

RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Part I. Definitions and Scope

These Standards of Practice provide guidelines for a dwelling inspection and define certain terms relating to these inspections. A dwelling inspection is a survey and basic operation of the systems and components of a dwelling which can be reached, entered, or viewed without difficulty, moving obstructions, or requiring any action which may result in damage to the property or personal injury to the Inspector. The purpose of the inspection is to provide the Client with information regarding the general condition of the dwelling(s) at the time of the inspection. Cosmetic and aesthetic conditions shall not be considered.

A. A dwelling inspection report provides written documentation of material defects discovered in the inspected dwelling's systems and components which, in the opinion of the Inspector, are safety hazards, are not functioning properly, or appear to be at the ends of their service lives. The report may include the Inspector's recommendations for correction or further evaluation.

B. Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice are not technically exhaustive and shall apply to the primary dwelling and its associated primary parking structure.

Part II. Standards of Practice

A dwelling inspection includes the readily accessible systems and components or a representative number of multiple similar components listed in SECTIONS 1 through 9 subject to the limitations, exceptions, and exclusions in Part III.

SECTION 1 – Foundation, basement, and Under-floor Areas

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Foundation system
2. Floor framing system
3. Under-floor ventilation
4. Foundation anchoring and cripple wall bracing
5. Wood separation from soil
6. Insulation

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Determine size, spacing, location or adequacy of foundation bolting/bracing components or reinforcing systems
2. Determine the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

SECTION 2 – Exterior

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Surface grade directly adjacent to the dwelling
2. Doors and windows
3. Attached decks, porches, patios, balconies, stairways, and their enclosures
4. Wall cladding and trim
5. Portions of walkways and driveways that are adjacent to the dwelling

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Inspect door or window screens, shutters, awnings, security bars
2. Inspect fences or gates or operate automated door or gate openers or their safety devices
3. Use a ladder to inspect systems or components

SECTION 3 – Roof Covering

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Covering
2. Drainage
3. Flashings
4. Penetrations
5. Skylights

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Walk on the roof surface if in the opinion of the Inspector if there is risk of damage or a hazard to the Inspector
2. Warrant or certify that roof systems, coverings, or components are free from leakage

SECTION 4 – Attic Areas and Roof Framing

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Framing
2. Ventilation
3. Insulation

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Inspect mechanical attic ventilation systems or components

2. Determine the composition or energy rating of insulation material

3. Inspect suspended ceiling system or remove suspended ceiling panels

SECTION 5 – Plumbing

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Water supply piping
2. Drain, waste, and vent piping
3. Faucets and fixtures
4. Fuel gas piping
5. Water heaters
6. Functional flow and functional drainage

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Fill any fixture with water or inspect overflow drains or drain-stops, or evaluate backflow devices, waste ejectors, sump pumps, drain line cleanouts, traps, fittings, anti-siphon devices, or air chambers
2. Inspect or evaluate water temperature balancing devices, temperature fluctuation, time to obtain hot water, water circulation, or solar heating systems or components
3. Inspect whirlpool baths, steam showers, jacuzzis, spa tubs, or sauna systems or components
4. Inspect fuel tanks or determine if fuel gas system is free of leaks
5. Inspect wells or water treatment systems

SECTION 6 - Electrical

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Interior service equipment
2. Electrical panels
3. Circuit wiring
4. Representative number of switches, receptacles, outlets, lighting fixtures

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Operate circuit breakers or circuit interrupters
2. Remove cover plates from any electrical panel, equipment or outlet
3. Inspect de-icing systems or components
4. Inspect private or emergency electrical supply systems or components
5. Inspect high voltage systems or components
6. Determine Ampacity

SECTION 7 – Heating and Cooling

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Heating equipment
2. Central cooling equipment
3. Energy source and connections
4. Combustion air and exhaust vent systems
5. Condensate drainage
6. Conditioned air distribution systems

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Inspect heat exchangers, electric heating elements, thermostats, firebox interior, or sensors
2. Inspect non-central air conditioning units, evaporative coolers
3. Inspect radiant, solar, hydronic, or geothermal systems or components
4. Determine volume, uniformity, temperature, airflow, balance, leakage, adequacy, efficiency or ducts of any air distribution ducts or systems
5. Inspect electronic air filtering or humidity control systems or components; Inspect air conditioning coils
6. Operate any heating, cooling or ventilation equipment
7. Inspect or review any printouts or displays

SECTION 8 – Fireplaces and Chimneys

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Chimney exterior
2. Spark arrestor
3. Firebox exterior, if accessible
4. Damper and hearth extension

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Inspect chimney, flue or firebox interiors
2. Inspect wood stoves, fireplace inserts, seals or gaskets
3. Operate any fireplace or determine if a fireplace can be safely used

SECTION 9 – Dwelling Interior

A. Items to be inspected:

1. Walls, ceilings, and floors
2. Doors and windows
3. Stairways, handrails, and guardrails

4. Permanently installed cabinets in the kitchen
5. Absence of smoke alarms or carbon monoxide alarms
6. Vehicle doors and openers

B. The Inspector is not required to:

1. Inspect window, door, or floor coverings, or security bars
2. Determine whether a dwelling is secure from unauthorized entry
3. Operate or test smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms or vehicle door safety devices
4. Use a ladder to inspect systems or components
5. Inspect under floor coverings, including carpets, vinyl, tile, etc.
6. Inspect or operate any appliances, such as cook-tops, mechanical range vents, ovens, dishwashers, washers, dryers, refrigerators, etc.
7. Determine adequacy of exiting

