

International Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties

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1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this document is to define good practice and to establish a reasonable approach for the performance of an inspection of a commercial property.

2. Definitions

2.1 Core Definitions

2.1.1 Commercial Property: A commercial property is defined as the building structures and improvements located on a parcel of commercial real estate. These may include structures such as buildings with residential units operated for profit, mixed-use buildings, strip malls, motels, factories, storage facilities, restaurants and office buildings.

2.1.2 Inspection: The inspection is defined as the process of an inspector collecting information through visual observation during a walk-through survey of the subject property, conducting research about the property, and then generating a meaningful report about the condition of the property based on the observations made and research conducted by the inspector. A commercial inspection requires the inspector to make observations, conduct research, and report findings.

2.1.2.1 Observations: Observations are defined as those potential items of interest noted by the inspector during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection.

2.1.2.2 Research: Research is defined as the process of gathering information through document review and interviews to augment the observations made during the walk-through portion of the inspection. This research may include reviewing readily available documents, such as previous inspection reports, building permits, code violation notices and environmental studies. This research may also include interviews with readily available personnel, such as building managers, tenants and owners.

2.1.2.3 Report: An inspection report is defined as a written communication describing the issues discovered from observations made and research conducted by the inspector that are, in the inspector's opinion, likely to be of interest to his/her client. A report may contain photographs of observations made during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection and/or copies of documents reviewed during the research portion of the inspection.

2.2 Terminology Commonly Found in Commercial Property Inspection Reports:

- **above-grade wall:** a wall that is mostly above grade and enclosing conditioned space.
- **access:** that which enables a device, appliance or equipment to be reached.
- **access panel:** a closure device used to cover an opening into a duct, an enclosure, or equipment.
- **accessibility:** level of access a building offers people with disabilities.
- **accessible:** in the opinion of the inspector, can be approached or entered safely without difficulty, fear or danger.
- **accessory structure:** an additional building to the primary building.
- **activate:** to turn on, supply power, or enable systems, equipment or devices to become active by normal operating controls; examples include turning on the gas or water supply valves to fixtures and appliances, or activating electrical breakers or fuses.
- **actual knowledge:** the knowledge possessed by an individual, as opposed to that discovered through document review.
- **addition:** an extension or increase in the conditioned space of a building.
- **adverse conditions:** conditions that may be dangerous for the inspector and may limit the walk-through survey portion of the inspection.
- **adversely affect:** to constitute, or potentially constitute, a negative or destructive impact.
- **air intake:** an opening in a building's envelope whose purpose is to allow outside air to be drawn in to replace inside air.
- **aisle:** an exit access component that provides a path of egress travel.
- **alarm signal:** a signal indicating an emergency, such as a fire, requiring immediate action.

- **alarm system:** warning devices, installed or freestanding, including, but not limited to: carbon-monoxide detectors, flue gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment, ejector pumps and smoke alarms.
- **alteration:** any construction or renovation to an existing structure other than a repair or addition; also, a change in a mechanical system.
- **appliance:** utilization equipment, generally other than industrial, that is installed or connected as a unit to perform one or more functions.
- **approved:** acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction; also, accepted by an internationally recognized organization, such as InterNACHI.
- **arc-fault circuit interrupter (AFCI):** a device intended to provide protection from the effects of arc faults by recognizing characteristics unique to arcing, and by functioning to de-energize the circuit when an arc fault is detected.
- **authority having jurisdiction (AHJ):** an organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure. The AHJ is often the building owner, health department, insurance agent, or fire marshal.
- **automatic:** that which provides a function without the necessity of human intervention.
- **automatic fire-extinguishing system:** a system of devices and equipment that automatically detects a fire and discharges in an attempt to put it out.
- **automatic sprinkler system:** an automated sprinkler system for fire-protection purposes.
- **balcony:** exterior floor projecting from and supported by a structure without additional independent supports.
- **band joist:** dimensional lumber used as a perimeter joist of the building framing.
- **basement:** that portion of a building which is partly or completely below grade.
- **basement wall:** a wall of a building that is mostly below grade.
- **bathroom:** a room containing plumbing fixtures, such as a water closet, urinal, bathtub and/or shower.
- **bedroom:** a room used for sleeping purposes.
- **bidet:** a toilet-like plumbing fixture designed to promote posterior hygiene; not a toilet.
- **bonding:** the permanent joining of metallic parts to form an electrically conductive path that ensures electrical continuity, and the capacity to conduct safely any fault current likely to be imposed.
- **branch circuit:** the circuit conductors between the final over-current device protecting the circuit and the outlet(s).
- **building:** the primary building subject of the commercial inspection.

- **building code:** rules and regulations adopted by the governmental authority having jurisdiction over the construction and/or remodeling of the commercial property.
- **building department:** local authority having jurisdiction over the construction, alteration and use of a property.
- **building envelope:** the enclosure that defines the heated/cooled area of a building, namely, the exterior walls and roof.
- **building systems:** components, assemblies and systems that are a part of the overall building and property such as pavement, flatwork, structural components, roofing, exterior walls, plumbing, HVAC, electrical components, fire prevention, etc.
- **built-in:** permanently installed.
- **chimney:** a structure containing one or more flues for removing gases to the outside atmosphere.
- **cladding:** something that covers or overlays, often used to describe exterior wall coverings or metal that covers windows, doors or fascia for weather protection.
- **cleanout:** an accessible opening in the drainage system used for the removal of possible obstructions and for inspections; an opening in a chimney that provides access to the flue for cleaning purposes.
- **clearance:** the minimum distance through air measured between the surface of something heat-producing and the surface of something combustible.
- **clearly identifiable:** capable of being recognized by a person of normal vision.
- **client:** the party that retains the inspector and pays for the inspection.
- **code official:** the officer or other government-designated authority charged with enforcement of building codes.
- **combustible:** describes any material that will burn.
- **commercial cooking appliances:** appliances used in a commercial food service establishment for heating or cooking food.
- **commercial property:** the building structures and improvements located on a parcel of commercial real estate. These may include structures such as buildings with residential units operated for profit, mixed-use buildings, strip malls, motels, factories, storage facilities, restaurants and office buildings.
- **component:** a permanently installed or attached fixture, element, or part of a system.
- **concealed:** rendered inaccessible by the structure or finish of the building. Wires in concealed raceways are considered concealed, even though they may become accessible by withdrawing them.
- **condition:** the plainly visible and conspicuous state of being of a material object or thing.
- **conditioned space:** an area or room within a building being heated or cooled.

- **connector:** the pipe that connects a fuel-burning appliance to a chimney.
- **consultant:** a person with particular expertise in a subject who assists the inspector with portions of the inspection.
- **contamination:** an impairment of the quality of the potable water.
- **crawlspace:** the area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the lowest floor's structural component.
- **cross-connection:** any connection between two otherwise separate piping systems, one of which contains potable water, and the other that contains something that could contaminate the potable water.
- **crow:** the sloped top of a masonry chimney designed to shed water away from the flue; also called a **splay** or a **wash**.
- **damper:** a valve or plate for controlling draft or flow of gases, including air, in a vent or ductwork; a manually-operated plate for controlling draft in a flue.
- **deck:** exterior floor system supported on at least two opposing sides by an adjoining structure and/or post, piers, or other independent supports.
- **decorative:** ornamental; not required for the operation of essential systems and components of a building.
- **defensible space:** an area around a building designed to slow the rate of an advancing wildfire.
- **deferred-maintenance items:** deficient items that cannot be remedied with routine maintenance, generally caused by neglect.
- **describe:** to report, in writing, a system or component by its type or other observed characteristics to distinguish it from other components used for the same purpose.
- **destructive:** an act of demolishing, damaging or probing any system, structure or component, or to dismantle any system or component that would not be taken apart by an ordinary person in the course of normal maintenance.
- **determine:** to arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to examination.
- **disconnected:** shut down.
- **dismantle:** to open, take apart or remove any component, device or piece that would not typically be opened, taken apart, or removed by an ordinary occupant.
- **duct:** a passageway, tube or conduit utilized for the transmission of air and vapors.
- **due diligence:** a level of care in the inspection process that varies, depending upon the scope of work agreed upon by the inspector and his/her client.
- **dwelling unit:** a single unit providing complete, independent living facilities, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

