ASHI STANDARD OF PRACTICE FOR HOME INSPECTIONS

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 this document is to establish a minimum standard (Standard) for *home inspections* performed by *home inspectors* who subscribe to this Standard. *Home inspections* performed using this Standard are intended to provide the client with information about the condition of inspected *systems* and *components* at the time of the *home inspection.*

2.2 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect readily accessible,* visually observable, *installed systems* and *components* listed in this Standard.

B. provide the client with a written report, using a format and medium selected by the *inspector,* that states:

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.B.1, or items needing *further evaluation* (Per Exclusion 13.2.A.5 the *inspector* is 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.B.1, that are not self-evident,
4. those *systems* and *components* designated for inspection in this Standard that were present at the time of the *home inspection* but were not inspected and the reason(s) they were not inspected.

C. adhere to the ASHI® Code of Ethics for the Home Inspection Profession.

2.3 This Standard is not intended to limit the *inspector* from:

A. including other services or *systems* and *components* in addition to those required in Section 2.2.A.

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 or agreed to by the client.

3. STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

3.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect structural components* including the foundation and framing.

B. *describe:*

1. the methods used to inspect *under-floor crawlspaces* 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 *engineering* or architectural services or analysis.

B. offer an opinion about the adequacy of *structural systems* and *components.*

C. enter *under-floor crawlspace* areas that have less than 24 inches of vertical clearance between *components* and the ground or that have an access opening smaller than 16 inches by 24 inches.

D. traverse attic load-bearing *components* that are concealed by insulation or by other materials.

4. EXTERIOR

4.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect:*

1. *wall coverings,* flashing, and trim.
2. exterior doors.
3. attached and 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 and entryway walkways, patios, and driveways.

B. *describe wall coverings.*

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

A. screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories.

B. fences, boundary walls, and similar structures.

C. geological and 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. antennas.

B. interiors of vent *systems,* flues, and 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 fixtures and faucets.
2. interior drain, waste, and vent *systems* including fixtures.
3. water heating equipment and hot water supply *systems*.
4. vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys.
5. fuel storage and fuel distribution *systems*.
6. sewage ejectors, sump pumps, and related piping.

B. *describe:*

1. interior 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 vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
3. wells, well pumps, and water storage related equipment.
4. water conditioning *systems*.
5. solar, geothermal, and other renewable energy water heating *systems*.
6. manual and automatic fire extinguishing and sprinkler *systems* and landscape irrigation *systems*.
7. septic and other sewage disposal *systems*.

B. *determine:*

1. whether water supply and sewage disposal are public or private.
2. water quality.
3. the adequacy of combustion air *components.*

C. measure water supply flow and pressure, and well water quantity.

D. fill shower pans and fixtures to test for leaks.

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 subpanels.
6. conductors.
7. overcurrent protection devices.
8. a *representative number* of installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
9. ground fault circuit interrupters and arc fault circuit interrupters.

B. *describe:*

1. amperage rating of the service.
2. location of main disconnect(s) and subpanels.
3. presence or absence of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.
4. the predominant branch circuit wiring method.

7.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect*:

1. remote control devices.
2. or test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, security *systems*, and other signaling and warning devices.
3. low voltage wiring *systems* and *components*.
4. ancillary wiring *systems* and *components* not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system.
5. solar, geothermal, wind, and other renewable energy *systems*.

B. measure amperage, voltage, and impedance.

C. determine the age and type of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.

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.
3. distribution systems.

C. *describe:*

1. energy source(s).
2. heating *systems*.

8.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect:*

1. interiors of vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
2. heat exchangers.
3. humidifiers and dehumidifiers.
4. electric air cleaning and sanitizing devices.
5. heating *systems* using ground-source, water-source, solar, and renewable energy technologies.
6. heat-recovery and similar whole-house mechanical ventilation *systems*.

B. *determine:*

1. heat supply adequacy and distribution balance.
2. the adequacy of combustion air *components*.

9. AIR CONDITIONING

9.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. open *readily openable access panels.*

B. *inspect:*

1. central and permanently installed cooling equipment.
2. distribution *systems*.

C. *describe:*

1. energy source(s).
2. cooling *systems*.

9.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect* electric air cleaning and sanitizing devices.

B. determine cooling supply adequacy and distribution balance.

C. *inspect* cooling units that are not permanently *installed* or that are *installed* in windows.

D. *inspect* cooling *systems* using ground-source, water-source, solar, and renewable energy technologies.

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 vehicle doors and garage vehicle door operators.

F. *installed* ovens, ranges, surface cooking appliances, microwave ovens, dishwashing machines, and food waste grinders by *using normal operating controls* to activate the primary function.

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

A. paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments.

B. floor coverings.

C. window treatments.

D. coatings on and the hermetic seals between panes of window glass.

E. central vacuum *systems*.

F. *recreational facilities*.

G. *installed* and free-standing kitchen and laundry appliances not listed in Section 10.1.F.

H. appliance thermostats including their calibration, adequacy of heating elements, self cleaning oven cycles, indicator lights, door seals, timers, clocks, timed features, and other specialized features of the appliance.

I. operate, or confirm the operation of every control and feature of an inspected appliance.

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. kitchen, bathroom, laundry, and similar exhaust *systems*.
4. clothes dryer exhaust *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.

12. FIREPLACES AND FUEL-BURNING APPLIANCES

12.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect:*

1. fuel-burning fireplaces, stoves, and fireplace inserts.
2. fuel-burning accessories *installed* in fireplaces.
3. chimneys and vent *systems*.

B. *describe systems* and *components* listed in 12.1.A.1 and .2.

12.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect:*

1. interiors of vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
2. fire screens and doors.
3. seals and gaskets.
4. automatic fuel feed devices.
5. mantles and fireplace surrounds.
6. combustion air *components* and to determine their adequacy.
7. heat distribution assists (gravity fed and fan assisted).
8. fuel-burning fireplaces and appliances located outside the *inspected* structures.

B. determine draft characteristics.

C. 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 actions, or to make determinations, or to make recommendations not specifically stated in this Standard.

B. *Inspections* performed using this Standard:

1. are not *technically exhaustive*.
2. are not required to identify and to report:
   a. concealed conditions, latent defects, consequential damages, and
   b. cosmetic imperfections that do not significantly affect a *component's* performance of its intended function.

C. This Standard applies to buildings with four or fewer dwelling units and their attached and detached garages and carports.

D. This Standard shall not limit or prevent the inspector from meeting state statutes which license professional home inspection and home inspectors.

E. Redundancy in the description of the requirements, limitations, and exclusions regarding the scope of the *home inspection* is provided for emphasis only.

13.2 General exclusions

A. The *inspector* is NOT required to determine:

1. the condition of *systems* and *components* that are not *readily accessible*.
2. the remaining life expectancy of *systems* and *components*.
3. the strength, adequacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of *systems* and *components*.
4. the causes of conditions and deficiencies.
5. methods, materials, and costs of corrections.
6. future conditions including but not limited to failure of *systems* and *components*.
7. the suitability of the property for specialized uses.

