

Home Inspection Standards of Practice

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1. Definitions and Scope

1.1. A general home inspection is a non-invasive, visual examination of the accessible areas of a residential property (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.

1st The general home inspection is based on the observations made on the date of the inspection, and not a prediction of future conditions.

2nd The general home inspection will not reveal every issue that exists or ever could exist, but only those material defects observed on the date of the inspection.

1.2. A material defect is a specific issue with a system or component of a residential property 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 **general home 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. Inspection reports may include additional comments and recommendations.

2. Limitations, Exceptions & Exclusions

2.1. Limitations:

1st An inspection is not technically exhaustive.

2nd An inspection will not identify concealed or latent defects.

3rd An inspection will not deal with aesthetic concerns or what could be deemed matters of taste, cosmetic defects, etc.

4th An inspection will not determine the suitability of the property for any use.

5th An inspection does not determine the market value of the property or its marketability.

6th An inspection does not determine the insurability of the property.

7th An inspection does not determine the advisability or inadvisability of the purchase of the inspected property.

8th An inspection does not determine the life expectancy of the property or any components or systems therein.

9th An inspection does not include items not permanently installed.

10th 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:

1st property boundary lines or encroachments.

2nd the condition of any component or system that is not readily accessible.

3rd the service life expectancy of any component or system.

4th the size, capacity, BTU, performance or efficiency of any component or system.

5th the cause or reason of any condition.

6th the cause for the need of correction, repair or replacement of any system or component.

7th future conditions.

8th compliance with codes or regulations.

9th the presence of evidence of rodents, birds, bats, animals, insects, or other pests.

10th the presence of mold, mildew or fungus.

11th the presence of airborne hazards, including radon.

12th the air quality.

13th the existence of environmental hazards, including lead paint, asbestos or toxic drywall.

14th the existence of electromagnetic fields.

15th any hazardous waste conditions.

16th any manufacturers' recalls or conformance with manufacturer installation, or any information included for consumer protection purposes.

17th acoustical properties.

18th correction, replacement or repair cost estimates.

19th estimates of the cost to operate any given system.

II. The inspector is not required to operate:

1st any system that is shut down.

2nd any system that does not function properly.

3rd or evaluate low-voltage electrical systems, such as, but not limited to:

1. phone lines;
2. cable lines;
3. satellite dishes;
4. antennae;
5. lights; or
6. remote controls.

4th any system that does not turn on with the use of normal operating controls.

5th any shut-off valves or manual stop valves.

6th any electrical disconnect or over-current protection devices.

7th any alarm systems.

8th moisture meters, gas detectors or similar equipment.

III. The inspector is not required to:

1st move any personal items or other obstructions, such as, but not limited to: throw rugs, carpeting, wall coverings, furniture, ceiling tiles, window coverings, equipment, plants, ice, debris, snow, water, dirt, pets, or anything else that might restrict the visual inspection.

2nd dismantle, open or uncover any system or component.

3rd enter or access any area that may, in the inspector's opinion, be unsafe.

4th enter crawlspaces or other areas that may be unsafe or not readily accessible.

5th inspect underground items, such as, but not limited to: lawn-irrigation systems, or underground storage tanks (or indications of their presence), whether abandoned or actively used.

6th do anything that may, in the inspector's opinion, be unsafe or dangerous to him/herself or others, or damage property, such as, but not limited to: walking on roof surfaces, climbing ladders, entering attic spaces, or negotiating with pets.

7th inspect decorative items.

8th inspect common elements or areas in multi-unit housing.

9th inspect intercoms, speaker systems or security systems.

10th offer guarantees or warranties.

11th offer or perform any engineering services.

12th offer or perform any trade or professional service other than general home inspection.

13th 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.

14th determine the age of construction or installation of any system, structure or component of a building, or differentiate between original construction and subsequent additions, improvements, renovations or replacements.

15th determine the insurability of a property.

16th perform or offer Phase 1 or environmental audits.

17th inspect any system or component that is not included in these Standards.

3. Standards of Practice

3.1. Roof

I. The inspector shall inspect from ground level or the eaves:

- 1st the roof-covering materials;
- 2nd the gutters;
- 3rd the downspouts;
- 4th the vents, flashing, skylights, chimney, and other roof penetrations; and
- 5th the general structure of the roof from the readily accessible panels, doors or stairs.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st the type of roof-covering materials.

