

# Appendix A – More About Home Inspections

## Standards of Practice

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Home inspections are typically performed according to applicable Standards of Practice. These are several organizations of home inspectors in America. The current wording of the Standards can be referenced on the appropriate association websites. Listed below are the three well-recognized associations and their websites.

American Society of Home Inspectors [www.ashi.org](http://www.ashi.org)

Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors [www.cahpi.ca](http://www.cahpi.ca)

National Association of Home Inspectors [www.nahi.org](http://www.nahi.org)

The current wording of the Standards can be referenced at the website for each association. There are other organizations with their own Standards. Inspectors will identify the Standards that they follow.

## About Home Inspections

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Home inspections provide tremendous value, but this can be a challenge for home inspectors. Because we have very broad knowledge of homes, clients' expectations of home inspectors are often very high. While that is flattering, it is also little dangerous for the client and for the inspector. It is important for the inspector to clearly define the scope of work (Standards of Practice, et al) and for the client to set realistic expectations based on that. Home inspections typically last a few hours and cost a few hundred dollars. The written technical report provides a professional opinion based on less-than-complete information, prepared within a very short time frame.

Home inspectors can't see through walls, ceilings or floors, predict the future, re-create the past, dismantle components or know everything there is to know about everything. We perform field inspections of homes to evaluate their performance, identifying existing recognizable problems. This dramatically improves a client's knowledge of the home, and reduces – but does not remove – the risk in making a decision. Clients need to understand that we will not identify or predict all the issues in any home, but by identifying several conditions, we provide a very valuable service.

**When Things Go Wrong: (Next page)** This short document maybe useful. Please read it as part of the report.

## When Things Go Wrong

There may come a time that you discover something wrong with the house, and you may wonder if your home inspector let you down. There are a few things to consider:

- INTERMITTENT OR CONCEALED PROBLEMS** Some problems can only be discovered by living in a house. They cannot be discovered during the few hours of a home inspection. For example, some shower stalls leak when water bounces off people in the shower, but do not leak when you simply turn on the tap. Some roofs and basements only leak when rain is very heavy or is accompanied by wind from a certain direction. Some problems will only be discovered when carpets are lifted, furniture and storage are moved or finishes are removed.
- NO CLUES** These problems may have existed at the time of the inspection but there were no clues as to their existence. Lawyers call these latent defects. Our inspections are based on the past performance of the house. If there are no clues of a past problem, it is unfair to assume we should foresee a future problem. Home inspectors do not identify latent defects.
- WE ALWAYS MISS SOME MINOR THINGS** Some say we are inconsistent because our reports identify some minor problems but not others. Any minor problems noted were discovered while looking for significant problems that would affect the typical person’s decision to purchase. We note them simply as a courtesy.
- SAMPLING EXERCISE** A home inspection is a sampling exercise with respect to components that are numerous, such as bricks, windows, and electrical receptacles. As a result, some conditions that are visible may go unreported. This is not a failing of the inspector but a result of sampling. A report by a second inspector will always be somewhat different than the first as a result of this sampling approach.
- CONTRACTORS’ ADVICE** A common source of concern with home inspectors comes from comments made by contractors. Contractors’ opinions often differ from ours. Don’t be surprised that three roofers all say the roof needs replacement when we said that, with some minor repairs, the roof will last a few more years.
- LAST MAN IN THEORY** While our advice represents the most prudent action in our professional opinion, many contractors are reluctant to undertake these repairs. This is because of the “Last Man In Theory”. The contractor fears that if he is the last person to work on the roof, he will get blamed if the roof leaks, whether or not the leak is his fault. Consequently, he won’t want to do a minor repair with high liability when he could re-roof the entire house for more money and reduce the likelihood of a callback. This is understandable.
- MOST RECENT ADVICE IS BEST** There is more to the “Last Man In Theory”. It is human nature for homeowners to believe the last “expert” advice they receive, even if it is contrary to previous advice. As home inspectors, we unfortunately find ourselves in the position of “First Man In” and consequently it is our advice that is often disbelieved.