Part III. Limitations, Exceptions and Exclusions

A. The following are excluded from a dwelling inspection:

1. Systems or components of a dwelling, or portions thereof, which are not readily accessible, not permanently installed, or not inspected due to circumstances beyond the control of the Inspector or which the Client has agreed or specified are not to be inspected
2. Site improvements or amenities, including, but not limited to: accessory structures, fences, planters, landscaping, irrigation, pools, spas, jacuzzis, ponds, waterfalls, fountains, retaining walls, playground equipment, central vacuums, gazebos, or their components or accessories
3. Appliances: washers, dryers, dishwashers, ovens, refrigerators, etc.
4. Systems or components, or portions thereof, which are under ground, under water, or where the Inspector must come into contact with water; underground storage tanks
5. Common areas as defined in California Civil Code section 1351, et seq., and any dwelling unit systems or components located in common areas
6. Building ingress or egress, compliance with Americans with Disabilities Acts or other accessibility standards, regulations, ordinances, covenants, or other restrictions.
7. Determining compliance with building codes, accessibility standards, conservation/energy standards, regulations, zoning, ordinances, covenants, or other restrictions, square footage, manufacturers installation guidelines or specifications, signage
8. Determining adequacy, efficiency, suitability, quality, age, or remaining life of any dwelling, system, or component, or marketability or advisability of purchase
9. Structural, architectural, geological, environmental, land surveying, soil stability or composition, hydrological, or any other site-related examinations or evaluations
10. Acoustical or other nuisance characteristics of any system or component of a dwelling, complex, adjoining properties, or neighborhood
11. Conditions related to animals, insects, wood-destroying organisms and insects (WDO/WDI), including termites, beetles, etc., or any other organisms, and any hazardous, illegal, or controlled substances, or damage or health risks arising therefrom
12. Risks associated with events or conditions of nature including, but not limited to: geological, seismic, wildfire, flood, landslide, mud
13. Water testing any dwelling, system, or component or determine leakage in windows, doorways, roof, shower pans, pools, spas, or any body of water
14. Determining integrity of hermetic seals at multi-pane glazing
15. Determining original construction or subsequent additions or modifications, levelness, permit research
16. Reviewing information from any third-party, including but not limited to: product defects, recalls, or similar notices
17. Specifying repairs/replacement procedures or estimating cost to correct
18. Communication, computer, security, thermostat, or low-voltage systems and remote, timer, sensor, or similarly controlled systems or components
19. Fire extinguishing and suppression systems and components or determining fire resistive qualities of materials or assemblies

20. Elevators, lifts, and dumbwaiters
21. Lighting pilot lights or activating or operating any system or component that is shut down, unsafe to operate, or does not respond to normal on/off user controls
22. Operating shutoff valves or shutting down any system or component
23. Dismantling any system, structure, or component or removing access panels
24. Determining the presence of Chinese drywall
25. Deficiencies that fall within the scope of routine maintenance

B. The Inspector may, at his or her discretion:

1. Inspect any dwelling, system, component, appliance, or improvement not included or otherwise excluded by these Standards of Practice. Any such inspection shall comply with all other provisions of these Standards.
2. Include photographs in the written report or take photographs for Inspector's reference without inclusion in the written report. Photographs may not be used in lieu of written documentation.

PART IV. Glossary of Terms

Appliance: An item such as an oven, dishwasher, heater, washer, dryer, refrigerator, cook top, microwave, etc., which performs a specific function

Component: A part of a system, appliance, fixture, or device

Condition: Conspicuous state of being

Determine: Arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to a dwelling inspection

Device: A component designed to perform a particular task or function

Dwelling: The subject of the inspection and its primary parking structure

Standard Home Inspection: Refer to Part I, "Definitions and Scope", Paragraph A

Equipment: A fixture, or device.

Fixture: A plumbing or electrical component with a fixed position and function

Function: The normal and characteristic purpose or action of a system, component or device

Functional Drainage: The ability to empty a plumbing fixture in a reasonable time

Functional Flow: The flow of the water supply at the highest and farthest fixture from the dwelling supply shutoff valve when another fixture is used simultaneously

Inspect: Refer to Part I, "Definition and Scope", Paragraph A

Inspector: One who performs a dwelling inspection

Normal User Control: Switch or other device that activates a system or component and is provided for use by an occupant of a dwelling

Operate: Cause a system, appliance, fixture, or device to function using normal user on/off controls

Permanently installed: Fixed in place, e.g. screwed, bolted, nailed, glued

Primary Dwelling: A dwelling than an Inspector has agreed to inspect

Primary Parking structure: A structure for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the primary dwelling

Readily Accessible: Can be reached, entered, or visually viewed without difficulty, moving obstructions, or requiring any action which may harm persons or property

Representative Number: An average of one component per area for multiple similar components such as windows, doors, & electrical outlets

Safety Hazard: A condition that could result in significant physical injury

Shut Down: Disconnected or turned off in a way so as not to respond to normal on/off controls

System: An Assemblage of various components designed to function as a whole

Technically Exhaustive: Examination beyond the scope of a dwelling inspection, which may require disassembly, specialized knowledge, special equipment, measuring, calculating, quantifying, testing, exploratory probing, research or analysis