

**ASHI's HOME INSPECTION STANDARD OF PRACTICE  
FOR THE HOME INSPECTION PROFESSION**

**APPROVED CHANGES AS OF 1/8/26**

**Please note that the newly approved changes are not yet effective. Additional information will be provided regarding the implementation date. The leadership team will work through the details of this process and communicate next steps, timelines and guidance as they become available**

- The deck and balcony items are now in its own section “Deck and Balcony” (new section 5) for clarity and to increase inspector awareness of the many issues pertaining to inspecting decks and balconies.
- The individual sections for “Heating” and “Air Conditioning” are now combined into one new combined section (“Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)” – section 9) to eliminate duplicative items within the current sections and for industry uniformity of terminology.
- Attached and detached garages are now its own “Garage and Carport” section (section 14) for clarity and simplicity when determining what items should be inspected. The new section 14 identifies those components that are specifically found in a garage and carport. For those other systems and components not specifically addressed within the new section 14 but pertain to or are a part of a garage or carport, the other applicable sections of the Standard should be followed as contained in Structure, Exterior, Roofing, Plumbing, Electrical, HVAC, Interior, Insulation, Venting Systems, etc.
- “Insulation” and “Ventilation” are now separate sections (“Insulation” – section 11 and “Ventilation” – section 12) for clarity.
- A new section “Use of Specialized Tools and Equipment” has been added as section 16 for risk management purposes.
- Definitions has been expanded to provide better understanding of terms used in the Standard and for risk management.

The final document will be reviewed for grammatical and formatting changes prior to implementation.

**THE STANDARD OF PRACTICE FOR HOME INSPECTIONS  
AND  
CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE HOME INSPECTION PROFESSION**



**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS**

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## Preface

### **HOME INSPECTION**

Home inspections were being performed in the mid-1950s and, by the early 1970s, were considered by many consumers to be essential to a real estate transaction. The escalating demand was due to a growing desire by consumers to learn about the condition of a house prior to purchase. Meeting the expectations of consumers required a unique discipline, distinct from construction, engineering, architecture, or municipal building inspection. As such, home inspection requires its own set of professional guidelines and qualifications. The American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) was formed in 1976 and established the ASHI Standard of Practice for Home Inspections and Code of Ethics to help buyers and sellers make real estate transaction decisions based on information about the condition of their current or prospective house.

### **American Society of Home Inspectors**

As the oldest and most respected organization of home inspectors in North America, ASHI takes pride in its position of leadership. Its Membership works to build public awareness of home inspections and to enhance the technical and ethical performance of home inspectors.

### **Standard of Practice for Home Inspections**

The ASHI Standard of Practice for Home Inspections guides home inspectors in the performance of their inspections. Subject to regular review, the Standard of Practice for Home Inspections reflects information gained through surveys of conditions in the field and of the consumers’ interests and concerns. Vigilance has elevated ASHI’s Standard of Practice for Home Inspections so that today it is the most widely accepted home inspection guideline and is recognized by many government and professional groups as the definitive standard for professional performance.

### **Code of Ethics for the Home Inspection Profession**

ASHI’s Code of Ethics stresses the home inspector’s responsibility to report the results of the inspection in a fair, impartial and professional manner, avoiding conflicts of interest.

### **ASHI Membership**

Selecting the right home inspector can be as important as finding the right home. ASHI Certified Inspectors have performed no fewer than 250 fee-paid inspections in accordance with the ASHI Standard of Practice for Home Inspections. They have passed written examinations testing their knowledge of residential construction, defect recognition, inspection techniques, and report-writing, as well as ASHI’s Standard of Practice for Home Inspections and Code of Ethics. Membership in the American Society of Home Inspectors is well-earned and maintained only through meeting requirements for continuing education.

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# ASHI STANDARD OF PRACTICE FOR HOME INSPECTIONS

## 1. 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' *home inspection* services to the public.

## 2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 While the ASHI Standards of Practice establish obligations that may be different than those mandated by law, in any instance where the ASHI Standards of Practice and the law conflict, the obligations of the law take precedence. The ASHI Standards of Practice are not intended to discourage or limit additional or more detailed inspections.

2.2 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* of the *residential building* as observed at the time of the *home inspection*.

2.3 The scope of this Standard applies to a *Residential Building* defined as a structure consisting of from one to four family dwelling units and their attached or detached garages or carports but excluding the common elements and areas in multiple unit housing such as condominiums and cooperative housing.