**WHY DIDN'T WE SEE IT** Contractors and others may say “I can’t believe you had this house inspected, and they didn’t find this problem”. There are several reasons for these apparent oversights:

**CONDITIONS DURING INSPECTION** 1. It is difficult for homeowners to remember the circumstances in the house, at the time of the inspection. It’s easy to forget that it was snowing, there was storage everywhere in the basement or that the furnace could not be turned on because the air conditioning was operating, etc. It’s impossible for contractors to know what the circumstances were when the inspection was performed.

**THE WISDOM OF HINDSIGHT** 2. When the problem manifests itself, it is very easy to have 20/20 hindsight. Anybody can say that the basement leaks when there are 2 inches of water on the floor. Predicting the problem is a different story.

**A LONG LOOK** 3. If we spent 1/2 an hour under the kitchen sink or two hours removing every electrical switch plate and cover plate, we’d find more problems too. Unfortunately, the inspection would take several days and would cost considerably more.

**WE’RE GENERALISTS** 4. We are generalists; we are not specialists. The heating contractor may indeed have more heating expertise than we do. This is because we are expected to have heating expertise and plumbing expertise, roofing expertise, electrical expertise, etc. A home inspection is a generalist the same way a family doctor is a generalist. They have wonderfully broad knowledge, but are not cardiologists or respirologists.

**AN INVASIVE LOOK** 5. Problems often become apparent when carpets or plaster are removed, when fixtures or cabinets are pulled out, and so on. Many issues appear once work begins on a home. A home inspection is a visual examination. We don’t perform any invasive or destructive tests.

**NOT INSURANCE** In conclusion, a home inspection is designed to better your odds. It is not designed to eliminate all risk. For that reason, a home inspection should not be considered an insurance policy. We know of no insurance company that offers a policy with no deductible, no exclusions, no limits and an indefinite policy period.

We hope this is food for thought.

# American Society of Home Inspectors Standards of Practice

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## 1. Introduction

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.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

**2.1** The purpose of the 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.

## 3. Structural Components

### 3.1 The *inspector* shall:

- A.** *inspect*:
  1. *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 spaces* and 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 services or analysis.
- B.** offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any *structural system* or *component*.

## 4. 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

## 5. Roofing

### 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.

## 6. Plumbing

### 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 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.

## 7. Electrical

### 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. 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 amperage, voltage, or impedance.

## 8. Heating

### 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.

## 9. Air Conditioning

### 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.

## 10. 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*.

## 11. 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. See 13.2.A.11 and 13.2.A.12.

## 12. Fireplaces 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. fire screens 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.

### 13. 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 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.

### 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.



# Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors Standards of Practice – September 2010

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** The Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors (CAHPI) is a not for-profit association whose members include the following seven provincial/regional organizations: CAHPI-B.C., CAHPI-Alberta, CAHPI-Sask., CAHPI-Manitoba, OAHI (Ontario), AIBQ (Quebec), and CAHPI-Atlantic. CAHPI's objectives include promotion of excellence within the profession and continual improvement of inspection services to the public.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

**2.1** The purpose of these National Standards of Practice is to establish a professional and uniform Standards for private, fee-paid home inspectors who are members of one of the provincial/regional organizations of CAHPI. Home Inspections performed to these National Standards of Practice are intended to provide information regarding the condition of the *systems* and *components* of the building as inspected at the time of the Home Inspection. This does NOT include building code inspections.

The building shall be compared with a building that was constructed in accordance with the generally accepted practices at the time of construction, and which has been adequately maintained such that there has been no significant loss of *functionality*.

In these Standards, the basis for comparison is a building of similar age and similar type to the subject building, and which is in reasonable condition – having been adequately maintained

over the life of the building. It follows that the building may not be in compliance with current building Standards, building regulations and the like that are applicable at the time of inspection.

These National Standards of Practice apply to inspections of part or all of a building of a maximum of (3) stories and a building area of a maximum of 600 square meters (excluding the basement), and for the following building types:

- single-family dwelling, detached, semi-detached or row house
- multi unit residential building
- residential building held in divided or undivided co ownership
- residential building occupied in part for a residential occupancy and in part for a commercial occupancy, as long as the latter use does not exceed 40% of the building's total area, excluding the basement.

