

# ASHI STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

## . 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 homes *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. over current 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 subpanels.
- 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. INTERIORS

### 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 & 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. 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.

### 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.

## ASHI STANDARDS OF PRACTICE GLOSSARY OF ITALICIZED TERMS

<p><b>Alarm Systems</b> Warning devices installed or freestanding including but not limited to smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, flue gas, and other spillage detectors, and security equipment</p> <p><b>Automatic Safety Controls</b> Devices designed and installed to protect systems and components from <i>unsafe</i> conditions</p> <p><b>Component</b> A part of a system</p> <p><b>Decorative</b> Ornamental; not required for the proper operation of the essential systems and components of a home</p> <p><b>Describe</b> To identify (in writing) a system or component by its type or other distinguishing characteristics</p> <p><b>Dismantle</b> 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</p> <p><b>Engineering</b> The application of scientific knowledge for the design, control, or use of building structures, equipment, or apparatus</p> <p><b>Further Evaluation</b> Examination and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesman, or service technician beyond that provided by the home inspection</p> <p><b>Home Inspection</b> 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</p> <p><b>Household Appliances</b> Kitchen, laundry, and similar appliances, whether installed or free-standing</p>	<p><b>Inspect</b> 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</p> <p><b>Inspector</b> A person hired to examine any system or component of a building in accordance with these Standards of Practice</p> <p><b>Installed</b> Attached such that removal requires tools</p> <p><b>Normal Operating Controls</b> Devices such as thermostats, switches, or valves intended to be operated by the homeowner</p> <p><b>Readily Accessible</b> 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</p> <p><b>Readily Openable Access Panel</b> 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</p> <p><b>Recreational Facilities</b> Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, exercise, entertainment, athletic, playground or other similar equipment, and associated accessories</p> <p><b>Report</b> Communicate in writing</p> <p><b>Representative Number</b> 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</p> <p><b>Roof Drainage Systems</b> Components used to carry water off a roof and away from a building</p>	<p><b>Shut Down</b> A state in which a system or component cannot be operated by normal operating controls</p> <p><b>Siding</b> Exterior wall covering and cladding; such as: aluminum, asphalt, brick, cement/asbestos, EIFS, stone, stucco, veneer, vinyl, wood, etc.</p> <p><b>Solid Fuel Burning Appliances</b> 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</p> <p><b>Structural Component</b> A component that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads)</p> <p><b>System</b> A combination of interacting or interdependent components, assembled to carry out one or more functions.</p> <p><b>Technically Exhaustive</b> An investigation that involves dismantling, the extensive use of advanced techniques, measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, or other means</p> <p><b>Under-floor Crawl Space</b> The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the floor</p> <p><b>Unsafe</b> 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</p> <p><b>Wiring Methods</b> Identification of electrical conductors or wires by their general type, such as non-metallic sheathed cable, armored cable, or knob and tube, etc.</p>
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