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

- 1st observed indications of active roof leaks.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

- 1st walk on any roof surface.
- 2nd predict the service life expectancy.
- 3rd inspect underground downspout diverter drainage pipes.
- 4th remove snow, ice, debris or other conditions that prohibit the observation of the roof surfaces.
- 5th move insulation.
- 6th inspect antennae, satellite dishes, lightning arresters, de-icing equipment, or similar attachments.
- 7th walk on any roof areas that appear, in the inspector's opinion, to be unsafe.
- 8th walk on any roof areas if doing so might, in the inspector's opinion, cause damage.
- 9th perform a water test.
- 10th warrant or certify the roof.
- 11th confirm proper fastening or installation of any roof-covering material.

3.2. Exterior

I. The inspector shall inspect:

- 1st the exterior wall-covering materials;
- 2nd the eaves, soffits and fascia;
- 3rd a representative number of windows;
- 4th all exterior doors;
- 5th flashing and trim;
- 6th adjacent walkways and driveways;
- 7th stairs, steps, stoops, stairways and ramps;
- 8th porches, patios, decks, balconies and carports;
- 9th railings, guards and handrails; and
- 10th vegetation, surface drainage, retaining walls and grading of the property, where they may adversely affect the structure due to moisture intrusion.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st the type of exterior wall-covering materials.

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

- 1st any improper spacing between intermediate balusters, spindles and rails.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

- 1st inspect or operate screens, storm windows, shutters, awnings, fences, outbuildings, or exterior accent lighting.
- 2nd inspect items that are not visible or readily accessible from the ground, including window and door flashing.
- 3rd inspect or identify geological, geotechnical, hydrological or soil conditions.

- 4th inspect recreational facilities or playground equipment.
- 5th inspect seawalls, breakwalls or docks.
- 6th inspect erosion-control or earth-stabilization measures.
- 7th inspect for safety-type glass.
- 8th inspect underground utilities.
- 9th inspect underground items.
- 10th inspect wells or springs.
- 11th inspect solar, wind or geothermal systems.
- 12th inspect swimming pools or spas.
- 13th inspect wastewater treatment systems, septic systems or cesspools.
- 14th inspect irrigation or sprinkler systems.
- 15th inspect drainfields or dry wells.
- 16th determine the integrity of multiple-pane window glazing or thermal window seals.

3.3. Basement, Foundation, Crawlspace & Structure

I. The inspector shall inspect:

- 1st the foundation;
- 2nd the basement;
- 3rd the crawlspace; and
- 4th structural components.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st the type of foundation; and
- 2nd the location of the access to the under-floor space.

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

- 1st observed indications of wood in contact with or near soil;
- 2nd observed indications of active water penetration;
- 3rd observed indications of possible foundation movement, such as sheetrock cracks, brick cracks, out-of-square door frames, and unlevel floors; and
- 4th any observed cutting, notching and boring of framing members that may, in the inspector's opinion, present a structural or safety concern.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

- 1st enter any crawlspace that is not readily accessible, or where entry could cause damage or pose a hazard to him/herself.
- 2nd move stored items or debris.
- 3rd operate sump pumps with inaccessible floats.
- 4th identify the size, spacing, span or location or determine the adequacy of foundation bolting, bracing, joists, joist spans or support systems.
- 5th provide any engineering or architectural service.
- 6th report on the adequacy of any structural system or component.

3.4. Heating

I. The inspector shall inspect:

- 1st the heating system, using normal operating controls.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st the location of the thermostat for the heating system;
- 2nd the energy source; and

- 3rd the heating method.

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

- 1st any heating system that did not operate; and
- 2nd if the heating system was deemed inaccessible.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

- 1st inspect, measure, or evaluate the interior of flues or chimneys, fire chambers, heat exchangers, combustion air systems, fresh-air intakes, makeup air, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, electronic air filters, geothermal systems, or solar heating systems.
- 2nd inspect fuel tanks or underground or concealed fuel supply systems.
- 3rd determine the uniformity, temperature, flow, balance, distribution, size, capacity, BTU, or supply adequacy of the heating system.
- 4th light or ignite pilot flames.
- 5th activate heating, heat pump systems, or other heating systems when ambient temperatures or other circumstances are not conducive to safe operation or may damage the equipment.
- 6th override electronic thermostats.
- 7th evaluate fuel quality.
- 8th verify thermostat calibration, heat anticipation, or automatic setbacks, timers, programs or clocks.
- 9th measure or calculate the air for combustion, ventilation, or dilution of flue gases for appliances.

