

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Association of Home Inspectors (OAH I) is a not-for-profit professional society established in 1987. Membership in OAH I is voluntary and its members include private, fee-paid home inspectors. OAH I's objectives include promotion of excellence within the profession and continual improvement of its members' inspection services to the public.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of these Standards of Practice is to establish a minimum and uniform standard for private, fee-paid home *inspectors* who are members of the Ontario Associate of Home Inspectors. *Home inspections* performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client with information regarding the condition of the *systems* and *components* of the home as *inspected* at the time of the *Home Inspection*.

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
 - 1. *readily accessible systems* and *components* of homes listed in these Standards of Practice.
 - 2. *installed systems* and *components* of homes listed in these Standards of Practice.
- B. *report*:
 - 1. on those *systems* and *components inspected* which, in the professional opinion of the *inspector*, are *significantly deficient* or are near the end of their service lives.
 - 2. a reason why, if not self evident, the *system* or component is *significantly deficient* or near the end of its service life.

- 3. the *inspector's* recommendations to correct or monitor the *reported* deficiency.
- 4. on any *systems* and *components* designated for inspection in these Standards of Practice which were present at the time of the *Home Inspection* but were not *inspected* and a reason they were not *inspected*.

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

- A. including other inspection services, *systems* or *components* in addition to those required by these Standards of Practice.
- B. specifying repairs, provided the *inspector* is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
- C. excluding *systems* and *components* from the inspection if requested by the client.

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
 - 1. the *structural components* including foundation and framing.
 - 2. by probing a *representative number of structural components* where deterioration is suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is NOT required when probing would damage any finished surface or where no deterioration is visible.
- B. *describe*:
 - 1. the foundation and *report* the methods used to *inspect* the under-floor crawl space.
 - 2. the floor structure.
 - 3. the wall structure.
 - 4. the ceiling structure.

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5. the roof structure and *report* the methods used to *inspect* the attic.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. provide any *engineering service* or *architectural service*.
- B. offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any *structural system* or *component*.

EXTERIOR

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the exterior wall covering, flashing and trim.
 2. all exterior doors.
 3. attached decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings.
 4. the eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
 5. the vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls on the property when any of these are likely to adversely affect the building.
 6. walkways, patios, and driveways leading to dwelling entrances.
- B. *describe* the exterior wall covering.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories.
 2. fences.
 3. geological, geotechnical or hydrological conditions.
 4. *recreational facilities*.
 5. outbuildings.
 6. seawalls, break-walls, and docks.
 7. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

ROOF SYSTEM

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the roof covering.
 2. the *roof drainage* systems.
 3. the flashings.
 4. the skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.
- B. *describe* the roof covering and *report* the methods used to *inspect* the roof.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. antennae.
 2. interiors of flues or chimneys which are not *readily accessible*.
 3. other *installed* accessories.

PLUMBING SYSTEM

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the interior water supply and distribution *systems* including all fixtures and faucets.
 2. the drain, waste and vent *systems* including all fixtures.
 3. the water heating equipment.
 4. the vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys.
 5. the fuel storage and fuel distribution *systems*.
 6. the drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping.
- B. *describe*:
 1. the water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping materials.
 2. the water heating equipment including the energy source.
 3. the location of main water and main fuel shut-off valves.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the clothes washing machine connections.

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2. the interiors of flues or chimneys which are not *readily accessible*.
 3. wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment.
 4. water conditioning *systems*.
 5. solar water heating *systems*.
 6. fire and lawn sprinkler *systems*.
 7. private waste disposal *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 safety valves or shutoff valves.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
1. the service drop.
 2. the service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways.
 3. the service equipment and main disconnects.
 4. the service grounding.
 5. the interior *components* of service panels and sub panels.
 6. the conductors.
 7. the overcurrent protection devices.
 8. a *representative number* of *installed* lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
 9. the ground fault circuit interrupters.
- B. *describe*:
1. the amperage and voltage rating of the service.
 2. the location of main disconnect(s) and subpanels.
 3. the wiring methods.
- C. *report*:
1. on the presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring.