### 2.4 The *Inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect* the *readily accessible*, visually observable, *installed systems* and *components* specified in this Standard.
- B. provide the *client* with a written report, using a format and medium selected by the *inspector*, that:

1. *describes* the *readily accessible*, visually observable, *installed systems* and *components* specified in this Standard.
  2. states the condition of those *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard that, in the professional judgment of the *Inspector*, are not functioning properly, *significantly deficient*, *unsafe*, or are near, at, or beyond the end of their *normal useful lives*;
  3. states the recommendations to repair or replace, or to obtain *further evaluation* and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesman or service technician, regarding the *systems* or *components* identified in 2.4.B.2.
  4. states the reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the *significantly deficient* and *unsafe systems* and *components* reported in 2.4.B.2;
  5. states those *systems* and *components* specified 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.

### 2.5 This Standard is NOT intended to limit the *Inspector* from:

- A. Including *additional inspection services* or other services or *systems* and *components* in addition to those specified in this Standard.
- 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. STRUCTURE

### 3.1 The *Inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible structural components* including the foundation and framing.
- B. *describe* in writing the type and material of the:
  1. foundation.

2. floor structure:
    - a. subfloor;
    - b. floor joists;
    - c. beams/girders;
    - d. columns/piers.
  3. wall structure.
  4. ceiling structure.
  5. roof structure:
    - a. sheathing/decking;
    - b. framing.
- C. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:
1. foundation.
  2. floor structure:
    - a. subfloor;
    - b. floor joists;
    - c. beams/girders;
    - d. columns/piers.
  3. wall structure.
  4. ceiling structure.
  5. roof structure:
    - a. sheathing/decking;
    - b. framing.
- D. state in writing the location of the access to and methods used to inspect *under-floor crawlspaces* and *attics*.

**3.2 The Inspector is NOT required to:**

- A. provide *engineering* or *architectural services* or analysis, including calculations regarding roof loading by any roof structures or environmental conditions.
- B. offer an opinion about the adequacy of *structural systems* and *components*.
- C. enter *under-floor crawl space* areas and *attics* that are not *readily accessible* or have less than 30 inches of vertical clearance and 30 inches of horizontal clearance between *components* and the ground or that have an access opening smaller than 18 inches by 24 inches.
- D. traverse *attic load bearing components* that are concealed by insulation or by other materials.
- E. walk on unfloored sections of *attics*.
- F. inspect footings.

**4. EXTERIOR**

**4.1 The Inspector shall:**

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  1. wall coverings (siding), flashing and trim.
  2. exterior doors including basement and crawl space accesses, and windows.
  3. attached and adjacent stoops, steps, ramps, porches, and their associated guards and handrails.
  4. eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from ground level.
  5. vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the *residential building*.
  6. walkways, patios, and driveways.
- B. *describe* in writing the type and material of the:
  1. wall coverings (siding).
- C. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:
  1. wall coverings (siding), flashing, and trim.
  2. exterior doors including basement and crawl space accesses, and windows.
  3. attached and adjacent stoops, steps, ramps, porches, and their associated guards and handrails, eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
  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 residential building.
  6. walkways, patios, and driveways.

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

- A. storm doors, storm windows, safety glazing, 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, breakwalls, bulkheads and docks.
- G. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

- H. sidewalks, whether public or private, adjacent to the street.

## 5. DECK AND BALCONY

### 5.1 The Inspector shall:

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  1. framing including ledger boards, joists, and beams.
  2. supporting members.
  3. footings and piers.
  4. walking surface.
  5. guards and handrails.
  6. stairs and landings.
- B. *describe* in writing the type and material of the:
  1. framing.
  2. walking surface.
  3. guards and handrails.
- C. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:
  1. framing.
  2. walking surface.
  3. guards and handrails.

### 5.2 The Inspector is NOT required to:

- A. determine adequacy and load capacity of framing, footings, and piers.
- B. enter the underside of a deck that has less than 30 inches of vertical clearance and 30 inches of horizontal clearance between components and the ground or that has an access opening smaller than 18 inches by 24 inches or inspect the underside of a deck or balcony that is more than 14 feet above grade level.

## 6. ROOFING

### 6.1 The Inspector shall:

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  1. roofing materials.
  2. *roof drainage systems*.
  3. flashing.
  4. skylights, chimneys, and other roof penetrations.
- B. *describe* in writing the type and material of the roofing.

- C. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:

1. roofing.
2. *roof drainage systems*.
3. flashing.

- D. state in writing the method(s) used to *inspect* the roofing.

### 6.2 The Inspector is NOT required to *inspect*:

- A. antennas, satellite dishes, de-icing equipment, lightning arrestors, or similar attachments.
- B. interiors of vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
- C. other *installed* accessories.

