underground storage tanks or other underground indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active.
2. items that are not *installed*.
3. *installed decorative* items.
4. items in areas that are not entered in accordance with 13.2.D.
5. detached structures other than garages and carports.
6. common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing.

F. *Inspectors* are NOT required to:
1. perform any procedure or operation that will, in the opinion of the *inspector*, likely be dangerous to the *inspector* or other persons or damage the property or its *systems* or *components*.
2. describe or report on any *system* or *component* that is not included in these Standards and was not *inspected*.
3. move personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.
4. *dismantle* any *system* or *component*, except as explicitly required by these Standards of Practice.

ASHI STANDARDS OF PRACTICE GLOSSARY OF ITALICIZED TERMS

Alarm Systems
Warning devices installed or freestanding including but not limited to smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, flue gas, and other spillage detectors, and security equipment

Automatic Safety Controls
Devices designed and installed to protect systems and components from unsafe conditions

Component
A part of a system

Decorative
Ornamental; not required for the proper operation of the essential systems and components of a home

Describe
To identify (in writing) a system or component by its type or other distinguishing characteristics

Dismantle
To take apart or remove any component, device, or piece of equipment that would not be taken apart or removed by a homeowner in the course of normal maintenance

Engineering
The application of scientific knowledge for the design, control, or use of building structures, equipment, or apparatus

Further Evaluation
Examination and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesman, or service technician beyond that provided by the home inspection

Home Inspection
The process by which an inspector visually examines the readily accessible systems and components of a home and which describes those systems and components in accordance with these Standards of Practice

Household Appliances
Kitchen, laundry, and similar appliances, whether installed or free-standing

Inspect
To examine any system or component of a building in accordance with these Standards of Practice, using normal operating controls and opening readily openable access panels

Inspector
A person hired to examine any system or component of a building in accordance with these Standards of Practice

Installed
Attached such that removal requires tools

Normal Operating Controls
Devices such as thermostats, switches, or valves intended to be operated by the homeowner

Readily Accessible
Available for visual inspection without requiring moving of personal property, dismantling, destructive measures, or any action that will likely involve risk to persons or property

Readily Openable Access Panel

A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is readily accessible, within normal reach, can be removed by one person, and is not sealed in place

Recreational Facilities

Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, exercise, entertainment, athletic, playground or other similar equipment, and associated accessories

Report

Communicate in writing

Representative Number

One component per room for multiple similar interior components such as windows, and electric receptacles; one component on each side of the building for multiple similar exterior components

Roof Drainage Systems

Components used to carry water off a roof and away from a building

Shut Down

A state in which a system or component cannot be operated by normal operating controls

Siding

Exterior wall covering and cladding; such as: aluminum, asphalt, brick, cement/asbestos, EIFS, stone, stucco, veneer, vinyl, wood, etc.

Solid Fuel Burning Appliances

A hearth and fire chamber or similar prepared place in which a fire may be built and that is built in conjunction with a chimney; or a listed assembly of a fire chamber, its chimney, and related factory-made parts designed for unit assembly without requiring field construction

Structural Component

A component that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads)

System

A combination of interacting or interdependent components, assembled to carry out one or more functions.

Technically Exhaustive

An investigation that involves dismantling, the extensive use of advanced techniques, measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, or other means

Under-floor Crawl Space

The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the floor

Unsafe

A condition in a readily accessible, installed system or component that is judged to be a significant risk of bodily injury during normal, day-to-day use; the risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted residential construction standards

Wiring Methods

Identification of electrical conductors or wires by their general type, such as non-metallic sheathed cable, armored cable, or knob and tube, etc.