### 2.2 The Inspector shall:

#### A. inspect:

1. *readily accessible, visually observable installed systems, and components* of buildings listed in these National Standards of Practice.
2. *installed systems and components* of buildings listed in these National Standards of Practice.

#### B. report:

1. on those *systems and components* installed on the building inspected which, in the professional opinion or judgement of the *inspector*, are *significantly deficient* or are near the end of their service lives.
2. a reason why, if not self-evident, the *system or component* is *significantly deficient* or near the end of its *service life*.
3. the *inspector's* recommendations to correct or monitor the reported deficiency.
4. on any *systems and components* designated for inspection in these National Standards of Practice which were present at the time of the *Home Inspection* but were not inspected and a reason they were not inspected.

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

- A.** including other inspection services in addition to those required by these

National Standards of Practice provided the *inspector* is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.

- B.** excluding *systems and components* from the inspection if requested by the client or as dictated by circumstances at the time of the inspection.

## 3. General Limitations and Exclusions

### 3.1 General Limitations:

- A.** Inspections performed in accordance with these National Standards of Practice
1. are not *technically exhaustive*.
  2. will not identify concealed conditions or latent defects.

### 3.2 General Exclusions:

- A.** The *inspector* is not required to perform any action or make any determination unless specifically stated in these National Standards of Practice, except as may be required by lawful authority.
- B.** *Inspectors* are NOT required to determine:
1. condition of *systems or components* which are not *readily accessible*.
  2. remaining life of any *system or component*.
  3. strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any *system or component*.
  4. 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. suitability of the property for any use.
  8. compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.).
  9. market value of the property or its marketability.
  10. advisability of the purchase of the property.
  11. presence of potentially hazardous plants or animals including, but not limited to wood destroying organisms or diseases harmful to humans.
  12. presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water,

- and air.
- 13. effectiveness of any *system* installed or methods utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.
- 14. operating costs of *systems* or *components*.
- 15. acoustical properties of any *system* or *component*
- 16. design adequacy with regards to location of the home, or the elements to which it is exposed.

**C. Inspectors** are NOT required to offer:

- 1. or perform any act or service contrary to law, statute or regulation.
- 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.

**D. Inspectors** are NOT required to operate:

- 1. any *system* or *component* which is *shut down* or otherwise inoperable.
- 2. any *system* or *component* which does not respond to *normal operating controls*.
- 3. shut-off valves.

**E. Inspectors** are NOT required to enter:

- 1. any area which will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be hazardous to the inspector or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components.
- 2. confined spaces.
- 3. spaces which are not readily accessible.

**F. 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. *systems* or *components* which are not *installed*.
- 3. *decorative* items.
- 4. *systems* or *components* located in areas that are not readily accessible in accordance with these National Standards of Practice.
- 5. detached structures.
- 6. common elements or common areas in multiunit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing when inspecting an individual unit(s) this includes the roof and building envelope.
- 7. and/or test and/or operate any installed fire alarm system, burglar alarm system, automatic sprinkler system or other fire protection equipment, electronic or automated

installations and any lifting equipment, elevator, freight elevator, wheelchair lift, climbing chair, escalator or others;

- 8. pools, spas and their associated safety devices, including fences.

**G. Inspectors** are NOT required to:

- 1. perform any procedure or operation which will, in the opinion of the *inspector*, likely be hazardous to the *inspector* or other persons or damage the property or its *systems* or *components*.
- 2. move suspended ceiling tiles, personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.
- 3. *dismantle* any *system* or *component*, except as explicitly required by these National Standards of Practice.

**4. Structural System**

**4.1 The Inspector Shall**

**A. inspect:**

- 1. *structural components* including visible foundation and framing.
- 2. by *probing* a sample 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.

**B. describe:**

- 1. foundation, and *report* the methods used to *inspect* the *under-floor crawl space*.
- 2. floor structure.
- 3. wall structure.
- 4. ceiling structure.
- 5. roof structure, and *report* the methods used to *inspect* the attic.

**C. report:**

- 1. on limitation of structural components not visible or accessible.

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

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

**5. Exterior**

**5.1 The inspector shall:**

**A. inspect:**

- 1. exterior wall covering, flashing and trim.
- 2. all exterior doors.
- 3. attached or *adjacent* decks, balconies, steps, porches, and their

associated railings.