### 6.3 The Inspector is NOT required to walk on roofs.

## 7. PLUMBING

### 7.1 The Inspector shall:

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  1. interior water service and predominant distribution *systems* including fixtures and faucets.
  2. predominant interior drain, waste and vent *systems* including fixtures.
  3. water heating equipment and hot water supply *systems*.
  4. vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys.
  5. above ground fuel storage and fuel distribution *systems*.
  6. sewage ejectors, sump pumps and related piping.
  7. *functional flow* and *functional drainage* of interior fixtures.
- B. *describe* in writing the:
  1. predominant type and material of interior water service and distribution *systems*, drain, waste and vent pipes.
  2. water heating equipment, including energy source(s).
- C. state in writing the location of the:
  - a. main water service pipe shutoff valve;
  - b. main fuel supply shutoff valve.

D. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:

1. interior water service and distribution *systems*, drain, waste and vent pipes.
2. water heating equipment.
3. interior fuel storage and fuel distribution *system*.

**7.2 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, pressure pumps, bladder tanks, water storage tanks, water filters, and related well or water storage tank equipment and *components*.
4. water conditioning *systems*.
5. manual and automatic fire extinguishing and sprinkler *systems*.
6. lawn and landscape irrigation *systems*.
7. septic and other sewage disposal or wastewater treatment *systems*.
8. underground fuel storage tanks or supply *systems*.
9. or test for gas or fuel leaks or indications of gas or fuel leaks.

B. *determine*:

1. whether water supply and sewage disposal are public or private.
2. water quality.
3. the adequacy of combustion air *components*.
4. The type of geothermal *system*.
5. the effectiveness of:
  - a. drain stoppers;
  - b. fixture overflow protection;
  - c. sewage ejectors;
  - d. sump pumps;
  - e. circulator pumps.
6. the function or effectiveness of:
  - a. condensate control and disposal *systems* or *components*;
  - b. thermal expansion control devices;
  - c. backflow preventers;

- d. anti-siphon devices;
- e. water circulation *system*;
- f. anti-scald devices;
- g. relief valves such as temperature and pressure relief (T&P) valves, pressure relief valves, temperature relief valves, and pressure reducing valves.

7. a geothermal *system*.
8. or measure water supply flow and pressure and well water quantity.
9. the adequacy of whirlpool or spa design features.
10. whether there are sufficient cleanouts for effective drain cleaning.
11. the presence or condition of polybutylene (PB), polyethylene (PE), or similar plastic piping and *components*.

C. fill shower pans and fixtures, tub and shower surrounds or enclosures to test for leakage or functional overflow protection.

D. remove the cover on a tankless water heater cabinet.

E. test, operate, open or close:

1. relief valves.
2. safety controls.
3. manual stop valves.
4. check valves.
5. control valves.

F. evaluate the plumbing system for the proper design or sizing of any water, drain, waste or vent components including, but not limited to pipes or fixtures, or compliance with conservation, energy or standards.

G. evaluate or determine the time to obtain hot water at any fixture or perform testing of any kind to water heater elements.

**8. ELECTRICAL**

**8.1 The Inspector shall:**

A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:

1. service drop.
2. service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways.
3. service equipment and main disconnects.
4. service bonding and grounding.
5. interior *components* of load centers (service panels and subpanels).

6. conductors.
  7. overcurrent protection devices (fuses and circuit breakers).
  8. *representative number* of installed lighting fixtures, switches and receptacles, ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) when possible.
- B. *describe* in writing the:
1. amperage and voltage rating of the service.
  2. location of main disconnect(s) and load centers (service panels and subpanels).
  3. presence or absence of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms/detectors.
  4. type and material of the predominant *branch circuit* wire.
  5. type of overcurrent protection devices (fuses and circuit breakers).
- C. state in writing the presence, where visible and if readily identifiable, of:
1. solid conductor aluminum *branch circuit* wiring.
  2. knob and tube *branch circuit* wiring.
- D. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:
1. service drop.
  2. service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways.
  3. service equipment and main disconnects.
  4. service bonding and grounding.
  5. interior *components* of load centers (service panels and subpanels).
  6. conductors.
  7. overcurrent protection devices (fuses and circuit breakers).
  8. a *representative number* of installed lighting fixtures, switches and receptacles, ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) when possible.
- c. lightning arrestor *systems*;
  - d. de-icing *systems*;
  - e. EV charging equipment and related components;
  - f. stand-by power generation and storage *systems*, transfer switching and related components;
  - g. whole house surge protection device(s), smart home devices and/or *systems*, communication, and automation.
- B. measure amperage, voltage and impedance.
- C. determine the age and type of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms/detectors.
- D. insert any tool, probe or testing device inside electrical panels.
- E. *dismantle* any electrical device or control other than to remove the covers of load centers (service panels and subpanels).
- F. *activate* any electrical systems or *branch circuits* that are not energized.
- G. determine the accuracy of overcurrent protection device labeling.