- **easement:** that portion of a land or property reserved for use by a person or agency other than the owner of the property.
- **easily visible:** describes systems, items and components that are both conspicuous and in plain sight, absent of the need for intrusive inspection techniques, probing, disassembly, or the use of special equipment.
- **egress:** a means of exiting.
- **emergency shutoff valve:** a valve designed to shut off the flow of gases or liquids.
- **energy analysis:** a method for estimating the annual energy use of a building.
- **energy-recovery ventilation system:** a system that uses air-to-air heat exchangers to recover energy from exhaust air for the purpose of pre-heating or pre-cooling outdoor air prior to supplying the air to an interior space.
- **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/or supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with the specifications and design, in conjunction with structures, buildings, machines, equipment, works or processes.
- **enter:** to access or go into an area to observe visible components.
- **evaluate:** to assess the systems, structures and/or components of a building.
- **evidence:** plainly visible and conspicuous material objects or other things presented to the senses that would tend to produce conviction in the mind of an ordinary person as to the existence or non-existence of a fact.
- **examine:** to visually examine; to look for and identify material physical deficiencies in systems, structures or components of a building through a non-intrusive physical inspection. See **inspect**.
- **existing:** buildings, facilities or conditions which are already in existence. This Standard is designed to be used to inspect existing commercial properties.
- **exit discharge:** the portion of a means of egress between the termination of an exit and a public way.
- **exposed:** capable of being inadvertently touched by a person because it is not suitably guarded, isolated or insulated.
- **exterior property:** the open space on the property.
- **exterior wall:** an outside wall of a building, either above or below grade.
- **extermination:** the control or elimination of insects, rats, vermin or other pests.
- **fenestration:** products with glass and non-glass glazing materials, including skylights, roof windows, vertical windows, opaque doors, glazed doors and glazed block.

- **fire apparatus access road:** a road, fire lane, public street, private street, or parking lot lane that provides access from a fire station to a facility.
- **fire code official:** the fire chief or other authority charged with the enforcement of a code.
- **fire department master key:** a special key carried by fire department officials which will open key boxes on commercial properties.
- **fire-resistance rating:** the time that materials or assemblies can withstand fire exposure.
- **fireplace lintel:** a horizontal, non-combustible member that spans the top of the fireplace opening.
- **firewall:** a wall separating buildings or subdividing a building to prevent the spread of fire.
- **fixture:** component.
- **flood-level rim:** the edge of a fixture from which water overflows.
- **floor area, gross:** the floor area within the inside perimeter of the exterior walls.
- **floor area, net:** the actual occupied area not including accessory areas, such as corridors, stairways, restrooms, mechanical rooms and closets.
- **flue:** a passage through which gases move from the fire chamber to the outer air.
- **foundation:** the base upon which the structure or wall rests (usually masonry, concrete or stone), and generally partially underground.
- **function:** the action for which an item, component or system is specially fitted or used, or for which an item, component or system exists; to be in action or perform a task.
- **functional:** performing, or able to perform, a function.
- **functional drainage:** the emptying of a plumbing fixture in a reasonable amount of time without overflow when another fixture is drained simultaneously.
- **functional flow:** a reasonable flow of water supply at the highest and farthest fixture from the building main when another fixture is operated simultaneously.
- **further evaluation:** a degree of examination beyond that of a typical and customary, non-intrusive physical examination.
- **fusible link:** a form of fixed-temperature heat-detecting device sometimes used to restrain the operation of an electrical or mechanical control until a certain temperature is reached, usually signifying a fire.
- **garbage:** the animal or vegetable waste resulting from preparation or consumption of food.
- **grease:** animal fat, vegetable shortening or oil used in preparing food or resulting from cooking.
- **grounded:** connected to the earth or to some conducting body that serves in place of the earth.

- **grounded, effectively:** intentionally connected to the earth through a ground connection or connections of sufficiently low impedance, and having sufficient current-carrying capacity to prevent the buildup of voltages that might otherwise result in undue hazards to connected equipment or to persons.
- **ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI):** a device intended for the protection of personnel that functions to de-energize a circuit.
- **grounding electrode:** a device that establishes an electrical connection to the earth.
- **habitable space:** space in a structure for living, sleeping, eating and/or cooking. Bathrooms, closets, halls, storage areas and utility spaces are not considered habitable spaces.
- **hearth:** the floor within a fireplace.
- **hearth extension:** non-combustible material in front of and at the sides of a fireplace opening.
- **heated slab:** slab-on-grade construction in which the heating elements are placed within or under the slab.
- **hood:** a device that directs and captures grease-laden vapors and gases from a cooking appliance.
- **humidistat:** a device used to automatically control relative humidity.
- **identify:** to notice and report.
- **immediate cost:** estimated cost of remedying an existing safety hazard, or repairing a system or component that will likely fail within a year.
- **imminent danger:** a condition which could cause serious or life-threatening injury or death.
- **infestation:** the presence of insects, rats, vermin or other pests.
- **infill:** area of the railing system bounded by the railing posts, cap, rail and the deck.
- **infiltration:** the uncontrolled inward air leakage into a building.
- **inspect:** to examine readily accessible systems and components safely, using normal operating controls, and accessing readily accessible areas, in accordance with these Standards of Practice.
- **inspected property:** the readily accessible areas of the buildings, site, items, components and systems included in the inspection.
- **inspection:** the process of an inspector collecting information through visual observation during a walk-through survey of the subject property, conducting research about the property, and then generating a meaningful report about the condition of the property based on the observations made and research conducted by the inspector. A commercial inspection requires the inspector to make observations, conduct research, and report findings.
- **inspector:** one who performs the commercial property inspection.

- **installed:** attached or connected such that the installed item requires a tool for removal.
- **interview:** to discuss with those who have knowledge about the subject property.
- **intrusive:** destructive.
- **key box:** a lockable device which permits the fire department to access the building in an emergency.
- **labeled:** devices, equipment or materials to which have been affixed a label, seal, symbol or other identifying mark of product evaluation.
- **ledger:** dimensional lumber attached to the building framing and used for supporting the section of a deck adjacent to the building.
- **life expectancy:** average function time, in years, assuming regular maintenance.
- **listed:** equipment, materials or services included in a list published by an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ), and concerned with evaluation of products or services, that maintains periodic inspection of production of listed equipment or materials, or periodic evaluation of services, and whose listing states that the equipment, material or service meets appropriate designated standards, or has been tested and found suitable for a specified purpose.
- **mantel:** a shelf or horizontal ornament above a fireplace opening.
- **manual:** capable of being operated by a person.
- **material:** having significant importance, as in "material defect." This term is reserved for describing things of significant importance.
- **material defect:** a condition of a commercial property, or any portion of it, that would have a significantly adverse impact on the value of the real property, or that involves unreasonable risk to people on the property. The fact that a structural element, system or sub-system is near, at or beyond the end of the normal useful life of such a structural element, system or sub-system is not, by itself, a material defect.
- **means of egress:** a continuous and unobstructed path out of a building to a public way.
- **mezzanine:** a semi-permanent, freestanding stair-and-deck system, typically constructed of fiberglass grating, heavy-duty steel and/or aluminum, and installed between two permanent/original floors within an industrial or commercial building in order to provide an open space on and under which can be created informal office areas, storage for inventory, tools and industrial equipment, etc.
- **mold:** a form of fungus. Some molds can cause disease in humans.
- **non-combustible:** a substance that will not burn when subjected to fire.
- **normal operating controls:** devices, such as thermostats, that would be operated by ordinary occupants which require no specialized skill or knowledge.

- **observations:** those potential items of interest noted by the inspector during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection.
- **observe:** to visually notice.
- **obvious:** a condition or fact not likely to be ignored or overlooked.
- **occupancy load:** the number of people permitted in a building based on the means of egress.
- **occupant:** any individual living in, sleeping in, or having possession of a space within a building.
- **operate:** to cause systems to function or turn on with normal operating controls.
- **operational:** systems or components capable of being safely operated.
- **oral consultation:** a limited visual inspection of specific systems, structures or components of a building where no written report is prepared by the inspector, and the inspector's findings, opinions, conclusions and recommendations are orally communicated by the inspector to the client.
- **owner:** any person, agent, operator, firm or corporation having a legal or equitable interest in a property.
- **panelboard:** a panel, including buses and automatic over-current devices, designed to be placed in a cabinet accessible only from the front.
- **permanently installed:** fixed in place (i.e., screwed, bolted or nailed), as distinct from components, systems or appliances considered portable or freestanding.
- **Phase I:** a type of fireplace and chimney inspection that exceeds the standards required by a traditional home inspection.
- **physical deficiency:** a major defect, a significant deferred-maintenance item, or a component or system that has exhausted most or all of its remaining useful life (regardless of its actual life expectancy), or a safety concern, or anything that could potentially cause the need for an expensive repair.
- **pitch:** angle or inclination, usually of a roof.
- **plenum:** an air compartment or chamber that connects one or more ducts and forms part of an air-distribution system.
- **premises:** a lot, plot, parcel of land, property or building.
- **pressure drop:** the loss in pressure due to friction or obstruction in pipes, valves, fittings, regulators and burners, and the length of pipes and the number of elbows.
- **pressure regulator:** a device placed in a gas line for reducing, controlling and maintaining the pressure downstream of the device.
- **primary building:** a building that an inspector has agreed to inspect, excluding all accessory buildings, with the exception of the primary parking structure.