- 4. eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
- 5. vegetation, grading, and surface drainage on the property when any of these are likely to adversely affect the building.
- 6. walkways, patios, and driveways leading to dwelling entrances.
- 7. landscaping structure attached or adjacent to the building when likely to adversely affect the building.
- 8. attached garage or carport.
- 9. garage doors and garage door operators for attached garages.

**B. describe the exterior wall covering(s).**

**C. report:**

- 1. the method(s) used to inspect the exterior wall elevations.

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

**A. inspect:**

- 1. screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories.
- 2. fences.
- 3. geological, geotechnical or hydrological conditions.
- 4. *recreational facilities*.
- 5. detached garages and outbuildings.
- 6. seawalls, break-walls, dykes and docks.
- 7. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

**6. Roof System**

**6.1 The inspector shall:**

**A. inspect:**

- 1. accessible roof coverings.
- 2. accessible *roof drainage systems*.
- 3. accessible flashings.
- 4. accessible skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.

**B. describe** the roof coverings.

**C. report:**

- 1. on the method(s) used to inspect the roof(s).

**6.2 The inspector is NOT required to:**

**A. inspect:**

- 1. antennae and satellite dishes.
- 2. interiors of flues or chimneys.
- 3. other *installed* accessories and items.

**7. Plumbing System**

**7.1 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.
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, distribution, drain, waste, and vent piping materials.
2. water heating equipment including the energy source.
3. location of main water and main fuel shut-off valves.

**7.2 The inspector is NOT required to:****A. inspect:**

1. clothes washing machine connections.
2. wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment.
3. water conditioning *systems*.
4. solar water heating *systems*.
5. fire and lawn sprinkler *systems*.
6. private waste disposal *systems*.

**B. determine:**

1. whether water supply and waste disposal *systems* are public or private.
2. the quantity or quality of the water supply.

**C. operate:**

1. safety valves or shut-off valves.

**8. Electrical System****8.1 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. over current protection devices.
8. a *representative number of installed* lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
9. ground fault circuit interrupters (if appropriate).

**B. describe:**

1. amperage and voltage rating of the service.
2. location of main disconnect(s) and sub panels.
3. *wiring methods*.

**C. report:**

1. on the absence of smoke detectors.

2. on the absence of carbon monoxide detectors (if applicable).
3. on the presence of arc fault circuit interrupters

**8.2 The inspector is NOT required to:****A. inspect:**

1. remote control devices unless the device is the only control device.
2. alarm *systems* and *components*.
3. voltage wiring, *systems* and *components*.
4. ancillary wiring, *systems* and *components* not a part of the primary electrical power distribution *system*.
5. to test arc fault circuit interrupters.
6. telecommunication equipment.

**B. measure:**

1. amperage, voltage, or impedance.

**9. Heating Systems****9.1 The inspector shall:****A. inspect:**

1. *visually accessible* components of *installed* heating equipment.
2. vent systems, flues, and chimneys.
3. fuel storage and fuel distribution *systems*.

**B. describe:**

1. energy source(s).
2. heating method(s) by distinguishing characteristics.
3. chimney(s) and/or venting material(s).

**C. report**

1. combustion air sources/make up air and exhaust venting methods.

**9.2 The inspector is NOT required to:****A. inspect:**

1. interiors of flues or chimneys.
2. heat exchangers.
3. auxiliary equipment.
4. solar heating *systems*.
5. fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances.
6. electronic air filters.

**B. determine:**

1. system adequacy or distribution balance.

**10. Air Conditioning Systems****10.1 The inspector shall:**

- A. inspect** the permanently *installed* central air conditioning equipment.

**B. describe:**

1. the energy source.
2. the cooling method by its distinguishing characteristics.

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

1. electronic air filters.
2. portable air conditioner(s).

**B. determine:**

1. system adequacy or distribution balance.

**11. Interior****11.1 The inspector shall:****A. inspect:**

1. walls, ceilings, and floors.
2. steps, stairways, and railings.
3. countertops and *installed* cabinets.
4. a *representative number* of doors and windows.
5. walls, doors and ceilings separating the habitable spaces and the garage.