## 9. HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC)

### 9.1. The *Inspector* shall:

- A. open *readily openable access panels*
- B. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  1. *permanently installed heating and cooling systems*.
  2. vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys.
  3. distribution *systems*.
  4. whole house fans.
- C. *describe* in writing the:
  1. type of *permanently installed heating and cooling system* (i.e., forced air furnace, heat pump, steam boiler, hot water boiler, geothermal, hot water hybrid, ductless mini-split, split-system, etc.).
  2. energy source(s).
  3. vent *systems*, flues and chimneys.
  4. distribution *systems*.
- D. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:

### 8.2 The *Inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect*:
  1. remote control devices.
  2. or test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms/detectors, security *systems* and other signaling and warning devices.
  3. identify, or disclose:
    - a. low voltage wiring *systems* and *components*;
    - b. ancillary wiring *systems* and *components* not a part of the primary electrical power distribution *system*;

1. *permanently installed heating and cooling systems.*
2. *vent systems, flues, and chimneys.*
3. *distribution systems.*
4. *whole house fans.*
2. *permanently installed household appliances (i.e. ovens, ranges, surface cooking appliances, microwave ovens, dishwashing machines and food waste disposers) by using normal operating controls to activate the primary function.*

**9.2 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 and cooling systems units that are not permanently installed or that are installed in windows.*
6. *automatic venting systems (i.e. HVAC exhaust fans).*
7. *condensate control and disposal.*
8. *automatic setbacks, timers, programs or clocks.*
9. *mechanical ventilation systems such as:*
  - a. *heat recovery ventilators (HRVs).*
  - b. *energy recovery ventilators (ERVs).*
  - c. *smart ventilation systems.*
10. *dehumidification systems.*

B. *determine:*

1. *heating and cooling supply adequacy and distribution balance.*
2. *the adequacy of combustion air components.*
3. *the type of geothermal system.*
4. *thermostat calibration.*

C. *operate HVAC equipment when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause damage to the system.*

C. *describe in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following systems and components specified in this Standard:*

1. *walls, ceilings and floors.*
2. *ramps, steps, stairways, landings, guards and handrails.*
3. *countertops and a representative number of installed kitchen wall cabinets.*
4. *permanently installed ovens, ranges, surface cooking appliances, microwave ovens, dishwashing machines and food waste disposers.*

**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/or the hermetic seals between panes of window glass.*
- E. *safety glazing.*
- F. *central vacuum systems.*
- G. *recreational facilities.*
- H. *installed and free-standing kitchen and laundry appliances not listed in Section 10.1.B.2.*
- I. *household appliance thermostats including their calibration, adequacy of heating elements, self-cleaning oven cycles, indicator lights, door seals, timers, clocks, timed features, other specialized features of the household appliance and microwave radiation leakage.*
- J. *operate, or confirm the operation of every control and feature of an inspected appliance.*

**10. INTERIOR**

**10.1 The Inspector shall:**

A. *inspect the visible and accessible:*

1. *walls, ceilings and floors.*
2. *ramps, steps, stairways, landings, guards and handrails.*
3. *countertops and a representative number of installed cabinets.*

B. *inspect:*

1. *a representative number of doors and windows.*

**10.3 The Inspector is NOT required to:**

- A. *move suspended ceiling tiles or panels.*
- B. *move personal possessions, furniture, stored items, window treatments, or any coverings such as carpets or rugs.*
- C. *operate any security bar release and opening mechanisms, whether interior or exterior.*

## 11. INSULATION

### 11.1 The *Inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  - 1. insulation and vapor retarders in *crawl spaces*, foundation areas and unfinished *attic* spaces.
- B. state in writing the presence or absence of:
  - 1. insulation and vapor retarders in *crawl spaces*, foundation areas and unfinished *attic* spaces at conditioned surfaces.
  - 2. a radiant barrier.
- C. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:
  - 1. insulation and vapor retarders in *crawl spaces*, foundation areas and unfinished *attic* spaces.

### 11.2 The *Inspector* is **NOT** required to:

- A. disturb or move insulation or vapor retarders.
- B. break or otherwise damage the surface finish or weather seal on or around *attic* and *crawl space* access panels or covers.
- C. identify the composition or R-value of insulation.

## 12. VENTING SYSTEMS

### 12.1 The *Inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  - 1. ventilation in *crawl spaces*, foundation areas and unfinished *attic* spaces.
  - 2. mechanical or similar exhaust *systems* for the kitchen(s), bathroom(s) and laundry areas.
  - 3. clothes dryer exhaust *systems*.
- B. state in writing the presence or absence of:
  - 1. ventilation in *crawl spaces*, foundation areas and unfinished *attic* spaces.
- C. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:
  - 1. ventilation in *crawl spaces*, foundation areas and unfinished *attic* spaces.
  - 2. mechanical or similar exhaust *systems* for the kitchen(s), bathroom(s) and laundry areas.
  - 3. clothes dryer exhaust *systems*.

