

InterNACHI® Pool and Spa Inspection Standards of Practice

(Revised April 2025)

POOL & SPA PLUMBING LAYOUT

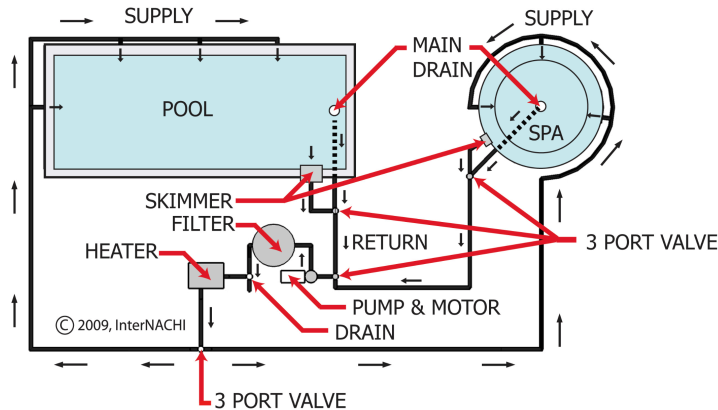


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1. Definitions and Scope

1.1. A residential pool and spa inspection is a non-invasive, visual examination of the accessible areas of a pool or spa (as delineated below), performed for a fee, which is designed to identify defects within specific systems and components defined by these Standards that are both observed and deemed material by the inspector. The scope of work may be modified by the Client and Inspector prior to the inspection process.

1. The pool and spa inspection is based on the observations made on the date of the inspection, and not a prediction of future conditions.
2. The pool and spa inspection will not reveal every issue that exists or ever could exist, but only those material defects observed on the date of the inspection.
3. The pool and spa inspection is conducted by a home inspection generalist, not by a pool technical specialist.

1.2. A **material defect** is a specific issue with a system or component that may have a significant, adverse impact on the value of the property or that poses an unreasonable

risk to people. The fact that a system or component is near, at, or beyond the end of its normal, useful life is not, in itself, a material defect.

1.3. A residential pool and spa inspection **report** shall identify, in written format, defects within specific systems and components defined by these Standards that are both observed and deemed material by the inspector. Residential pool and spa inspection reports may include additional comments and recommendations.

2. Limitations, Exceptions & Exclusions

Inspectors are not required to inspect or perform any action not explicitly detailed in these Standards.

2.1. Limitations:

1. Inspectors are not required to come into direct contact with pool or spa water.
2. Inspectors are not required to enter the pool or spa.
3. Inspectors are not required to drain a pool or spa in order to inspect it.
4. Inspectors are not required to inspect solar heating systems.
5. An inspection is not technically exhaustive.
6. An inspection will not identify concealed or latent defects.
7. An inspection will not deal with aesthetic concerns or what could be deemed matters of taste, cosmetic defects, etc.
8. An inspection does not include items not permanently installed.
9. An inspection will not determine the suitability of the property for any use.
10. An inspection does not determine the market value of the property or its marketability.
11. An inspection does not determine the insurability of the property.
12. An inspection does not determine the advisability or inadvisability of the purchase of the inspected property.
13. An inspection does not determine the life expectancy of the property or any components or systems therein.
14. This Standards of Practice applies to properties with four or fewer residential units and their attached garages and carports.

2.2. Exclusions

I. The inspector is not required to determine:

1. water quality;
2. water chemistry;

3. property boundary lines or encroachments.
4. condition of any component or system that is not readily accessible.
5. the service life expectancy of any component or system.
6. the size, capacity, BTU, performance, or efficiency of any component or system.
7. the cause or reason of any condition.
8. the cause for the need for correction, repair, or replacement of any system or component.
9. future conditions.
10. compliance with codes or regulations.
11. the presence of evidence of rodents, birds, bats, animals, insects, or other pests.
12. the presence of mold, mildew, or fungus.
13. the existence of environmental hazards.
14. the existence of electromagnetic fields.
15. any hazardous waste conditions.
16. any manufacturer's recalls, conformance with manufacturer installation, or any information included for consumer protection purposes.
17. correction, replacement or repair cost estimates.
18. estimates of the cost to operate any given system.

