



## RESIDENTIAL HOME INSPECTION STANDARDS OF PRACTICE - Four or Fewer Units

### Part I. Definitions and Scope

These Standards of Practice provide guidelines for a home inspection and define certain terms relating to these inspections. Italicized words in these Standards are defined in Part IV, Glossary of Terms.

- A. A home inspection is a noninvasive, visual survey and basic operation of the *systems* and *components* of a home 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 *building(s)* to assist client in determining what *corrections* or *further evaluations* the Client should have *corrected*, evaluated or obtained estimates for repair prior to the release of contingencies.
- B. A home inspection report provides written documentation of material defects discovered in the inspected *building'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 will include the Inspector's recommendations for *correction* or *further evaluation*.
- C. All *corrections* or *further evaluations* need to be provided by an appropriate, competent, licensed and/or certified professional as stated in the CA Business and Professions Code 7195(c).
- D. Client should consider all available information when negotiating regarding the Property.
- E. Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice are not *technically exhaustive* and shall apply to the primary *building* and its associated *primary parking structure*.
- F. Cosmetic and aesthetic conditions shall not be considered.

### Part II. Standards of Practice

A home 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 and Under-floor Areas - Items to be inspected/reported:

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

#### Section 2 - Exterior - Items to be inspected/reported:

1. Surface grade directly adjacent to the *building*
2. Doors and windows
3. Attached decks, porch, and balconies
4. Stairways that are attached to the *building*, attached decks or porch
5. Wall cladding and trim
6. Portions of patios, walkways and driveways that are adjacent to the *buildings*
7. *Pool/spa drowning prevention safety features*, for the sole purpose of identifying which, if any, are present
8. *Pool/spa drowning prevention safety features*, for the sole purpose of identifying if less than two are present

#### Section 3 - Roof - Items to be inspected/reported:

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

## 5. Skylights

### **Section 4 - Attic Areas and Roof Framing** - Items to be inspected/reported:

1. Framing
2. Ventilation
3. Insulation

### **Section 5 - Plumbing** - Items to be inspected/reported:

1. Water supply piping
2. Drain, waste, and vent piping
3. Faucets, toilets, sinks, tubs, and showers
4. Fuel gas piping
5. Water heaters

### **Section 6 - Electrical** - Items to be inspected/reported:

1. *Service equipment*
2. Electrical panels
3. Circuit wiring
4. Switches, receptacles, outlets, and lighting *fixtures*

### **Section 7 - HVAC** - Items to be inspected/reported:

1. *Heating equipment*
2. *Central cooling equipment*
3. Energy source and connections
4. Combustion air
5. Exhaust vents
6. Condensate drainage
7. *Conditioned air distribution systems*

### **Section 8 - Interior** - Items to be inspected/reported:

1. Walls, ceilings, and floors
2. Doors and windows
3. Stairways
4. *Permanently installed* cabinets
5. *Permanently installed* cook-tops
6. Ovens
7. Cooktop exhaust vents
8. Dishwashers
9. Food waste disposals
10. Absence of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
11. Vehicle doors and openers

### **Section 9 - Fireplaces and Chimneys** - Items to be inspected/reported:

1. Chimney exterior
2. Spark arrestor
3. Firebox
4. Damper
5. Hearth extension

## **Part III. Limitations, Exceptions, and Exclusions**

### A. The following are excluded from a home inspection:

1. *Determine* size, spacing, location, or adequacy of foundation bolting or bracing components or reinforcing systems
2. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials.
3. *Inspect* door or window screens, shutters, awnings, or security bars
4. *Inspect* fences or gates or automated door or gate openers or their safety devices, except as required by applicable law
5. Use a ladder to inspect *systems* or *components*
6. Walk on the roof if in the opinion of the Inspector there is risk of damage or a hazard to the Inspector
7. Warrant or certify that roof *systems*, coverings, or *components* are free from leakage
8. *Inspect* mechanical attic ventilation *systems* or *components*