### 12.2 The *Inspector* is **NOT** required to:

- A. break or otherwise damage the surface finish or weather seal on or around *attic* and *crawl space* access panels or covers.
- B. *activate* thermostatically operated or solar powered fans.
- C. determine the adequacy of ventilation in *attics* and *crawl spaces*.
- D. determine the adequacy of mechanical or similar exhaust *systems* for the kitchen(s), bathroom(s) and laundry areas or clothes dryer exhaust *systems*.

## 13. FIREPLACES AND FUEL-BURNING APPLIANCES

### 13.1 The *Inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  - 1. fuel-burning fireplaces, stoves, and fireplace inserts.
  - 2. fuel-burning accessories *installed* in fireplaces.
  - 3. chimneys and vent *systems*.
  - 4. *permanently installed* electric fireplaces.
  - 5. mantle, hearth, and fireplace surround.
- B. *describe* in writing the type and material of:
  - 1. fuel-burning fireplaces, stoves, and fireplace inserts.
  - 2. fuel-burning accessories *installed* in fireplaces.
  - 3. chimneys and vent *systems*.
- C. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the following *systems* and *components* specified in this Standard:
  - 1. fuel-burning fireplaces, stoves, and fireplace inserts.
  - 2. fuel-burning accessories *installed* in fireplaces.
  - 3. chimneys and vent *systems*.
  - 4. *permanently installed* electric fireplaces.
  - 5. mantles, hearth, and fireplace surround.

### 13.2 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. combustion air *components* and to determine their adequacy.
  - 6. heat distribution assists (gravity fed and fan assisted).

7. fuel-burning fireplaces and appliances located outside the *inspected* structures.
- B. *operate*, or confirm the operation of every control and feature of *permanently installed* fireplaces other than their primary functionality.
- C. determine draft characteristics.
- D. move fireplace inserts and stoves or firebox contents.
- E. perform any type of chimney inspection, such as a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 211 Level I, II or III inspection.

## 14. GARAGE AND CARPORT

### 14.1 The *Inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect* the visible and *accessible*:
  1. *systems and components* specified in the applicable sections of this Standard where they exist, such as Structure, Exterior, Roofing, Plumbing, Electrical, HVAC, Interior, Insulation, Venting Systems, etc.
- B. *inspect*:
  1. a *representative number* of doors and windows.
  2. garage vehicle doors including automatic door openers and entrapment protection mechanisms, excluding remote control devices.
- C. *describe* in writing the condition, recommendations and explanations, according to Sections 2.4.B.2-5, of the *systems and components* specified in the applicable sections of this Standard where they exist.

### 14.2 The *Inspector* is **NOT** required to:

- A. inspect or test vehicle door remote control devices.
- B. move suspended ceiling tiles or panels.
- C. move personal possessions, furniture, stored items, window treatments, or any coverings such as carpets or rugs.

## 15. GENERAL LIMITATION AND EXCLUSIONS

### 15.1 General limitations

- A. The *inspector* is **NOT** required to perform any actions, or to make determinations or 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 inspectors*.
- E. Redundancy in the description of the requirements, limitations, and exclusions regarding the scope of the *home inspection* is provided for emphasis only.

### 15.2 General exclusions

- A. The *Inspector* is **NOT** required to determine:
  1. the condition of *systems and components* that are not *readily accessible*.
  2. the age, life expectancy or remaining useful life of *systems and components*.
  3. the strength, adequacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of *systems and components*.
  4. the causes of any condition or deficiency.
  5. methods, materials and costs of corrections.
  6. the suitability of the property for any specialized uses.
  7. compliance of *systems and components* with past and present requirements, guidelines, codes, standards, regulations, laws, ordinances, specifications, installation and maintenance instructions, use and care guides, recall notices or advisories, etc.
  8. the market value of the property and its marketability.
  9. the advisability of purchasing the property.
  10. the presence of wood destroying insects and organisms.
  11. the presence of potentially hazardous plants, animals or diseases or the presence of any suspected hazardous substances or adverse conditions such as environmental hazards, animal urine or feces, mold, fungus, allergens, toxins, carcinogens, asbestos, electromagnetic radiation, noise, radioactive substances, and contaminants in building materials, soil, water, and air.
  12. operating costs of *systems and components*.
  13. acoustical properties of *systems and components*.
  14. soil conditions relating to seismic, geotechnical or hydrologic specialties.
  15. whether items, materials, conditions and *components* are subject to recall, controversy,

