



Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors

CAHPI National Standards of Practice

The National Standards of Practice are for home and property inspectors to follow in the performance of their inspections. They are the most widely accepted Canadian home and property inspection Standards in use and address all the home's major systems and components as listed in this Standard. The National Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics are recognized by many related professionals as the definitive standards for professional performance in the industry.

These National Standards of Practice are being published to inform the public on the nature and scope of visual building inspections performed by home and property inspectors who are members of the Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors (CAHPI).

The purpose of the National Standards of Practice is to provide minimum requirements for home and property inspectors regarding both the inspection itself and the inspection report, and to define certain terms relating to the performance of home or property inspections to ensure consistent interpretation.

These standards take into account that a visual inspection of a building does not constitute an evaluation or a verification of compliance with building codes, standards or regulations governing the construction industry or the health and safety industry, or standards and regulations governing insurability.

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Any terms not defined in the glossary of this standard will use industry standard terms.

Glossary Note: Italicized words are defined in the Glossary.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors (CAHPI) is a not-for-profit association. CAHPI strives to promote excellence within the profession and continual improvement of inspection services to the public.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 2.1 The purpose of these National Standards of Practice is to establish professional and uniform Standards for home and property inspectors who are members of CAHPI. Home and Property Inspections performed to these National Standards of Practice are intended to provide information regarding the condition of the systems and components of the building as observed at the time of the Inspection.

These National Standards of Practice apply to inspections of part or all of a building for the following building types:

- single-family dwelling, detached, semi-detached or row house
- multi-unit residential building
- residential building held in divided or undivided co-ownership
- residential building occupied in part for a residential occupancy and in part for a commercial occupancy, as long as the latter use does not exceed 40% of the building's total area, excluding the basement.

2.2 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. *readily-accessible*, visually-observable *installed systems*, and *components* of buildings listed in these National Standards of Practice.

B. report:

1. on those installed *systems* and *components* that, in the professional opinion or judgement of the *inspector*, have a *significant deficiency*, or are near the end of their *service lives*.
2. the implication for the *system* or *component* that has a *significant deficiency* or is near the end of its *service life*.
3. the inspector's recommendations to correct, repair, or refer for further evaluation of the reported deficiency by a qualified specialist.
4. on any *systems* and *components* designated for inspection in these National Standards of Practice which were known to be present at the time of the *Home or Property Inspection* but were not inspected and a reason they were not inspected.

2.3 These National Standards of Practice are not intended to limit inspectors from:

- A. including other inspection services in addition to those required by these National Standards of Practice provided the *inspector* is appropriately qualified to do so.
- B. excluding *systems* and *components* from the inspection if requested by the client or as dictated by circumstances at the time of the inspection.

3. GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

3.1 GENERAL LIMITATIONS:

- A. Inspections performed in accordance with these National Standards of Practice
 1. are not *technically exhaustive*.
 2. will not identify concealed conditions or latent defects.

3.2 GENERAL EXCLUSIONS:

- A. The *inspector* is not required to perform any action or make any determination unless specifically stated in these National Standards of Practice, except as may be required by lawful authority.

- B. *Inspectors* are NOT required to determine:
1. condition of *systems* or *components* which are not *readily accessible*.
 2. remaining *service life* of any *system* or *component*.
 3. strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any *system* or *component*.
 4. causes of any condition or deficiency.
 5. methods, materials, or costs of corrections.
 6. future conditions including, but not limited to, failure of *systems* and *components*.
 7. suitability of the property for any use.
 8. compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.).
 9. market value of the property or its marketability.
 10. advisability of the purchase of the property.
 11. presence of potentially hazardous plants, animals or insects including, but not limited to wood destroying organisms, diseases or organisms harmful to humans.
 12. presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water, and air.
 13. effectiveness of any *system installed* or methods utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.
 14. operating costs of *systems* or *components*.
 15. acoustical properties of any *system* or *component*.
 16. design adequacy with regards to location of the home or property, or the elements to which it is exposed.
- C. *Inspectors* are NOT required to offer or perform:
1. any act or service contrary to law, statute or regulation.
 2. *engineering*, *architectural* and technical services.
 3. work in any trade or any professional service other than *home or property inspection*.
 4. warranties or guarantees of any kind.
- D. *Inspectors* are NOT required to operate:
1. any *system* or *component* which is *shut down* or otherwise inoperable.
 2. any *system* or *component* which does not respond to *normal operating controls*.
 3. shut-off valves.
- E. *Inspectors* are NOT required to enter:
1. any area which will, in the opinion of the *inspector*, likely be hazardous to the *inspector* or other persons or damage the property or its *systems* or *components*.
 2. spaces which are not *readily accessible*.
- F. *Inspectors* are NOT required to *inspect*:
1. underground items including, but not limited to, storage tanks or other indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active.
 2. *systems* or *components* which are not *installed*.
 3. *decorative* items.
 4. *systems* or *components* located in areas that are not *readily accessible* in accordance with these National Standards of Practice.
 5. detached buildings.
 6. common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium/strata properties, or cooperative housing when inspecting individual units, including the roof and building envelope.
 7. test and/or operate any fire alarm system, burglar alarm system, automatic sprinkler system or other fire protection equipment, electronic or automated installations, telephone, intercom, cable/ internet systems and any lifting equipment, elevator, freight elevator, wheelchair lift, climbing chair, escalator or others;
 8. pools, *spas* and their associated safety devices;
 9. fences.
- G. *Inspectors* are NOT required to:
1. perform any procedure or operation which will, in the opinion of the *inspector*, likely be hazardous to the *inspector* or other persons or damage the property or its *systems* or *components*.
 2. move suspended ceiling tiles, personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.
 3. *dismantle* any *system* or *component*.

4. STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

4.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. *structural components* including visible foundation and framing.

B. report:

1. methods used to *inspect* the *crawl space*.
2. methods used to *inspect* the attics.

5. EXTERIOR SYSTEMS

5.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. exterior wall coverings, flashing and trim.
2. all exterior doors.
3. decks, balconies, stairs, porches, and their associated guards and handrails.
4. eaves, soffits, and fascia where visible from the ground level.
5. grading, and surface drainage.
6. walkways, patios, and driveways.
7. retaining walls.
8. attached garages or carports including garage doors and garage door operators.

B. report:

1. the methods used to inspect the exterior walls and their related components.

5.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. inspect:

1. screening, shutters, awnings, and similar accessories.
2. geological, geotechnical, or hydrological conditions.
3. *recreational facilities*.
4. detached garages and outbuildings except as required by local authority with jurisdiction.
5. mechanical lifts.
6. seawalls, breakwaters, dikes, and docks.
7. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

6. ROOF SYSTEMS

6.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. roof coverings.
2. *roof drainage systems*.
3. flashings.
4. skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.

B. describe:

1. roof coverings.

C. report:

1. methods used to inspect the roofs.

6.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. inspect:

1. antennae and satellite dishes.
2. interiors of flues or chimneys.
3. other *installed* items attached to but not related to the roof systems.

7. PLUMBING SYSTEMS

7.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. interior water supply and distribution *systems* including all fixtures and faucets.
2. drain, waste and vent *systems* including all fixtures.
3. water-heating equipment and associated venting systems.
4. fuel storage and distribution *systems*.
5. drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping.
6. backflow preventers on supply piping.

B. describe:

1. water supply, distribution, drain, waste, and vent piping materials.
2. water heating equipment including the energy source.
3. location of main water and fuel shut-off valves.

7.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. inspect:

1. clothes washing machine connections.
2. wells, well pumps, cisterns, or water storage related equipment.
3. water conditioning *systems*.
4. solar water heating *systems*.
5. fire sprinkler *systems*.
6. private waste disposal *systems*.
7. irrigation *systems*.

B. determine:

1. whether water supply and waste disposal *systems* are public or private.
2. the quantity or quality of the water supply.

C. operate:

1. safety valves or shut-off valves.

8. ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

8.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. service drop.
2. service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways.
3. service equipment and main disconnects.
4. service grounding.
5. interior components of service panels and sub panels.

6. distribution conductors.
7. overcurrent protection devices.
8. a *representative number* of installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
9. ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI).
10. arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCI).
11. smoke alarms.
12. carbon monoxide alarms.

8.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. inspect:

1. remote control devices unless the device is the only control device.
2. alarm *systems* and *components*.
3. low voltage wiring, *systems* and *components*.
4. ancillary wiring, *systems* and *components* not a part of the primary electrical power distribution *system*.
5. telecommunication equipment.

B. measure:

1. amperage, voltage, or impedance.

C. operate or test:

1. smoke alarms.
2. carbon monoxide alarms.

9. HEATING SYSTEMS

9.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. *installed* heating equipment.
2. vent systems, flues, and chimneys.
3. fuel storage and distribution *systems*.

9.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. inspect:

1. interiors of flues or chimneys.
2. heat exchangers.
3. auxiliary equipment.
4. solar heating *systems*.

B. determine:

1. system adequacy or distribution balance.

10. FIREPLACES AND SOLID FUEL BURNING APPLIANCES

10.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. fireplace and solid fuel burning system components.
2. vent systems and chimneys.

B. describe:

1. fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances.

10.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. inspect:

1. interior of flues or chimneys.

2. screens, doors and dampers.
3. seals and gaskets.
4. automatic fuel feed devices.
5. heat distribution systems whether fan-assisted or convection.
- B. ignite or extinguish fires or pilot lights.
- C. determine draft characteristics.
- D. move fireplace inserts, stoves, or firebox contents.

11. AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

11.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect

1. permanently *installed* air conditioning equipment.

11.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. inspect

1. portable air conditioners.

B. determine:

1. system adequacy or distribution balance.

12. INTERIOR SYSTEMS

12.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. walls, ceilings, and floors.
2. stairs, guards and handrails.
3. a *representative number* of countertops and *installed* cabinets.
4. a *representative number* of doors and windows.
5. gas proofing of walls, doors and ceilings separating the habitable spaces and the garage.
6. fire separations.