2. on the absence of smoke detectors.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect*:
1. the remote control devices unless the device is the only control device.
 2. the *alarm systems* and *components*.
 3. the low voltage wiring, *systems* and *components*.
 4. the ancillary wiring, *systems* and *components* not a part of the primary electrical power distribution *system*.
- B. measure amperage, voltage, or impedance.

HEATING SYSTEM

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
1. the *installed* heating equipment.
 2. the vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys.
- B. *describe*:
3. the energy source.
 4. the heating method by its distinguishing characteristics.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect*:
1. the interiors of flues or chimneys which are not *readily accessible*.
 2. the heat exchanger.
 3. the humidifier or dehumidifier.
 4. the electronic air filter.
 5. the solar space heating *system*.
- B. determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance.

AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect* the *installed* central and through-wall cooling equipment.
- B. *describe*:

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1. the energy source
2. the cooling method by its distinguishing characteristics.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect* electronic air filters.
- B. determine cooling supply adequacy or distribution balance.

INTERIOR

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the walls, ceilings, and floors.
 2. the steps, stairways, and railings.
 3. the countertops and a *representative number* of *installed* cabinets.
 4. a *representative number* of doors and windows.
 5. garage doors and garage door operators.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments.
 2. the carpeting.
 3. the window treatments.
 4. the central vacuum *systems*.
 5. the *household appliances*.
 6. *recreational facilities*.

INSULATION AND VENTILATION

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.
 2. the ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
 3. the mechanical ventilation *systems*.
- B. *describe*:
 1. the insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.

2. the absence of insulation in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. disturb insulation or vapor retarders.
- B. determine indoor air quality.

FIREPLACES AND SOLID FUEL BURNING APPLIANCES

The *inspector* shall:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the *system components*.
 2. the vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys.
- B. *describe*:
 1. the fireplaces and *solid fuel burning appliances*.
 2. the chimneys.

The *inspector* is NOT required to:

- A. *inspect*:
 1. the interiors of flues or chimneys.
 2. the fire screens and doors.
 3. the seals and gaskets.
 4. the automatic fuel feed devices.
 5. the mantels and fireplace surrounds.
 6. the combustion make-up air devices.
 7. the heat distribution assists whether gravity controlled or fan assisted.
- B. ignite or extinguish fires.
- C. determine draft characteristics.
- D. move fireplace inserts or stoves or firebox contents.

GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

General limitations:

- A. Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice
 1. are not *technically exhaustive*.

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2. will not identify concealed conditions or latent defects.
- B. These Standards of Practice are applicable to buildings with four or fewer dwelling units and their garages or carports.

General exclusions:

- A. The *inspector* is not required to perform any action or make any determination unless specifically stated in these Standards of Practice, except as may be required by lawful authority.
- B. *Inspectors* are NOT required to determine:
 1. the condition of *systems* or *components* which are not *readily accessible*.
 2. the remaining life of any *system* or *component*.
 3. the strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any *system* or *component*.
 4. the causes of any condition or deficiency.
 5. the methods, materials, or costs of corrections.
 6. future conditions including, but not limited to, failure of *systems* and *components*.
 7. the suitability of the property for any specialized use.
 8. compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.).
 9. the market value of the property or its marketability.
 10. the advisability of the purchase of the property.
 11. the presence of potentially hazardous plants or animals including, but not limited to wood destroying organisms or diseases harmful to humans.
 12. the presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water, and air.
13. the effectiveness of any *system installed* or methods utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.
14. the operating costs of *systems* or *components*.
15. the acoustical properties of any *system* or *component*.
- C. *Inspectors* are NOT required to offer:
 1. or perform any act or service contrary to law.
 2. or perform *engineering services*.
 3. or perform work in any trade or any professional service other than *Home 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 dangerous to the *inspector* or other persons or damage the property or its *systems* or *components*.
 2. the *under-floor crawl spaces* or attics which are not *readily accessible*.
- F. *Inspectors* are NOT required to *inspect*:
 1. underground items including, but not limited to underground storage tanks or other underground 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 entered in accordance with these Standards of Practice.

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- 5. detached structures other than garages and carports.
- 6. common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing.
- G. *Inspectors* are NOT required to:
 - 1. perform any procedure or operation which will, in the opinion of the *inspector*, likely be dangerous 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*, except as explicitly required by these Standards of Practice