- **primary parking structure and surfaces:** a building and appurtenant surfaces for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the primary building.
- **public way:** a street, alley or yard open to the outside and leading to a public area.
- **publicly available information:** information that is accessible or available to anyone upon request.
- **raceway:** an enclosed channel or conduit designed expressly for holding wires or cables.
- **ramp:** a sloped walking surface.
- **readily accessible:** describes the area of the subject property that has been made available to the inspector at the time of the walk-through survey portion of the inspection, and/or a system or component that, in the judgment of the inspector, is capable of being safely observed without the need of portable ladders, the removal of obstacles, the detachment or disengagement of connecting or securing devices, or other unsafe or difficult procedures to gain access, and/or a document that has been made available to the inspector for use in the research portion of the inspection.
- **readily ascertainable:** describes information that is available to the inspector within reasonable time at a nominal cost so that it can be practically reviewed during the research portion of the inspection.
- **readily available:** describes the information, personnel and documents that are made available quickly to the inspector.
- **receptacle:** a contact device installed at the outlet for the connection of an attachment plug.
- **recreational facilities:** spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, and other exercise, entertainment or athletic facilities.
- **remaining useful life:** a subjective estimate or guess made by the inspector based upon his observations and experience as to the number of remaining years that a component will be functional before needing replacement.
- **removable:** capable of being transferred to another location easily.
- **repair:** the reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing building.
- **replacement air:** air deliberately brought into a structure to compensate for the air being consumed or expelled.
- **report:** the written communication describing the issues discovered from observations made and research conducted by the inspector and which, in the inspector's opinion, are likely to be of interest to his/her client. A report may contain photos or digital images of observations made during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection, and/or copies of documents reviewed during the research portion of the inspection.

- **representative number:** a sufficient number to serve as a typical or characteristic example of the item(s) inspected.
- **representative sampling:** a small quantity of components of any system or structure, enough like others in its class or kind, to serve as an example of its class or kind.
- **research:** the process of gathering information through the review of documents and interviews to augment the observations made during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection. This research may include reviewing readily available documents, such as previous inspection reports, building permits, code violation notices, and environmental studies. This research may also include interviews with readily available personnel, such as building managers, tenants and owners.
- **roof assembly:** a system designed to provide weather protection and including the roof covering, underlayment, roof deck, insulation, vapor retarder and interior finish.
- **rubbish:** waste materials other than garbage.
- **scope of work:** work that deviates from this Standard, depending on budget, time constraints, purpose of the inspection, age of the subject property, and risk-tolerance of the client, which the inspector and client have agreed to.
- **screw-lamp holder:** a lamp base that requires a screw-in-type lamp, such as a compact fluorescent, incandescent, or tungsten-halogen bulb.
- **short-term cost:** estimated cost of repairs which may not require immediate attention, but which should not be delayed for more than two years.
- **shut down:** turned off, unplugged, inactive, not in service, or not operational.
- **single-wall metal chimney:** a field-constructed chimney not permitted in one- and two-family dwellings.
- **sleeping unit:** a room or space in which people sleep.
- **smoke alarm:** a single or multiple alarm responsive to smoke and not connected to a sprinkler system.
- **smoke detector:** a device that senses particles of combustion.
- **solid fuel:** wood, coal, pellets, and other materials that can be burned for heat.
- **special consultant:** a person with particular expertise in a subject who assists the inspector with portions of the inspection.
- **special equipment:** any tools or devices other than those normally used by an inspector to perform a typical and customary, non-invasive, physical examination of the systems, structures and components of a building, including, but not limited to: levels, probes, meters, video or audio devices, and measuring devices.
- **Standard:** often used to mean InterNACHI's Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties.

- **storefront:** a non-residential system of doors and windows typically at ground-floor level of a commercial building.
- **structural component:** a component that supports the building's dead and live loads.
- **structure:** an assemblage of various systems and components that function as a whole.
- **subject property:** the commercial property that is the subject of the inspection.
- **suggested remedy:** an opinion offered as to a course of action to repair a deficiency. Suggested remedies are outside the scope of a commercial inspection.
- **sump:** a tank or pit that receives sewage or wastewater that is typically located below the drain system, and so must be emptied by mechanical means.
- **sump pump:** an automatic water pump powered by a motor and typically controlled by a float for the removal of wastewater from a sump pit.
- **system:** an assembly of various components which function as a whole.
- **technically exhaustive:** a comprehensive and detailed examination beyond the scope of a commercial property inspection that might involve, but would not be limited to: specialized knowledge or training, special equipment, measurements, calculations, testing, research, analysis, meters, scaffolding, dismantling, probing or troubleshooting; also, where the cost of obtaining information or the time required to conduct a portion of the inspection and prepare that portion of the inspection report could outweigh the likely usefulness of the information obtained, or could be detrimental to the orderly and timely completion of the client's transaction.
- **thermostat:** an automatic control device used to maintain temperature at a set point.
- **thimble:** the tube or lining through a wall that a connector passes through to enter a flue or that a flue passes through to exit a roof.
- **timely access:** access to the subject property and documentation required by the inspector to perform the inspection.
- **toilet room:** a room containing a water closet or urinal, but not a bathtub or shower.
- **trap:** a fitting that provides a liquid seal to prevent the emission of sewer gases and odors.
- **tree crown:** the branches growing out from a tree, including twigs and foliage.
- **unsafe:** in the inspector's opinion, a condition of an area, system, component or procedure that is judged to be a significant risk of injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted commercial construction standards.

- **valve:** a device used in piping to control the gas or liquid supply downstream of the device.
- **vapor retarder:** a vapor-resistant material, membrane or covering, such as foil, plastic sheeting or insulation facing, that limits the amount of moisture vapor that passes through a material or wall assembly.
- **ventilation:** the natural or mechanical process of supplying and removing air from any space.
- **verify:** to confirm or substantiate.
- **visible:** that which may be easily observed during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection.
- **walk-through survey:** that portion of the inspection where the inspector makes non-intrusive, visual observations of readily accessible areas of the subject property.
- **wall protector:** non-combustible shield between a wall and anything heat-producing for the purpose of reducing required clearance.
- **workmanlike:** executed in a skilled manner.
- **yard:** an open space on the same lot with a building.
- **zone:** a conditioned space within a building controlled by a single device.

2.3 Common Abbreviations and Acronyms Used in Commercial Property Inspection Reports:

- ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act (U.S.)
- AHJ: authority having jurisdiction
- BUR: built-up roofing
- CCI: Certified Commercial Inspector
- CMI: Certified Master Inspector
- CPI: Certified Professional Inspector
- CO: Certificate of Occupancy
- ComSOP: International Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties
- CSA: Canadian Standards Association
- EIFS: exterior insulation and finish system
- EPA: Environmental Protection Agency (U.S.)
- HVAC: heating, ventilation and air conditioning
- IAC2: International Association of Certified Indoor Air Consultants
- IAQ: indoor air quality
- InterNACHI: International Association of Certified Home Inspectors
- ICC: International Code Council
- IR: infrared
- MICB: Master Inspector Certification Board
- NEC: National Electrical Code (U.S.)
- NFPA: National Fire Protection Association

- PE: Professional Engineer
- RICS: Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (U.K.)
- RUL: remaining useful life

2.4 Other Inspection-Related Terms

Other inspection-related terms can be found by visiting InterNACHI's searchable online Glossary at <http://www.nachi.org/glossary>

3. Use

3.1 Royalty-Free Use

Although this Standard is protected by copyright and other laws, the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors, Inc. (InterNACHI) hereby grants non-exclusive, royalty-free license to all members of InterNACHI and their clients, and all public authorities, government agencies, and government employees throughout the world to use this code as desired, including making copies, posting, transmitting and incorporating it into reporting software, free of charge, without the need for pre-approval, provided that each use is clearly attributed to InterNACHI. Acceptable examples of attribution include "performed in accordance with InterNACHI's Commercial SOP," "based on InterNACHI ComSOP" or "see www.internachi.org/comsop"

Nothing in this license shall preclude InterNACHI from modifying this Standard, and users should regularly check for the latest revision at www.nachi.org/comsop, which supersedes earlier versions.