- litigation, product liability, and other adverse claims and conditions.
16. the method of construction such as but not limited to site-built, modular, manufactured, balloon or platform framed, etc.
  17. property boundary lines or encroachments.
  18. the insurability of the property.
  19. future conditions that may occur including the failure of *systems* and *components* including consequential damage.
- B. The *Inspector* is **NOT** required to offer:
1. or to perform acts or services contrary to law or to government regulations.
  2. or to perform *architectural, engineering, contracting, or surveying* services or to confirm or to evaluate such services performed by others.
  3. or to perform trades or professional services other than *home inspection*.
  4. warranties or guarantees.
- C. The *Inspector* is **NOT** required to *operate*:
1. *systems* and *components* that are shut down or otherwise inoperable.
  2. *systems* and *components* that do not respond to *normal operating controls*.
  3. shut-off valves and manual stop valves.
  4. *automatic safety controls*.
  5. remote-controlled devices via Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, RF, or other communication protocols and automations.
- D. The *Inspector* is **NOT** required to:
1. enter areas that will, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, likely be dangerous to the *inspector* or to other persons, or to damage the property or its *systems* and *components*.
  2. perform procedures or operations that will, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, likely be dangerous to the *inspector* or to other persons, or to damage the property or its *systems* or *components*.
  3. *describe* or report on *systems* and *components* that are not included in this Standard and that were not *inspected*.
  4. move personal property, stored items, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, and debris.
  5. *dismantle systems* and *components*, except as explicitly required by this Standard.
  6. reset, reprogram, or otherwise adjust devices, *systems*, and *components* affected by *inspection* required by this Standard.
7. ignite or extinguish fires, pilot lights, burners, and other open flames that require manual ignition.
  8. probe *components* where deterioration is visible and suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is not required when, in the opinion of the *Inspector*, probing would only further damage any area already identified as defective or where no deterioration is visible or presumed to exist.
  9. turn on any utilities such as the electric, water or gas.
  10. identify the presence of, or determine the effectiveness of, any *system installed* or method utilized to control or remove subsurface water penetration and storm drainage or suspected potentially hazardous substances.
  11. anticipate future events or conditions, including but not limited to:
    - a. decay, deterioration, or damage that may occur after the inspection;
    - b. deficiencies from abuse, misuse or lack of use;
    - c. changes in performance of any component or system due to changes in use or occupancy;
    - d. the consequences of the inspection or its effects on *clients*;
    - e. common household accidents, personal injury, or death;
    - f. water penetration;
    - g. the failure or future performance of any *system* or *component*.
- E. The *Inspector* is **NOT** required to *inspect*:
1. underground items including, but not limited to, wells, cisterns, underground storage tanks and other underground indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active.
  2. interior and exterior subsurface drainage *systems*.
  3. items that are not *permanently installed*.
  4. *installed decorative* items.
  5. items in areas that are not entered in accordance with 3.2.C and 15.2.D.1.
  6. detached structures other than garages and carports.
  7. common elements or areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominiums and cooperative housing.
  8. every occurrence of multiple similar *components*.
  9. outdoor cooking appliances, fireplaces, and fire pits.

10. bridges.
11. elevators, lifts, cable-hoisted fixtures and devices.
12. swimming pools, spas, hot tubs, ponds, water features and their related components.
13. phone and cable lines, antennas and satellite dishes.
14. photovoltaic (solar), geothermal, wind and other renewable energy *systems*.
15. *alarm systems* or warning devices, installed or free-standing, including but not limited to flue gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment, ejector pumps, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms/detectors.

## 16. USE OF TOOLS AND SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

**16.1** A *home inspector* may use reasonable and appropriate tools or equipment that, in the *Inspector's* professional judgment, the *Inspector* believes is necessary to adequately perform a *home inspection*.

**16.2** A *home inspector* is not required to:

- A. use specialized equipment, instruments or testing devices, such as but not limited to:
  1. amp meters;
  2. pressure gauges;
  3. moisture meters;
  4. combustible gas or carbon monoxide detection equipment and similar equipment;
  5. thermal imaging equipment (i.e. infrared cameras);
  6. environmental testing equipment and devices;
  7. elevation determination devices;
  8. ladders capable of reaching surfaces over one story above ground surface;
  9. cameras or other equipment used to inspect the interior of a drain or sewer line;
  10. small unmanned aircraft systems (drones).

## 17 DEFINITIONS OF ITALICIZED TERMS

**17.1** This section provides definitions and descriptions or terms for the words used in this Standard. These are an integral part of this Standard and are critical to an understanding of this Standard and its use.