9. Fill any fixture with water, inspect overflow drains or drain stops, or evaluate backflow devices, waste ejectors, sump pumps, or drain line cleanouts
10. *Inspect* or *evaluate* water temperature balancing devices, temperature fluctuation, time to obtain hot water, water circulation, or solar heating *systems* or *components*
11. *Inspect* whirlpool baths, steam showers, or sauna *systems* or *components*
12. *Inspect* fuel tanks or *determine* if the fuel gas system is free of leaks
13. *Inspect* wells, private water supply or water treatment *systems*
14. *Operate* circuit breakers
15. *Inspect* de-icing *systems* or *components*
16. *Inspect* onsite electrical generation or storage or emergency electrical supply *systems* or *components*
17. *Inspect* heat exchangers or electric heating elements
18. *Inspect* non-central air conditioning units or evaporative coolers
19. *Inspect* radiant, solar, hydronic, or geothermal *systems* or *components*
20. *Determine* volume, uniformity, temperature, airflow, balance, or leakage of any air distribution *system*
21. *Inspect* electronic air filtering or humidity control *systems* or *components*
22. *Determine* whether a *building* is secure from unauthorized entry
23. *Operate*, test or determine the type of smoke or carbon monoxide alarms
24. *Inspect* chimney interiors, fireplace inserts, seals, or gaskets. *Operate* any fireplace or *determine* if a fireplace can be safely used
25. Test vehicle door safety impact reversing devices
26. *Inspect* *systems* or *components* of a *building*, 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 are not to be inspected
27. *Inspect* site improvements or amenities (i.e., accessory buildings, fences, planters, landscaping, irrigation, swimming pools, spas, ponds, waterfalls, fountains, landscape stairs...)
28. *Inspect* auxiliary features of appliances beyond the *appliance's* basic *function*
29. *Inspect* *systems* or *components*, or portions thereof, which are under ground, under water, or where the Inspector must come into contact with water
30. *Inspect* common areas as defined in California Civil Code section 1351, et seq., and any dwelling unit *systems* or *components* located in common areas
31. *Determine* compliance with manufacturers' installation guidelines or specifications, building codes, accessibility standards, conservation or energy standards, regulations, ordinances, easements, setbacks, covenants, or other restrictions
32. *Determine* adequacy, efficiency, suitability, quality, age, marketability or advisability of purchase or remaining life of any *building*, *system*, or *component*.
33. Conduct structural, architectural, geological, environmental, hydrological, land surveying, or soils-related examinations
34. *Evaluate* acoustical or other nuisance characteristics of any system or component of a building, complex, adjoining property, or neighborhood
35. Report Wood Destroying Organisms (WDO) including termites or any insect, as well as rot or any fungus, that damage wood.
36. *Inspect* or identification for the presence of animals or animal activity
37. *Evaluate* risks associated with events or conditions of nature including (i.e., geological, seismic, wildfire, flood...)
38. *Conduct* any water testing or *determine* leakage in any body of water (i.e., shower pans, water features...)
39. *Determine* the integrity of hermetic seals or reflective coatings at multi-pane glazing
40. Differentiate between original construction or subsequent additions or modifications
41. Review or interpret information or reports from any third-party (i.e., permits, disclosures, product defects, construction documents, litigation concerning the Property, recalls, insurance requirements...)
42. Specify *correction* procedures or estimating cost to correct
43. *Inspect* communication, computer, security, or low-voltage, timer, sensor, or similarly controlled *systems* or *components*
44. *Evaluate* fire extinguishing and suppression systems and components or *determine* fire resistive qualities of materials or assemblies
45. *Inspect* elevators, lifts, and dumbwaiters
46. Lighting pilot lights or activating or *operate* any *system*, *component*, or *appliance* that is *shut down*, unsafe to operate, or does not respond to *normal user controls*
47. *Operate* shutoff valves or shutting down any *system* or *component*
48. Dismantle any *system*, structure or *component* or removing cover plates or access panels other than those provided for homeowner maintenance
49. Test, *operate* or *determine* if any *drowning prevention safety feature* is installed properly or is adequate, effective or meets ASTM standards

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

1. *Inspect any building, system, component, appliance, or improvement not included or otherwise excluded by these Standards of Practice, as a courtesy to the Client, which may include an additional fee. Any such inspection shall comply with all other provisions of these Standards, as applicable.*
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 of conditions found in the report.*

#### IV. Home Glossary of Terms

Note: All definitions apply to derivatives of these terms when italicized in the text.

**Appears:** When the *Inspector* observes an item or defect but, cannot determine the state or cause of the item or defect, when analysis or procedures are out of the scope of the Standard of Practice, or it is beyond the *Inspectors'* expertise

**Appliance:** An item such as an oven, dishwasher, heater, etc. which performs a specific *function*

**Building:** The subject of the *inspection* and its primary parking structure

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

**Condition:** Conspicuous state of being

**Correction:** The appropriate corrective action taken by the appropriate, competent, licensed and/or certified person (i.e., repair, replace, remove...)

**Determine:** Arrive at an opinion or conclusion

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

**Drowning Prevention Safety Features** (as per CA Health and Safety Code 115992):

- 1 - *Isolation barrier*
- 2 - *Mesh barrier*
- 3 - *Pool/spa cover*
- 4 - Home exit alarms
- 5 - Self-closing and self-latching home doors
- 6 - *Pool/spa alarm*

**Equipment:** An *appliance, fixture, or device*

**Evaluate:** form an idea of the amount, number, or value of; assess

**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*

**Further Evaluation:** a recommendation when the *Inspector* can not determine the state or cause, when analysis or procedures are out of the scope of the Standard of Practice, or it is beyond the *Inspectors'* expertise

**Home Inspection:** Refer to Part I, 'Definitions and Scope', Paragraph A

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

**Inspector:** One who performs a home inspection

**Isolation Barrier:** The *barrier* around the *pool* area that isolates the *pool* area from the house

**Mesh Barrier:** The *barrier* around the *pool* area that isolates the *pool* area from the house of which any portion is made of mesh

**Natural Barrier:** A portion of the *barrier* that is not man-made (cliff, lake, boulder...)

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

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

**Permanently Installed:** Fixed in place, e.g. screwed, bolted, nailed, or glued

**Primary Building:** A *building* that an *Inspector* has agreed to *inspect*

**Primary Parking Structure:** A *building* for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the primary *building*, which may be attached or detached. Only one *primary parking structure* may be designated as primary.

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

**Representative Number:** Example, an average of one *component* per area for multiple similar *components* such as windows, doors, and 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 user controls*

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

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