3.2 Conflicts With Other Standards, Codes, Local Laws, and Manufacturers' Instructions

There likely exist other standards, codes, local laws, and manufacturers' instructions that differ or are in conflict with this Standard and with each other. Although this Standard does not require an inspector to know or discover all the provisions that may pertain to every situation, this Standard does require an inspector, if aware of such conflicts, to author the inspection report based on the requirements that provide the greatest protection of life and property, in the inspector's judgment. This Standard is not intended to usurp or abridge adopted codes or ordinances.

3.3 Substantial Compliance

The inspector shall substantially abide by this Standard, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the inspector and client.

3.4 Disclaimer of Liability

InterNACHI administers the process in the development of its standards. InterNACHI does not independently test, evaluate or verify the accuracy of any information or the soundness of any judgments contained in its Standards. InterNACHI disclaims liability

for any personal injury, property or other damages of any nature whatsoever, whether special, indirect, consequential or compensatory, directly or indirectly resulting from the publication, use of, or reliance on this document. InterNACHI also makes no guarantee or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of any information published herein.

Anyone using this document should rely on his or her own independent judgment, or, as appropriate, seek the advice of a competent professional in determining the exercise of reasonable care in any given circumstances.

4. Inspection

4.1 Objective

The objective of an inspection is to provide written communication describing the issues discovered from observations made and research conducted by the inspector, which, in the inspector's opinion, are likely to be of interest to his/her client, and to enhance the client's information and knowledge about the commercial property to improve decision-making for buying, selling, maintaining or improving the property.

4.2 Who May Perform the Inspection

Any portion of the inspection, including the walk-through survey, research and report-generation, may be performed by the inspector, his/her staff, or any consultant hired by the inspector. This Standard recognizes that, for the majority of commercial inspections, the inspector is likely an individual with a general, well-rounded knowledge of commercial properties, and that the inspector or client may want to augment the inspector's skills with specialty consultants who have particular expertise in certain areas. The decision to hire specialty consultants will, of course, rely on budget and time constraints, as well as the risk-tolerance of the client.

4.3 Varying Levels of Due Diligence

This Standard is designed as a baseline from which the inspector and client can develop and agree to a scope of work that may deviate from this Standard, depending on budget, time constraints, purpose of the inspection, age of the subject property, and risk-tolerance of the client. The level of due diligence should be set where the cost, in time and money, of acquiring information about the subject property will not likely exceed the value of that information. Therefore, an inspection performed in accordance with this Standard will not be technically exhaustive.

4.3.1 Sample Language for Use When Defining the Scope of Work

"The inspection will be performed in accordance with InterNACHIcomsop, except that..."

4.3.2 Representative Observations

In recognizing that the client likely has the goal of acquiring information about the subject property at a cost, in time and money, that does not exceed the value of that information, representative observations are not just permitted by this Standard, but recommended, as well.

4.4 Uncertainty

The client should understand that no inspection report is completely accurate. A report is only the written communication of the observations made and research conducted by the inspector. The report contains those items which, in the inspector's opinion, are likely to be of interest to his/her client.

4.5 Subjectivity

The client should understand that the inspection report is, to a large degree, the subjective opinions of the inspector based on his/her observations and research within the limits of access, time and budget, and without the aid of special equipment or meters, and without dismantling, probing, testing or troubleshooting, and without detailed knowledge of the commercial property, its components or its systems. The inspection report is not much more than a subjective professional opinion.

4.6 Not an Architectural or Engineering Service

An inspector performing a commercial inspection in accordance with this Standard is not practicing architecture or engineering.

4.7 Not a Warranty, Guarantee or Insurance Policy

The inspection is not a warranty, and the inspection report is merely the written communication of the inspector's subjective opinion on the condition of the subject property.

5. Research

5.1 Objective

The objective of research, including the review of documents and the performing of interviews, is to augment the information obtained during the walk-through survey and to provide supporting documentation to the inspection report.

5.2 Document Procurement

It is the client's responsibility to obtain copies of all documents and provide them for the inspector. These documents are most often obtained from the seller or from local government offices. The inspector is not responsible for gathering or paying for copies of appropriate documents to be reviewed unless these tasks are specifically assigned to the inspector in the Scope of Work Agreement.

5.3 Documents to Be Reviewed and Included in the Inspection Report

The inspector should review all documents provided by the client and owner. The inspector should also make an inquiry and review of any other documents that can be reasonably procured on-site or from the building owner or manager, such as Certificates of Occupancy, building code violation notices, repair invoices, and warranties. The inspector is not required to uncover and review information that is not provided or cannot be reasonably ascertained or acquired on-site. Copies of documents that the inspector believes may be of interest to the client and copies of documents that support the inspector's opinions should be included in the inspection report.

5.3.1 Examples of documents the inspector may want to request for review:

- accessibility surveys;
- appraisals;
- building plans;
- Certificates of Occupancy;
- citations;
- deck age records, plans and construction permits;
- deck and balcony maintenance, power-washing, painting, treating, repair and modification history;
- emergency evacuation plans;
- environmental studies;
- evacuation drill records;
- fire-detection test and maintenance records;
- fire door inspection reports;
- fire-prevention plans;
- fire extinguisher service records;
- fire records;
- flame-resistant certificates;
- floodplain maps;
- floor plans;
- kitchen grease-cleaning records;
- kitchen post-fire inspections;
- maintenance records;
- manufacturers' installation instructions;
- notices;
- permits;
- power-washing records;
- previous inspection reports;
- proposals;
- rent records;
- repair estimates/invoices;
- safety inspection records;
- seller disclosures;
- sprinkler head replacement records;
- utility bills; and
- warranties.

5.4 Interviews

The inspector should identify and interview the person(s) with the most knowledge about the condition of the building. Typically, this will be the building owner or manager. Unless otherwise agreed to in the Scope of Work Agreement, it is the responsibility of the

client to arrange to have such person(s) on hand for interview by the inspector on the day of the walk-through survey.

5.5 Pre-Inspection Questionnaires

The inspector may request that the owner, building manager and/or client fill out pre-inspection questionnaires to gather information. The inspector may rely that these responses are truthful. In cases where parties refuse to fill out questionnaires in writing, the inspector may interview the parties and fill out the questionnaires for them. The inspector should note in the report if s/he filled out the questionnaire based on an interview and whether such interview was performed in person, by telephone, or by email. Copies of all responses to such questionnaires should be included in the inspection report.

5.6 Reliance

The level of accuracy of information varies, depending on its source. The inspector may rely on information obtained to the extent that the information appears to be accurate and complete. This Standard does not require the inspector to independently verify the accuracy of the documents reviewed by the inspector or included in the report, nor the statements made by those interviewed by the inspector.

5.7 Fraud

The inspector is not a fraud investigator, and this Standard does not require the inspector to look for intentionally hidden deficiencies in the subject property. The inspection report is supplementary to the seller's disclosures.

5.8 Previously Generated Reports

A previously generated inspection report should be treated no differently than any other document reviewed during the research portion of the inspection, and, as with information collected from any other source, information obtained from a previously generated report should reference its source in the new inspection report. No portion of a previously generated report should be used as a substitute for the new inspection report.

6. Walk-Through Survey

6.1 Objective

The objective of the walk-through survey is to allow the inspector to visually observe the subject property, gather information, and note items of interest.

6.2 Access Responsibility

It is the client's responsibility to arrange for the inspector to receive timely access to the subject property for the walk-through survey portion of the inspection, as well as access to all documents and interviewees needed for the research portion of the inspection. This includes access to all documents, information and previously generated reports in the client's possession. The inspector is not responsible for obtaining, reviewing or providing information, should the source withhold, impede or delay access. Anything that hinders the inspector's access should be noted in the report.

6.3 Revisits

It is expected that the inspector will perform only one walk-through survey per inspection report. However, it may be necessary for the inspector to revisit certain areas of the subject building after performing the research portion of the inspection.

6.4 Inspector Safety

It is the responsibility of the inspector to perform the walk-through survey safely.