- A. Scope.** Unless otherwise expressly stated, the following terms shall, for the purposes of this Standard, have the meanings shown in this section.
- B. Terms not defined.** Where terms are not defined through the methods authorized by this section, such terms shall have ordinarily accepted meanings such as the context implies.

### **Accessible (see Readily Accessible)**

**Activate** means the act of turning on, supplying power, or otherwise enabling systems, equipment, or devices to become active by normal operating controls.

**Additional Inspection Services** means a specialized inspection by a professional trained to evaluate a specific element of the property that is outside of the scope of home inspection and may require additional licenses, certification, or training.

**Architectural Service** means any practice involving the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or groupings of structures and the use of space within and surrounding the structures or the design for construction, including but not specifically limited to, services that an architect typically provides including concept design, development, preparation of construction documents and construction administration.

**Attic** means the unfinished space between the ceiling joists or truss chords of the top floor and the underside of the roof framing.

**Automatic Safety Controls** means devices designed and installed to protect *systems* and *components* from unsafe conditions.

**Basement/Cellar** means the bottom full story of a residential building below the first floor. A *basement* may be partially or completely below grade.

**Bonding** means connecting metallic systems to establish electrical continuity and conductivity.

**Branch Circuit** means the circuit conductors (wire) between the final overcurrent device protecting the circuit and the outlet(s).

**Client** means any current or prospective homeowner who engages, or seeks to engage, the services of a *home inspector* for the purpose of obtaining an inspection of, and written report regarding, the condition of a *residential building*.

**Component** means a part of a *system*.

**Cooling System** means a *permanently installed* climate-controlled *system* to cool all or a portion of the *residential building*.

**Cosmetic** means blemishes or imperfections that affect the appearance or aesthetics and do not interfere with the functionality of the *component* or *system*.

**Crawl Space** means in a residential building or portion of a residential building, the accessible space between the surface of the ground and the bottom of the first floor joists, with less-than-normal headroom. Any interior space of limited height designed to permit access to components such as ductwork, wiring, and pipe fittings (see also Under-floor Crawl Space).

**Decorative** means not required for the proper operation of the essential *systems* and *components* of a home.

**Describe** means to state in writing a *system* and/or *component* by its type or other observed significant characteristics to distinguish it from other similar *systems* or *components*.

**Dismantle** means to take apart or remove *components*, devices, or pieces of equipment that would not be taken apart or removed by a homeowner in the course of normal maintenance, except as may be required within this Standard.

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

**Engineering Service** means 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.

**Functional Drainage** means a plumbing drain that empties at a rate equal to or greater than the supply water flow to the plumbing fixture.

**Functional Flow** means sufficient water flow to provide supply to the highest and/or furthest fixture from the main water source when a single intermediate fixture is operated simultaneously with uninterrupted flow.

**Further Evaluation** means examination and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesman, or service technician beyond that provided by a *home inspection*.

**Heating System** means a *permanently installed system* to heat all or a portion of the *residential building*.

**Home Inspection** means—a limited visual *non-invasive* examination of the *readily accessible systems* and *components* of a *residential building* as defined in this Standard, for compensation and performed without moving personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.

**Home Inspector** means an individual who performs a *Home Inspection* for compensation.

**Inspect** means the process of examining *readily accessible systems* and *components* by applying this Standard, operating *normal operating controls* and opening *readily openable access panels*.

**Inspection Report** or “**Home Inspection Report**” means a written document of the observations in accordance with Section 2.4.B.1-5 as of the date and time of the home inspection resulting from the limited visual examination/inspection of the property which meets this Standard.

**Inspector (see Home Inspector)**

**Installed** means attached such that removal requires tools.

**Load Bearing** means those elements that support both dead and live loads (i.e. foundations, floors, walls, ceilings, and roof framing).

**Non-Invasive** means not causing disturbance or damage upon inspection.

**Normal Operating Controls** means devices such as thermostats, switches and valves intended to be operated by the homeowner.

**Normal Use** mean *systems and components* used in accordance with the instruction manual included with the product and ordinary use under typical daily operations including routine maintenance activities performed by homeowners and service technicians.

**Normal Useful Life-** means a subjective estimate based upon observations, and/or average estimates of similar items, *systems*, or *components*, that an item, *system*, or *component*, is estimated to be able to function in accordance with its intended purpose before warranting replacement.

**Operate** means to *activate* equipment using normal operating controls.

**Permanently Installed** means an item, *system* or *component* designed or intended to remain where originally placed, not easily moved and which is attached, connected, or set in place for use so as to render moving or removing the item, *system*, or *component* impossible without the use of tools or equipment.