II. The inspector is not required to operate:

1. any system that is shut down.
2. any system that does not function properly.
3. any system that does not turn on with the use of normal operating controls.
4. any shut-off valves or manual stop valves.
5. any electrical disconnect or over-current protection devices.
6. any alarm systems.
7. moisture meters, gas detectors, or similar equipment.

III. The inspector is not required to:

1. touch the water or fill the pool, spa, or tub with water.
2. find water leaks from the shell or determine underground water tables.
3. inspect water chemistry, water clarity, and the presence or absence of bacteria or algae.
4. activate any system or component of the pool or spa that has been winterized, shut down, or otherwise secured.

5. inspect or operate equipment or components that, in the inspector's opinion, may cause damage.
6. inspect any system, equipment, or component that is turned off, shut down, or does not respond to normal operating controls.
7. inspect or operate any valves and automatic safety controls or inspect ancillary equipment such as computer controls, covers, thermostats, heating elements, heat exchangers, alternative energy heating systems including solar, water features, decorative features, fountains, scuppers, and waterfalls;
8. inspect or operate backwash functions, aerators, automatic cleaning systems, automatic water fill systems, water treatment systems, chemical dispensers, chlorinators, water ionization devices,
9. open, disassemble, or dismantle systems and components, including filters, pool and spa components, pipes, or lines;
10. inspect, uncover, excavate, or determine underground or concealed components, including structural systems and components;
11. inspect electrical problems, including stray voltage and defective bonding and grounding.
12. inspect low-voltage electrical systems.
13. inspect diving or jump boards, slides, play equipment, and similar components.
14. determine the safe condition of using any pool or spa, its equipment or components.
15. determine the adequacy and safety of any system or component, including flow rates, filters, pool water heaters, safety barriers and alarms, and entrapment prevention covers and components.
16. perform any action that contradicts any laws or regulations.
17. move any personal items or other obstructions, such as, but not limited to: furniture, ceiling tiles, equipment, plants, ice, debris, snow, water, dirt, pets, or anything else that might restrict the visual inspection.
18. dismantle, open, or uncover any system or component.
19. enter or access any area that may, in the inspector's opinion, be unsafe.
20. enter spaces or other areas that may be unsafe or not readily accessible.
21. inspect underground items, such as, but not limited to: electrical cables, pipes, valves, or underground storage tanks (or indications of their presence), whether abandoned or actively used.
22. do anything that may, in the inspector's opinion, be unsafe or dangerous to the inspector or others or damage property, such as, but not limited to: walking on pool surfaces, pool decks, climbing ladders, entering unsafe spaces, or negotiating with pets.
23. inspect decorative items.
24. inspect common elements or areas in multi-unit housing.

25. inspect intercoms, speaker systems, or security systems.
26. offer guarantees or warranties.
27. offer or perform any engineering services.
28. offer or perform any trade or professional service other than a pool and spa inspection.
29. 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.
30. determine the age of construction or installation of any system, structure, or component of a unit, or differentiate between original construction and subsequent additions, improvements, renovations, or replacements.
31. determine the insurability of the property.
32. inspect any system or component that is not included in these Standards.

3. Standards of Practice

3.1 Pool and Spa

I. The inspector shall inspect:

1. the water level;
2. pool interior surfaces, tiles, coping, steps, handrails, and ladders;
3. adjacent decks and walking surfaces;
4. plumbing, piping, valves, pumps, motors, blowers, drains, skimmers, entrapment prevention components, filters, filter tanks, safety controls, and gauges;
5. spa jets nozzles, air controls, suction fittings, spill-over edges;
6. water heating systems and components, pool water heaters, and heat pumps;
7. electrical system and components, disconnects, switches, external bonding of pump motors, ground fault circuit interrupters, controllers, and timers;
8. the operation of pool lights;
9. pool fencing, and the types of safety barriers and alarms.
10. vegetation, surface drainage, retaining walls, and grading of the property, where they may adversely affect the pool structure;
11. adjoining structure containing pool equipment.

II. The inspector shall describe:

1. the type of swimming pool or spa;
2. the type of main drain installed;
3. the type of filtration system;

4. the pool water heater's energy source;
5. the types of safety barriers.