6.5 Observations

6.5.1 Roof

I. The inspector should inspect from ground level, eaves or rooftop (if a rooftop access door exists):

- A. the roof covering;
- B. for the presence of exposed membrane;
- C. slopes;
- D. for evidence of significant ponding;
- E. the gutters;
- F. the downspouts;
- G. the vents, flashings, skylights, chimney and other roof penetrations;
- H. the general structure of the roof from the readily accessible panels, doors or stairs; and
- I. for the need for repairs.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. walk on any pitched roof surface.
- B. predict service-life expectancy.
- C. inspect underground downspout diverter drainage pipes.
- D. remove snow, ice, debris or other conditions that prohibit the observation of the roof surfaces.
- E. move insulation.
- F. inspect antennae, lightning arresters, de-icing equipment or similar attachments.
- G. walk on any roof areas that appear, in the opinion of the inspector, to be unsafe.
- H. walk on any roof areas if it might, in the opinion of the inspector, cause damage.
- I. perform a water test.
- J. warrant or certify the roof.
- K. walk on any roofs that lack rooftop access doors.

6.5.2 Exterior

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. the siding, flashing and trim;
- B. all exterior doors, decks, stoops, steps, stairs, porches, railings, eaves, soffits and fasciae;
- C. and report as in need of repair any safety issues regarding intermediate balusters, spindles or rails for steps, stairways, balconies and railings;

- D. a representative number of windows;
- E. the vegetation, surface drainage, and retaining walls when these are likely to adversely affect the structure;
- F. the exterior for accessibility barriers;
- G. the storm water drainage system;
- H. the general topography;
- I. the parking areas;
- J. the sidewalks;
- K. exterior lighting;
- L. the landscaping;
- M. and determine that a 3-foot clear space exists around the circumference of fire hydrants;
- N. and describe the exterior wall covering.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. inspect or operate screens, storm windows, shutters, awnings, fences, outbuildings or exterior accent lighting.
- B. inspect items, including window and door flashings, that are not visible or readily accessible from the ground.
- C. inspect geological, geotechnical, hydrological or soil conditions.
- D. inspect recreational facilities.
- E. inspect seawalls, breakwalls or docks.
- F. inspect erosion-control or earth-stabilization measures.
- G. inspect for proof of safety-type glass.
- H. determine the integrity of thermal window seals or damaged glass.
- I. inspect underground utilities.
- J. inspect underground items.
- K. inspect wells or springs.
- L. inspect solar systems.
- M. inspect swimming pools or spas.
- N. inspect septic systems or cesspools.
- O. inspect playground equipment.
- P. inspect sprinkler systems.
- Q. inspect drainfields or dry wells.
- R. inspect manhole covers.
- S. operate or evaluate remote-control devices, or test door or gate operators.

6.5.3 Wood Decks and Balconies

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. with the unaided eye, for deck and balcony members that are noticeably out of level or out of plumb;
- B. for visible decay;
- C. for paint failure and buckling;

- D. for nail pullout (nail pop);
- E. for fastener rust, iron stain and corrosion;
- F. and verify that flashing was installed on the deck-side of the ledger board;
- G. for vertical members (posts) that have exposed end-grains;
- H. for obvious trip hazards;
- I. for non-graspable handrails;
- J. railings for height less than the 36-inch minimum*;
- K. guardrails and infill for openings that exceed the 4-inch maximum*;
- L. open-tread stairs for openings that exceed the 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch maximum*;
- M. the triangular area between guardrails and stairways for openings that exceed the 6-inch maximum*;
- N. built-up and multi-ply beam spans for butt joints;
- O. for notches in the middle-third of solid-sawn wood spans;
- P. for large splits longer than the depths of their solid-sawn wood members;
- Q. for building egresses blocked, covered or hindered by deck construction; and
- R. for the possibility of wetting from gutters, downspouts or sprinklers.

*See <http://www.nachi.org/stairways.htm> for formal standards (compliance verification in entirety not required).

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. discover insect infestation or damage.
- B. inspect, determine or test the tightness or adequacy of fasteners.
- C. determine lumber grade.
- D. measure moisture content.
- E. inspect for or determine bending strength.
- F. inspect for or determine shear stress.
- G. determine lag screw or bolt shear values.
- H. calculate loads.
- I. determine proper spans or inspect for deflections.
- J. discover decay hidden by paint.
- K. verify that flashing has been coated to prevent corrosion.
- L. determine that post-to-footing attachments exist.
- M. dig below grade or remove soil around posts.
- N. crawl under any deck with less than 3 feet of headroom, or remove deck skirting to acquire access.
- O. determine proper footing depth or frostline.
- P. verify proper footing size.
- Q. perform pick tests.
- R. perform or provide any architectural or engineering service.
- S. use a level or plumb bob.
- T. use a moisture meter.
- U. predict service-life expectancy.

- V. verify compliance with permits, codes or formal standards.
- W. inspect for disabled persons' accessibility barriers.
- X. determine if a deck blocks, covers or hinders septic tank or plumbing access.
- Y. determine easement-encroachment compliance.

6.5.4 Basement, Foundation and Crawlspace

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. the basement;
- B. the foundation;
- C. the crawlspace;
- D. the visible structural components;
- E. and report on the location of under-floor access openings;
- F. and report any present conditions or clear indications of active water penetration observed by the inspector;
- G. for wood in contact with or near soil;
- H. and report any general indications of foundation movement that are observed by the inspector, such as, but not limited to: sheetrock cracks, brick cracks, out-of-square door frames, or floor slopes;
- I. and report on any cutting, notching or boring of framing members that may present a structural or safety concern.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. enter any crawlspaces that are not readily accessible, or where entry could cause damage or pose a hazard to the inspector.
- B. move stored items or debris.
- C. operate sump pumps.
- D. identify size, spacing, span or location, or determine the adequacy of foundation bolting, bracing, joists, joist spans or support systems.
- E. perform or provide any engineering or architectural service.
- F. report on the adequacy of any structural system or component.

6.5.5 Heating and Ventilation

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. multiple gas meter installations, such as a building with multiple tenant spaces, and verify that each meter is clearly and permanently identified with the respective space supplied;
- B. the heating systems using normal operating controls, and describe the energy source and heating method;
- C. and report as in need of repair heating systems that do not operate;
- D. and report if the heating systems are deemed inaccessible;
- E. and verify that a permanent means of access, with permanent ladders and/or catwalks, are present for equipment and appliances on roofs higher than 16 feet;

- F. and verify the presence of level service platforms for appliances on roofs with a slope of 25% or greater;
- G. and verify that luminaire and receptacle outlets are provided at or near the appliance;
- H. and verify that the system piping appears to be sloped to permit the system to be drained;
- I. for connectors, tubing and piping that might be installed in a way that exposes them to physical damage;
- J. wood framing with cutting, notching or boring that might cause a structural or safety issue;
- K. pipe penetrations in concrete and masonry building elements to verify that they are sleeved;
- L. exposed gas piping for identification by a yellow label marked "Gas" in black letters occurring at intervals of 5 feet or less;
- M. and determine if any appliances or equipment with ignition sources are located in public, private, repair or parking garages or fuel-dispensing facilities;
- N. and verify that fuel-fired appliances are not located in or obtain combustion air from sleeping rooms, bathrooms, storage closets or surgical rooms;
- O. for the presence of exhaust systems in occupied areas where there is a likelihood of excess heat, odors, fumes, spray, gas, noxious gases or smoke;
- P. and verify that outdoor air-intake openings are located at least 10 feet away from any hazardous or noxious contaminant sources, such as vents, chimneys, plumbing vents, streets, alleys, parking lots or loading docks;
- Q. outdoor exhaust outlets for the likelihood that they may cause a public nuisance or fire hazard due to smoke, grease, gases, vapors or odors;
- R. for the potential of flooding or evidence of past flooding that could cause mold in ductwork or plenums; and
- S. condensate drains.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. inspect or evaluate interiors of flues or chimneys, fire chambers, heat exchangers, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, electronic air filters, solar heating systems, fuel tanks, safety devices, pressure gauges, or control mechanisms.
- B. determine the uniformity, temperature, flow, balance, distribution, size, capacity, BTU, or supply adequacy of the heating system.
- C. light or ignite pilot flames.
- D. activate heating, heat pump systems, or other heating systems when ambient temperatures or other circumstances are not conducive to safe operation or may damage the equipment.
- E. over-ride electronic thermostats.
- F. evaluate fuel quality.
- G. verify thermostat calibration, heat anticipation or automatic setbacks, timers, programs or clocks.
- H. inspect tenant-owned or tenant-maintained heating equipment.

- I. determine ventilation rates.
- J. perform capture and containment tests.
- K. test for mold.