**11.2 The inspector is NOT required to:****A. inspect:**

1. paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments.
2. carpeting.
3. window treatments.
4. central vacuum *systems*.
5. *household appliances*.
6. *recreational facilities*.

**12. Insulation****12.1 The inspector shall:****A. inspect:**

1. insulation and vapour barriers in unfinished spaces.

**B. describe:**

1. insulation and vapour barriers in unfinished spaces.

**C. report**

1. absence of insulation in unfinished spaces within the building envelope.

**12.2 The inspector is NOT required to:****A. disturb insulation or vapour barriers.****13. Mechanical and Natural Ventilation****13.1 The inspector shall:****A. inspect:**

1. ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
2. mechanical ventilation *systems*.
3. ventilation systems in rooms where moisture is generated such as kitchen, bathrooms, laundry rooms.

**B. describe:**

1. ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
2. mechanical ventilation *systems*.
3. ventilation systems in rooms where moisture is generated such as kitchen, bathrooms, laundry rooms.

## 13.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

1. determine indoor air quality.
2. determine system adequacy or distribution balance.

## Glossary

### Adjacent

Nearest in space or position; immediately adjoining without intervening space.

### Alarm Systems

Warning devices, installed or free-standing, including but not limited to; carbon monoxide detectors, flue gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment, ejector pumps and smoke alarms.

### Architectural Service

Any practice involving the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or grouping of structures and the use of space within and surrounding the structures or the design for construction, including but not specifically limited to, schematic design, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and administration of the construction contract, adequacy of design for the location and exposure to the elements.

### Automatic Safety Controls

Devices designed and installed to protect systems and components from unsafe conditions.

### Component

A part of a system.

### Confined Spaces

Is an enclosed or partially enclosed area that:

1. Is occupied by people only for the purpose of completing work.
2. Has restricted entry/exit points.
3. Could be hazardous to people entering due to:
  - a. its design, construction, location or atmosphere
  - b. the materials or substances in it, or
  - c. any other conditions

### Decorative

Ornamental; not required for the operation of the essential systems and components of a building.

### Determine

To find out, or come to a conclusion by investigation.

### Describe

To report a system or component by its type or other observed, significant characteristics to distinguish it from other systems or components.

### 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 and routine home owner maintenance.

### Engineering Service

Any professional service or creative work requiring engineering education, training, and experience and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical and engineering sciences to such professional service or creative work as

consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design and supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with the specifications and design, in conjunction with structures, buildings, machines, equipment, works or processes

### Functionality

the purpose that something is designed or expected to fulfill.

### 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 building and which describes those systems and components in accordance with these National Standards of Practice.

### Household Appliances

Kitchen, laundry, and similar appliances, whether installed or freestanding.

### Inspect

To examine readily accessible systems and components of a building in accordance with these National Standards of Practice, where applicable 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 National Standards of Practice.

### Installed

Set up or fixed in position for current use or service.

### Normal Operating Controls

Devices such as thermostats, switches or valves intended to be operated by the homeowner.

### Operate

To cause to function, turn on, to control the function of a machine, process, or system.

### Probing

Examine by touch.

### Readily Accessible

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

### Readily Openable Access Panel

A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is 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

To communicate in writing.

### Representative Number

One component per room for multiple similar interior components such as windows and electric outlets; 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.

### Sample

A representative portion selected for inspection.

### Service Life

The period during which something continues to function fully as intended.

### Significantly Deficient

Sufficiently lacking a specified quality to be worthy of attention by the inspector and/or the client.

### Shut Down

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

### Solid Fuel Burning Appliances

A hearth and fire chamber or similar prepared place in which a fire may be built and which 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 inspection is technically exhaustive when it is done by a specialist who may make extensive use of measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, and other means to develop scientific or engineering findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

### 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 which is judged to be a significant risk of personal 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.

### Visually Accessible

Able to be viewed by reaching or entering.

### Wiring Methods

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

Note - In these National Standards of Practice, redundancy in the description of the requirements, limitations and exclusions regarding the scope of the Home Inspection is provided for clarity not emphasis.