**Readily Accessible** means visually observable and able to be examined: without requiring destructive measures; without risk to the *Inspector* or others; without risk of damage to any item of personal or real property; without requiring the *Inspector* to move, remove, damage, or disturb any wall, floor, ceiling, window coverings, any interior or exterior claddings, finish treatments; without requiring the *Inspector* to move, remove, damage, disturb, climb upon, climb over, or straddle any item of personal property; without requiring the *Inspector* to move, remove, damage, or disturb any landscape elements; without interrupting the business of occupants and without requiring disassembly or the use of any special protective clothing or special tools or equipment.

**Readily Openable Access Panel** means a panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is *readily accessible*, within normal reach, can be opened by one person and is not sealed in place.

**Recreational Facilities** means spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, exercise, entertainment, athletic, playground and other similar equipment and associated accessories, etc.

**Representative Number** means one *component* per room for multiple similar interior *components* such as windows and electric receptacles; one *component* on each side of the *residential building* for multiple similar exterior *components*.

**Residential Building** means a structure consisting of from one to four family dwelling units and their attached or detached garages or carports but excluding the common elements and areas in multiple unit housing such as condominiums and cooperative housing.

**Roof Drainage Systems** means *components* used to carry water off a roof and away from a building.

**Shut Down** means a state in which a *system* or *component* cannot be operated by *normal operating controls*.

**Significantly Deficient** means a condition that in the professional judgment of the inspector significantly affects the value, habitability, or safety of the dwelling and/or occupants but does not include decorative, stylistic, cosmetic, or aesthetic aspects of the *system*, structure or *component*. The fact that a *system* or *component* is near, at or beyond the end of the normal useful life is not by itself *significantly deficient*.

**State** means to identify in writing.

**Structural Component** means a *component* that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads).

**System** means a combination of interacting or interdependent *components*, assembled to carry out one or more functions.

**Technically Exhaustive** means an investigation that involves *dismantling*, the extensive use of advanced techniques, measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, or other means.

**Under-floor Crawl Space (see *Crawl Space*)**

**Unsafe** means a condition in a *readily accessible, installed system* or *component* that is judged by the *Inspector* to be a significant risk of serious bodily injury during *normal use*; the risk may be due to damage, deterioration, or improper installation.



## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS

### Code of Ethics for the Home Inspection Profession

The ASHI Code of Ethics details the core guidelines of home inspection professionalism and home inspection ethics. Covering crucial issues such as conflicts of interest, good faith and public perception, these home inspection ethics are central pillars of home inspection professionalism for the entire industry.

Integrity, honesty, and objectivity are fundamental principles embodied by this Code, which sets forth obligations of ethical conduct for the home inspection profession. The Membership of ASHI has adopted this Code to provide high ethical standards to safeguard the public and the profession.

Inspectors shall comply with this Code, shall avoid association with any enterprise whose practices violate this Code, and shall strive to uphold, maintain, and improve the integrity, reputation, and practice of the home inspection profession.

All inspector members of ASHI have agreed to abide by this Code of Ethics.

**1. Inspectors shall avoid conflicts of interest or activities that compromise, or appear to compromise, professional independence, objectivity, or inspection integrity.**

- A. Inspectors shall not inspect properties for compensation in which they have, or expect to have, a financial interest.
- B. Inspectors shall not inspect properties under contingent arrangements whereby any compensation or future referrals are dependent on reported findings or on the sale of a property.

- C. Inspectors shall not directly or indirectly compensate realty agents, or other parties having a financial interest in closing or settlement of real estate transactions, for the referral of inspections or for inclusion on a list of recommended inspectors, preferred providers, or similar arrangements.
- D. Inspectors shall not receive compensation for an inspection from more than one party unless agreed to by the client(s).
- E. Inspectors shall not accept compensation, directly or indirectly, for recommending contractors, services, or products to inspection clients or other parties having an interest in inspected properties.
- F. Inspectors shall not repair, replace, or upgrade, for compensation, systems or components covered by ASHI Standards of Practice, for one year after the inspection.

**2. Inspectors shall act in good faith toward each client and other interested parties.**

- A. Inspectors shall perform services and express opinions based on genuine conviction and only within their areas of education, training, or experience.
- B. Inspectors shall be objective in their reporting and not knowingly understate or overstate the significance of reported conditions.
- C. Inspectors shall not disclose inspection results or client information without client approval. Inspectors, at their discretion, may disclose observed immediate safety hazards to occupants exposed to such hazards, when feasible.

**3. Inspectors shall avoid activities that may harm the public, discredit themselves, or reduce public confidence in the profession.**

- A. Advertising, marketing, and promotion of inspectors' services or qualifications shall not be fraudulent, false, deceptive, or misleading.
- B. Inspectors shall report substantive and willful violations of this Code to the Society.