6.5.6 Cooling

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. multiple air-conditioning compressor installations, such as a building with multiple tenant spaces, and verify that each compressor is clearly and permanently identified with the respective space supplied;
- B. the central cooling equipment using normal operating controls;
- C. and verify that luminaire and receptacle outlets are provided at or near the appliance;
- D. and verify that a permanent means of access, with permanent ladders and/or catwalks, are present for equipment and appliances on roofs higher than 16 feet;
- E. and verify the presence of level service platforms for appliances on roofs with a slope of 25% or greater;
- F. wood framing with cutting, notching or boring that might cause a structural or safety issue;
- G. pipe penetrations in concrete and masonry building elements to verify that they are sleeved;
- H. piping support;
- I. for connectors, tubing and piping that might be installed in a way that exposes them to physical damage;
- J. for the potential of flooding or evidence of past flooding that could cause mold in ductwork and plenums; and
- K. condensate drains.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. inspect or test compressors, condensers, vessels, evaporators, safety devices, pressure gauges, or control mechanisms.
- B. determine the uniformity, temperature, flow, balance, distribution, size, capacity, BTU, or supply adequacy of the cooling system.
- C. inspect window units, through-wall units, or electronic air filters.
- D. operate equipment or systems if exterior temperature is below 60° Fahrenheit, or when other circumstances are not conducive to safe operation or may damage the equipment.
- E. inspect or determine thermostat calibration, cooling anticipation, or automatic setbacks or clocks.
- F. examine electrical current, coolant fluids or gases, or coolant leakage.
- G. inspect tenant-owned or tenant-maintained cooling equipment.
- H. test for mold.

6.5.7 Plumbing

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. and verify the presence of and identify the location of the main water shut-off valve to each building;
- B. and verify the presence of a back-flow prevention device if, in the inspector's opinion, a cross-connection could occur between the water-distribution system and non-potable water or private source;
- C. the water-heating equipment, including combustion air, venting, connections, energy-source supply systems, and seismic bracing, and verify the presence or absence of temperature-/pressure-relief valves and/or Watts 210 valves;
- D. and flush a representative number of toilets;
- E. and water-test a representative number of sinks, tubs and showers for functional drainage;
- F. and verify that hinged shower doors open outward from the shower, and have safety glass-conformance stickers or indicators;
- G. the interior water supply, including a representative number of fixtures and faucets;
- H. the drain, waste and vent systems, including a representative number of fixtures;
- I. and describe any visible fuel-storage systems;
- J. and test sump pumps with accessible floats;
- K. and describe the water supply, drain, waste and main fuel shut-off valves, as well as the location of the water main and main fuel shut-off valves;
- L. and determine whether the water supply is public or private;
- M. the water supply by viewing the functional flow in several fixtures operated simultaneously, and report any deficiencies as in need of repair;
- N. and report as in need of repair deficiencies in installation and identification of hot and cold faucets;
- O. and report as in need of repair mechanical drain stops that are missing or do not operate if installed in sinks, lavatories and tubs;
- P. and report as in need of repair commodes that have cracks in the ceramic material, are improperly mounted on the floor, leak, or have tank components that do not operate; and
- Q. piping support.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. determine the adequacy of the size of pipes, supplies, vents, traps or stacks.
- B. ignite pilot flames.
- C. determine the size, temperature, age, life expectancy or adequacy of the water heater.
- D. inspect interiors of flues or chimneys, cleanouts, water-softening or filtering systems, dishwashers, interceptors, separators, sump pumps, well pumps or tanks, safety or shut-off valves, whirlpools, swimming pools, floor drains, lawn sprinkler systems or fire sprinkler systems.
- E. determine the exact flow rate, volume, pressure, temperature or adequacy of the water supply.
- F. verify or test anti-scald devices.
- G. determine the water quality, potability or reliability of the water supply or source.
- H. open sealed plumbing access panels.

- I. inspect clothes washing machines or their connections.
- J. operate any main, branch or fixture valve.
- K. test shower pans, tub and shower surrounds, or enclosures for leakage.
- L. evaluate compliance with local or state conservation or energy standards, or the proper design or sizing of any water, waste or venting components, fixtures or piping.
- M. determine the effectiveness of anti-siphon, back-flow prevention or drain-stop devices.
- N. determine whether there are sufficient cleanouts for effective cleaning of drains.
- O. evaluate gas, liquid propane or oil-storage tanks.
- P. inspect any private sewage waste-disposal system or component within such a system.
- Q. inspect water-treatment systems or water filters.
- R. inspect water-storage tanks, pressure pumps, ejector pumps, or bladder tanks.
- S. evaluate wait time for hot water at fixtures, or perform testing of any kind on water-heater elements.
- T. evaluate or determine the adequacy of combustion air.
- U. test, operate, open or close safety controls, manual stop valves, or temperature- or pressure-relief valves.
- V. examine ancillary systems or components, such as, but not limited to, those relating to solar water heating or hot-water circulation.
- W. determine the presence or condition of polybutylene plumbing.

6.5.8 Electrical

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. the service drop/lateral;
- B. the meter socket enclosures;
- C. the service-entrance conductors, and report on any noted deterioration of the conductor insulation or cable sheath;
- D. the means for disconnecting the service main;
- E. the service-entrance equipment, and report on any noted physical damage, overheating or corrosion;
- F. and determine the rating of the service disconnect amperage, if labeled;
- G. panelboards and over-current devices, and report on any noted physical damage, overheating, corrosion, or lack of accessibility or working space (minimum 30 inches wide, 36 inches deep, and 78 inches high in front of panel) that would hamper safe operation, maintenance or inspection;
- H. and report on any unused circuit-breaker panel openings that are not filled;
- I. and report on absent or poor labeling;
- J. the service grounding and bonding;
- K. a representative number of switches, lighting fixtures and receptacles, including receptacles observed and deemed to be AFCI-protected using the AFCI test button, where possible. Although a visual inspection, the removal of faceplates or other covers or luminaires (fixtures) to identify suspected hazards is permitted;

- L. and report on any noted missing or damaged faceplates or box covers;
- M. and report on any noted open junction boxes or open wiring splices;
- N. and report on any noted switches and receptacles that are painted;
- O. and test all ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) receptacles and GFCI circuit breakers observed and deemed to be GFCIs using a GFCI tester, where possible;
- P. and report the presence of solid-conductor aluminum branch-circuit wiring, if readily visible;
- Q. and report on any tested GFCI receptacles in which power was not present, polarity was incorrect, the cover was not in place, the GFCI devices were not installed properly or did not operate properly, any evidence of arcing or excessive heat, or where the receptacle was not grounded or was not secured to the wall;
- R. and report the absence of smoke detectors;
- S. and report on the presence of flexible cords being improperly used as substitutes for the fixed wiring of a structure or running through walls, ceilings, floors, doorways, windows, or under carpets.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. insert any tool, probe or device into the main panelboard, sub-panels, distribution panelboards, or electrical fixtures.
- B. operate electrical systems that are shut down.
- C. remove panelboard cabinet covers or dead fronts if they are not readily accessible.
- D. operate over-current protection devices.
- E. operate non-accessible smoke detectors.
- F. measure or determine the amperage or voltage of the main service equipment, if not visibly labeled.
- G. inspect the fire or alarm system and components.
- H. inspect the ancillary wiring or remote-control devices.
- I. activate any electrical systems or branch circuits that are not energized.
- J. operate or reset overload devices.
- K. inspect low-voltage systems, electrical de-icing tapes, swimming pool wiring, or any time-controlled devices.
- L. verify the service ground.
- M. inspect private or emergency electrical supply sources, including, but not limited to: generators, windmills, photovoltaic solar collectors, or the battery- or electrical-storage facility.
- N. inspect spark or lightning arrestors.
- O. inspect or test de-icing equipment.
- P. conduct voltage-drop calculations.
- Q. determine the accuracy of labeling.
- R. inspect tenant-owned equipment.
- S. inspect the condition of or determine the ampacity of extension cords.

6.5.9 Fireplaces

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. fireplaces, and open and close the damper doors, if readily accessible and operable;
- B. hearth extensions and other permanently installed components;
- C. and report as in need of repair deficiencies in the lintel, hearth or material surrounding the fireplace, including clearance from combustible materials.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. inspect the flue or vent system.
- B. inspect the interior of chimneys or flues, fire doors or screens, seals or gaskets, or mantels.
- C. determine the need for a chimney sweep.
- D. operate gas fireplace inserts.
- E. light pilot flames.
- F. inspect automatic fuel-feed devices.
- G. inspect combustion and/or make-up air devices.
- H. inspect heat-distribution assists, whether gravity-controlled or fan-assisted.
- I. ignite or extinguish fires.
- J. determine draft characteristics.
- K. move fireplace inserts, stoves or firebox contents.
- L. determine the adequacy of drafts, perform a smoke test, or dismantle or remove any fireplace component.
- M. perform an NFPA inspection.
- N. perform a Phase I fireplace and chimney inspection.
- O. determine the appropriateness of any installation.