III. The inspector shall report as in need of correction:

1. any system or component that did not operate;
2. observed indications of inadequate water levels;
3. the presence of a single blockable main drain (potential entrapment hazard);
4. a pump motor, blower, or other electrical equipment that lacks bonding;
5. the absence of or deficiencies in safety barriers;
6. observed indications of active water leaks in above-ground pipes and equipment;
7. the absence or failure in performance of ground-fault circuit interrupter protection devices;
8. observed indications of material defects; and
9. the pool or spa that was deemed inaccessible.

4. Glossary of Terms

- **accessible:** In the opinion of the inspector, can be approached or entered safely, without difficulty, fear or danger.
- **activate:** To turn on, supply power, or enable systems, equipment or devices to become active by normal operating controls.
- **adverse effect:** Refers to anything that may constitute, or potentially constitute, a negative or destructive impact.
- **alarm system:** Warning devices, installed or freestanding, including, but not limited to, spillage detectors.
- **component:** A permanently installed or attached fixture, element or part of a system.
- **condition:** The visible and conspicuous state of being of an object.
- **correction:** Something that is substituted or proposed for what is incorrect, deficient, unsafe, or a defect.
- **cosmetic defect:** An irregularity or imperfection in something, which could be corrected, but is not required.
- **decorative:** Ornamental; not required for the operation of essential systems or components.
- **describe:** To report in writing a system or component by its type or other observed characteristics in order to distinguish it from other components used for the same purpose.
- **determine:** To arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to examination.

- **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.
- **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 and/or processes.
- **enter:** To go into an area to observe visible components.
- **evaluate:** To assess the systems, structures and/or components.
- **evidence:** That which tends to prove or disprove something; something that makes plain or clear; grounds for belief; proof.
- **examine:** To visually look (see inspect).
- **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 defect:** A lack of or an abnormality in something that is necessary for normal and proper functioning and operation, and, therefore, requires further evaluation and correction.
- **identify:** To notice and report.
- **indication:** That which serves to point out, show, or make known the present existence of something under certain conditions.
- **inspect:** To examine readily accessible systems and components safely, using normal operating controls, and accessing readily accessible areas, in accordance with this Standards of Practice.
- **inspection report:** A written communication (possibly including images) of any material defects observed during the inspection.
- **inspector:** One who performs an inspection.
- **installed:** Attached or connected such that the installed item requires a tool for removal.
- **material defect:** A specific issue with a system or component that may have a significant, adverse impact on the value of the property, or that poses an unreasonable risk to people. The fact that a system or component is near, at, or beyond the end of its normal, useful life is not, in itself, a material defect.
- **normal operating controls:** Describes the method by which certain devices (such as thermostats) can be operated by ordinary occupants, as they require no specialized skill or knowledge.
- **observe:** To visually notice.

- **operate:** To cause systems to function or turn on with normal operating controls.
- **readily accessible:** A system or component that, in the judgment of the inspector, is capable of being safely observed without the removal of obstacles, detachment or disengagement of connecting or securing devices, or other unsafe or difficult procedures to gain access.
- **report** (verb form): To express, communicate or provide information in writing; give a written account of. (See also inspection report.)
- **shut down:** Turned off, unplugged, inactive, not in service, not operational, etc.
- **system:** An assembly of various components which function as a whole.
- **technically exhaustive:** A comprehensive and detailed examination beyond the scope of an inspection that would involve or include, but would not be limited to: dismantling, specialized knowledge or training, special equipment, measurements, calculations, testing, research, analysis, or other means.
- **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 residential construction standards.

Special Thanks

Special thanks to the following InterNACHI® members who helped with the development of the Pool and Spa Standards of Practice: Paul Roebuck, Lon Henderson, Jim Krumm, Dennis Bonner, and Juan Garcia.

Resources:

- [California-Specific \(PDF\)](#)/ [California-Specific \(MS Word\)](#)
- Download InterNACHI's free [Pool & Spa Inspection Checklist](#) from Inspector Outlet.
- Take InterNACHI's free, online [How to Inspect Pools and Spas Course](#).
- [InterNACHI's Home Inspection Standards of Practice](#)
- [The International Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties \(ComSOP\)](#)