12.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. inspect:

1. *decorative* finishes.
2. window treatments.
3. central vacuum *systems*.
4. *household appliances*.
5. *recreational facilities*.

13. INSULATION AND VAPOUR RETARDERS

13.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. insulation and *vapour retarders*.

B. describe:

1. type of insulation materials and *vapour retarders* in unfinished spaces.

13.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

A. disturb:

1. insulation.
2. *vapour retarders*

14. MECHANICAL AND NATURAL VENTILATION SYSTEMS

14.1 THE INSPECTOR SHALL:

A. inspect:

1. ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
2. *mechanical ventilation systems*.
3. the ventilation systems in areas where moisture is generated such as kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms.

14.2 THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:

B. determine:

1. indoor air quality.
2. system adequacy or distribution balance.

GLOSSARY

Adjacent

Nearest in space or position; immediately adjoining without intervening space.

Alarm Systems

Warning devices, installed or free-standing, including but not limited to; carbon monoxide alarms, flue gas and other spillage alarms, security equipment, ejector pumps and smoke alarms.

Architectural Service

Any practice involving the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or grouping of structures and the use of space within and surrounding the structures or the design for construction, including but not specifically limited to, schematic design, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and administration of the construction contract, adequacy of design for the location and exposure to the elements.

Automatic Safety Controls

Devices designed and installed to protect *systems* and *components* from unsafe conditions.

Component

A part of a *system*.

Crawl Space

The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the floor.

Decorative

Ornamental; not required for the operation of *systems* and *components* of a building.

Describe

To report a *system* or *component* by its type or other observed, significant characteristics to distinguish it from other *systems* or *components*.

Determine

To find out, or come to a conclusion by investigation.

Dismantle

To take apart or remove any component, device, or piece of equipment that would not be taken apart or removed by a homeowner in the course of normal and routine homeowner maintenance.

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 supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with the specifications and design, in conjunction with structures, buildings, machines, equipment, works or processes.

Functionality

The purpose that something is designed or expected to fulfill.

Further Evaluation

Examination and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesperson or service technician beyond that provided by the *home inspection*.

Home and Property Inspection

The process by which an *inspector* visually examines the *readily accessible systems and components* of a building in accordance with these National Standards of Practice.

Household Appliances

Kitchen, laundry, and similar appliances, whether *installed* or freestanding.

Inspect

To examine *readily accessible systems and components* of a building in accordance with these National Standards of Practice, *where applicable* using *normal operating controls* and opening *readily openable access panels*.

Inspector

A person hired to examine any *system* or *component* of a building in accordance with these National Standards of Practice.

Installed

Set up or fixed in position for current use or service.

Mechanical Ventilation Systems

An active or powered air exhaust and/or intake system installed to remove moisture or contaminants from, or introduce fresh air into, the living space.

Normal Operating Controls

Devices such as thermostats, switches or valves intended to be operated by the homeowner.

Operate

To cause to function, turn on, to control the function of a machine, process, or system.

Readily Accessible

Available for visual inspection without requiring moving of personal property, *dismantling*, destructive measures, or any action which will likely involve risk to persons or property.

Readily Openable Access Panel

A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is within normal reach, can be removed by one person, and is not sealed in place.

Recreational Facilities

Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, exercise, entertainment, athletic, playground or other similar equipment and associated accessories.

Report

To communicate in writing.

Representative Number

One *component* per room for multiple similar interior *components* such as windows and electric outlets; one *component* on each side of the building for multiple similar exterior *components*.

Roof Drainage Systems

Components used to carry water off a roof and away from a building.

Sample

A representative portion selected for inspection.

Service Life/Lives

The period during which something continues to function fully as intended.

Shut Down

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

Significant Deficiency

A clearly definable hazard or a clearly definable potential for failure or is unsafe or not functioning.

Solid Fuel Burning Appliances

A hearth and fire chamber or similar prepared place in which a fire may be built, and which is built in conjunction with a chimney; or a listed assembly of a fire chamber, its chimney and related factory-made parts designed for unit assembly without requiring field construction.

Spa

Residential recreational or therapeutic device.

Structural Component

A component that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads).

System

A combination of interacting or interdependent components, assembled to carry out one or more functions.

Technically Exhaustive

An inspection is technically exhaustive when it is done by a specialist who may make extensive use of measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, and other means to develop scientific or engineering findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Technical Services

Services that involve dismantling, the extensive use of advanced techniques, measurements, instruments, tools, testing, calculations, or other similar methods.

Unsafe

A condition in a *readily accessible, installed system* or component which is judged to be a significant risk of personal injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, missing or improper installation or a change in accepted residential construction Standards.

Note - In these National Standards of Practice, redundancy in the description of the requirements, limitations and exclusions regarding the scope of the Home and Property Inspection is provided for clarity not emphasis.

Vapour Retarder

Material used in the building envelope to retard the passage of water vapour.

(CAHPI acknowledges The American Society of Home Inspectors®, Inc. (ASHI®) for the use of their Standards of Practice (version January 1, 2000)

Visually Accessible

Able to be viewed by reaching or entering.

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