6.5.10 Attic Ventilation and Insulation

I. The inspector should inspect:

- A. the insulation in unfinished spaces;
- B. the ventilation of attic spaces;
- C. mechanical ventilation systems;
- D. and report on the general absence or lack of insulation.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. enter the attic or any unfinished spaces that are not readily accessible, or where entry could cause damage or pose a safety hazard to the inspector, in his or her opinion.
- B. move, touch or disturb insulation.
- C. move, touch or disturb vapor retarders.
- D. break or otherwise damage the surface finish or weather seal on or around access panels or covers.
- E. identify the composition or exact R-value of insulation material.
- F. activate thermostatically operated fans.
- G. determine the types of materials used in insulation or wrapping of pipes, ducts, jackets, boilers or wiring.

H. determine the adequacy of ventilation.

6.5.11 Doors, Windows and Interior

I. The inspector should:

- A. open and close a representative number of doors and windows;
- B. inspect the walls, ceilings, steps, stairways and railings;
- C. inspect garage doors and garage door-openers;
- D. inspect interior steps, stairs and railings;
- E. inspect all loading docks;
- F. ride all elevators and escalators;
- G. and report as in need of repair any windows that are obviously fogged or display other evidence of broken seals.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. inspect paint, wallpaper, window treatments or finish treatments.
- B. inspect central-vacuum systems.
- C. inspect safety glazing.
- D. inspect security systems or components.
- E. evaluate the fastening of countertops, cabinets, sink tops or fixtures, or firewall compromises.
- F. move furniture, stored items, or any coverings, such as carpets or rugs, in order to inspect the concealed floor structure.
- G. move drop-ceiling tiles.
- H. inspect or move any appliances.
- I. inspect or operate equipment housed in the garage, except as otherwise noted.
- J. verify or certify safe operation of any auto-reverse or related safety function of a garage door.
- K. operate or evaluate any security bar-release and opening mechanisms, whether interior or exterior, including their compliance with local, state or federal standards.
- L. operate any system, appliance or component that requires the use of special keys, codes, combinations or devices.
- M. operate or evaluate self-cleaning oven cycles, tilt guards/latches, gauges or signal lights.
- N. inspect microwave ovens, or test leakage from microwave ovens.
- O. operate or examine any sauna, steam-jenny, kiln, toaster, ice maker, coffee maker, can opener, bread warmer, blender, instant hot-water dispenser, or other ancillary devices.
- P. inspect elevators.
- Q. inspect remote controls.
- R. inspect appliances.
- S. inspect items not permanently installed.
- T. examine or operate any above-ground, movable, freestanding, or otherwise non-permanently installed pool/spa, recreational equipment, or self-contained equipment.
- U. come into contact with any pool or spa water in order to determine the system's

structure or components.

V. determine the adequacy of a spa's jet water force or bubble effect.

W. determine the structural integrity or leakage of a pool or spa.

X. determine combustibility or flammability.

Y. inspect tenant-owned equipment or personal property.

6.5.12 Life Safety

I. The inspector should:

A. inspect fire access roads and report on any obstructions or overhead wires lower than 13 feet and 6 inches;

B. inspect the address or street number to determine whether it is visible from the street, with numbers in contrast to their background;

C. inspect to determine whether a 3-foot clear space exists around the circumference of fire hydrants;

D. verify that hinged shower doors open outward from the shower and have safety glass-conformance stickers or indicators;

E. inspect to determine whether the storage of flammable and combustible materials is orderly, separated from heaters by distance or shielding so that ignition cannot occur, and not stored in exits, boiler rooms, mechanical rooms or electrical equipment rooms;

F. inspect to determine whether a "No Smoking" sign is posted in areas where flammable or combustible material is stored, dispensed or used;

G. inspect for the presence of fire alarm systems;

H. inspect for alarm panel accessibility;

I. inspect for the presence of portable extinguishers, and determine whether they are located in conspicuous and readily available locations immediately available for use, and not obstructed or obscured from view;

J. inspect to determine whether a portable fire extinguisher is stored within a 30-foot travel distance of commercial-type cooking equipment that uses cooking oil or animal fat;

K. inspect to determine whether manual-actuation devices for commercial cooking appliances exist near the means of egress from the cooking area, 42 to 48 inches above the floor and 10 and 20 feet away, and clearly identifying the hazards protected;

L. inspect to determine whether the maximum travel distance to a fire extinguisher is 75 feet;

M. inspect for the presence of sprinkler systems, and determine if they were ever painted other than at the factory;

N. inspect for the presence of emergency lighting systems;

O. inspect for exit signs at all exits, and inspect for independent power sources, such as batteries;

P. inspect for the presence of directional signs where an exit location is not obvious;

Q. inspect for the presence of signs over lockable exit doors stating: "This Door Must Remain Unlocked During Business Hours";

R. inspect for penetrations in any walls or ceilings that separate the exit corridors or stairwells from the rest of the building;

- S. inspect for fire-separation doors that appear to have been blocked or wedged open, or that do not automatically close and latch;
- T. inspect exit stairwell handrails;
- U. inspect for exit trip hazards;
- V. inspect for the presence of at least two exits to the outside, or one exit that has a maximum travel distance of 75 feet;
- W. inspect exit doorways to determine that they are less than 32 inches in clear width;
- X. inspect to determine whether the exit doors were locked from the inside, chained, bolted, barred, latched or otherwise rendered unusable at the time of the inspection;
- Y. inspect to determine whether the exit doors swing open in the direction of egress travel; and
- Z. inspect the storage to determine if it is potentially obstructing access to fire hydrants, fire extinguishers, alarm panels or electric panelboards, or if it is obstructing aisles, corridors, stairways or exit doors, or if it is within 18 inches of sprinkler heads, or if it is within 3 feet of heat-generating appliances or electrical panelboards.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. test alarm systems, or determine if alarms systems have been tested.
- B. inspect or test heat detectors, fire-suppression systems, or sprinkler systems.
- C. determine the combustibility or flammability of materials in storage.
- D. determine the adequate number of fire extinguishers needed, or their ratings.
- E. test or inspect fire extinguishers, their pressure, or for the presence of extinguisher inspection tags or tamper seals.
- F. inspect or test fire pumps or fire department connections.
- G. inspect or test cooking equipment suppression systems.
- H. determine the operational time of emergency lighting or exit signs.
- I. inspect for proper occupant load signs.
- J. determine fire ratings of walls, ceilings, doors, etc.
- K. inspect, test or determine the adequacy of fire escapes or ladders.
- L. inspect fire department lock boxes or keys.
- M. determine the flame resistance of curtains or draperies.
- N. inspect parking or outdoor lighting.
- O. inspect for unauthorized entry or crime issues.
- P. inspect or test security systems.
- Q. inspect for pet or livestock safety issues.
- R. inspect for unsafe candle use or decoration hazards.
- S. inspect or test emergency generators.
- T. test kitchen equipment, appliances or hoods.
- U. verify that elevator keys exist, or that they work properly.

6.5.13 Cooking Area

I. The inspector should:

- A. verify that all smoke- or grease-laden, vapor-producing cooking equipment, such as deep-fat fryers, ranges, griddles, broilers and woks, is equipped with an exhaust system;

- B. inspect for the accessibility for cleaning and inspection of the exhaust system's interior surface;
- C. inspect for grease buildup;
- D. verify that hoods are made of steel or stainless steel;
- E. verify that visible grease filters are arranged so that all exhaust air passes through them;
- F. verify that visible sections of exhaust ducts are not interconnected with any other ventilation system;
- G. verify that visible sections of exhaust ducts are installed without dips or traps that might collect residue;
- H. verify that exhaust ducts do not appear to pass through firewalls;
- I. try to verify that exhaust ducts lead directly to the exterior of the building;
- J. try to verify that exterior exhaust outlets do not discharge into walkways, or create a nuisance, in the opinion of the inspector;
- K. inspect to determine that a portable fire extinguisher is stored within a 30-foot travel distance of commercial-type cooking equipment that uses cooking oil or animal fat; and
- L. inspect to determine that manual-actuation devices for commercial cooking appliances exist near the means of egress from the cooking area, 42 and 48 inches above the floor and 10 to 20 feet away, and clearly identifying the hazards protected.

II. The inspector is not required to:

- A. determine proper clearances.
- B. determine proper hood size or position.
- C. test hoods.
- D. test exhaust fans or dampers, or measure air flow.
- E. test fire extinguishers, fire-extinguishing equipment, or fusible links.
- F. test kitchen equipment, appliances, hoods or their gauges.
- G. inspect or test grease-removal devices, drip trays or grease filters.
- H. inspect or test air pollution-control devices or fume incinerators.
- I. inspect or test kitchen refrigeration.
- J. inspect for fuel-storage issues.
- K. inspect, test or determine anything regarding food safety.
- L. issue an opinion regarding cooking operating procedures.

7. Report

7.1 Format

The report must be in writing. This Standard does not require any one particular format. It is InterNACHI's opinion that the commercial inspection industry and consumer clients are best served when inspectors are free to compete through report-generation innovation.

7.2 Date

The report should be dated on the first page.

7.3 Inspection Firm Information

The report should include the name and contact information of the inspection firm on the first or second page.

7.4 Property Address

The report should include the address of the property inspected, or a description of the real estate sufficient for identification, on the first or second page.

7.5 Total Number of Pages

The report should indicate the total number of pages and attachments on the first page.

7.6 Brevity

Reports should be concise, to-the-point, and avoid the inclusion of large amounts of pre-printed material.

7.7 Legibility

Reports should be typed or handwritten clearly.

7.8 Opinions of Shut-Down Systems

The inspector should still try to render an opinion of the condition of systems even if they were shut down or were not operational at the time of the walk-through survey.

7.9 Obsolescence

The client should only rely on the inspection report at the point in time that the inspector's observations were being made and research was being conducted. The client should deem the report as obsolete to some extent, even while it is being prepared.

7.10 Site-Specific

The client should understand that an inspection performed in accordance with this Standard only relates to the observations made and research conducted. Consequently, this Standard does not address issues such as business operations at the subject property, deed encumbrances, neighborhood conditions, etc.

7.11 Multiple Buildings

An inspection report produced in accordance with this Standard may encompass more than one building within a single report.

7.12 Cost to Remedy

The inspector is not required to provide repair estimates or opinions of costs to remedy. The inspector may offer opinions about such costs as a courtesy, but the offering of these opinions is outside the scope of a commercial inspection.

8. Limitations, Exceptions and Exclusions

8.1. Limitations:

I. An inspection is not technically exhaustive.

II. An inspection will not identify concealed or latent defects.

III. An inspection will not deal with aesthetic concerns or what could be deemed matters of taste, cosmetic defects, etc.

- IV. An inspection will not determine the suitability of the property for any use.
- V. An inspection does not determine the market value of the property, or its marketability.
- VI. An inspection does not determine the insurability of the property.
- VII. An inspection does not determine the advisability or inadvisability of the purchase of the inspected property.
- VIII. An inspection does not determine the life expectancy of the property, or any components or systems therein.
- IX. An inspection does not include items not permanently installed.
- X. These Standards of Practice apply only to commercial properties.

8.2. Exclusions:

I. The inspector is not required to determine:

- A. property boundary lines or encroachments.
- B. the condition of any component or system that is not readily accessible.
- C. the service-life expectancy of any component or system.
- D. the size, capacity, BTU, performance or efficiency of any component or system.
- E. the cause or reason of any condition.
- F. the cause of the need for repair or replacement of any system or component.
- G. future conditions.
- H. the compliance with codes or regulations.
- I. the presence of evidence of rodents, animals or insects.
- J. the presence of mold, mildew, fungus or toxic drywall.
- K. the presence of airborne hazards.
- L. the presence of birds.
- M. the presence of other flora or fauna.
- N. the air quality.
- O. the presence of asbestos.
- P. the presence of environmental hazards.
- Q. the presence of electromagnetic fields.
- R. the presence of hazardous materials including, but not limited to, the presence of lead in paint.
- S. any hazardous-waste conditions.
- T. any manufacturers' recalls, or conformance with manufacturers' installations, or any information included for consumer-protection purposes.
- U. operating costs of systems.
- V. replacement or repair cost estimates.
- W. the acoustical properties of any systems.
- X. estimates of the cost of operating any given system.
- Y. resistance to wind, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes or seismic activities.
- Z. geological conditions or soil stability.
- AA. compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

II. The inspector is not required to operate:

- A. any system that is shut down.
- B. any system that does not function properly.
- C. or evaluate low-voltage electrical systems, such as, but not limited to:

- 1. phone lines;
- 2. cable lines;
- 3. antennae;
- 4. lights; or
- 5. remote controls.

- D. any system that does not turn on with the use of normal operating controls.
- E. any shut off-valves or manual stop valves.
- F. any electrical disconnect or over-current protection devices.
- G. any alarm systems.
- H. moisture meters, gas detectors or similar equipment.
- I. sprinkler or fire-suppression systems.

III. The inspector is not required to:

A. move any personal items or other obstructions, such as, but not limited to:

- 1. throw rugs;
- 2. furniture;
- 3. floor or wall coverings;
- 4. ceiling tiles;
- 5. window coverings;
- 6. equipment;
- 7. plants;
- 8. ice;
- 9. debris;
- 10. snow;
- 11. water;
- 12. dirt;
- 13. foliage; or
- 14. pets.

- B. dismantle, open or uncover any system or component.
- C. enter or access any area that may, in the opinion of the inspector, be unsafe.
- D. enter crawlspaces or other areas that are unsafe or not readily accessible.
- E. inspect or determine the presence of underground items, such as, but not limited to, underground storage tanks, whether abandoned or actively used.
- F. do anything which, in the inspector's opinion, is likely to be unsafe or dangerous to the inspector or others, or may damage property, such as, but not limited to, walking on roof surfaces, climbing ladders, entering attic spaces, or interacting with pets or livestock.
- G. inspect decorative items.

- H. inspect common elements or areas in multi-unit housing.
- I. inspect intercoms, speaker systems, radio-controlled, security devices, or lawn-irrigation systems.
- J. offer guarantees or warranties.
- K. offer or perform any engineering services.
- L. offer or perform any trade or professional service other than commercial property inspection.
- M. research the history of the property, or report on its potential for alteration, modification, extendibility or suitability for a specific or proposed use for occupancy.
- N. determine the age of construction or installation of any system, structure or component of a building, or differentiate between original construction and subsequent additions, improvements, renovations or replacements thereto.
- O. determine the insurability of a property.
- P. perform or offer Phase 1 environmental audits.
- Q. inspect or report on any system or component that is not included in these Standards.

9. Ethics

Inspectors performing inspections in accordance with this Standard must maintain a high level of business ethics.

9.1 Duty to Client

9.1.1 The inspector shall substantially follow this Standard unless the Scope of Work indicates otherwise.

9.1.2 The inspector shall not engage in any practices that could be damaging to the client or bring discredit to the inspection industry.

9.1.3 The inspector shall be fair, honest, impartial, and act in good faith in dealing with the client.

9.1.4 The inspector shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status or handicap, and shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws concerning discrimination.

9.1.5 The inspector-member shall be truthful regarding his/her services and qualifications.

9.1.6 The inspector shall have no undisclosed conflict of interest with the client, nor shall the inspector accept or offer any undisclosed commissions, rebates, profits or other benefit, nor shall the inspector accept or offer any disclosed or undisclosed commissions, rebates, profits or other benefit from real estate agents, brokers or any third parties having financial interest in the sale of the property, nor shall the inspector offer or provide any disclosed or undisclosed financial compensation directly or indirectly to any

real estate agent, real estate broker or real estate company for referrals or for inclusion on lists of preferred and/or affiliated inspectors or inspection companies.

9.1.7 The inspector shall not communicate any information about an inspection to anyone except the client without the prior written consent of the client, except in cases when the information may affect the safety of others, or violates a law or statute.

9.1.8 The inspector shall always act in the interests of the client, unless doing so violates a law or statute.

9.1.9 The inspector shall use a written Scope of Work Agreement that specifies the services to be performed, the limitations of services, and fees.

9.1.10 The inspector shall comply with all government rules and licensing requirements in the jurisdiction where s/he conducts business.

9.1.11 The inspector shall not perform or offer to perform, for an additional fee, any repairs or repair-associated services to the structure for which the inspector or inspector's company has prepared a commercial inspection report for a period of 12 months. This provision shall not include services to components and/or systems that are not included in this Standard.

END of Standards of Practice