3.5. Cooling

I. The inspector shall inspect:

- 1st the cooling system, using normal operating controls.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st the location of the thermostat for the cooling system; and

- 2nd the cooling method.

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

- 1st any cooling system that did not operate; and
- 2nd if the cooling system was deemed inaccessible.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

- 1st determine the uniformity, temperature, flow, balance, distribution, size, capacity, BTU, or supply adequacy of the cooling system.
- 2nd inspect portable window units, through-wall units, or electronic air filters.
- 3rd operate equipment or systems if the exterior temperature is below 65° Fahrenheit, or when other circumstances are not conducive to safe operation or may damage the equipment.
- 4th inspect or determine thermostat calibration, cooling anticipation, or automatic setbacks or clocks.
- 5th examine electrical current, coolant fluids or gases, or coolant leakage.

3.6. Plumbing

I. The inspector shall inspect:

- 1st the main water supply shut-off valve;
- 2nd the main fuel supply shut-off valve;
- 3rd the water heating equipment, including the energy source, venting connections, temperature/pressure-relief (TPR) valves, Watts 210 valves, and seismic bracing;
- 4th interior water supply, including all fixtures and faucets, by running the water;
- 5th all toilets for proper operation by flushing;
- 6th all sinks, tubs and showers for functional drainage;
- 7th the drain, waste and vent system; and
- 8th drainage sump pumps with accessible floats.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st whether the water supply is public or private based upon observed evidence;
- 2nd the location of the main water supply shut-off valve;
- 3rd the location of the main fuel supply shut-off valve;

4th the location of any observed fuel-storage system; and

5th the capacity of the water heating equipment, if labeled.

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

1st deficiencies in the water supply by viewing the functional flow in two fixtures operated simultaneously;

2nd deficiencies in the installation of hot and cold water faucets;

3rd mechanical drain stops that were missing or did not operate if installed in sinks, lavatories and tubs; and

4th toilets that were damaged, had loose connections to the floor, were leaking, or had tank components that did not operate.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

1st light or ignite pilot flames.

2nd measure the capacity, temperature, age, life expectancy or adequacy of the water heater.

3rd inspect the interior of flues or chimneys, combustion air systems, water softener or filtering systems, well pumps or tanks, safety or shut-off valves, floor drains, lawn sprinkler systems, or fire sprinkler systems.

4th determine the exact flow rate, volume, pressure, temperature or adequacy of the water supply.

5th determine the water quality, potability or reliability of the water supply or source.

6th open sealed plumbing access panels.

7th inspect clothes washing machines or their connections.

8th operate any valve.

9th test shower pans, tub and shower surrounds or enclosures for leakage or functional overflow protection.

10th evaluate the compliance with conservation, energy or building standards, or the proper design or sizing of any water, waste or venting components, fixtures or piping.

11th determine the effectiveness of anti-siphon, back-flow prevention or drain-stop devices.

12th determine whether there are sufficient cleanouts for effective cleaning of drains.

13th evaluate fuel storage tanks or supply systems.

14th inspect wastewater treatment systems.

15th inspect water treatment systems or water filters.

16th inspect water storage tanks, pressure pumps, or bladder tanks.

17th evaluate wait time to obtain hot water at fixtures, or perform testing of any kind to water heater elements.

18th evaluate or determine the adequacy of combustion air.

19th test, operate, open or close: safety controls, manual stop valves, temperature/pressure-relief valves, control valves, or check valves.

20th examine ancillary or auxiliary systems or components, such as, but not limited to, those related to solar water heating and hot water circulation.

21st determine the existence or condition of polybutylene, polyethylene, or similar plastic piping.

22nd

23rd inspect or test for gas or fuel leaks, or indications thereof.

24th

3.7. Electrical

I. The inspector shall inspect:

1st the service drop;

2nd the overhead service conductors and attachment point;

3rd the service head, gooseneck and drip loops;

4th the service mast, service conduit and raceway;

5th the electric meter and base;

6th service-entrance conductors;

7th the main service disconnect;

8th panelboards and over-current protection devices (circuit breakers and fuses);

9th service grounding and bonding;

- 10th a representative number of switches, lighting fixtures and receptacles, including receptacles observed and deemed to be arc-fault circuit interrupter (AFCI)-protected using the AFCI test button, where possible;
- 11th all ground-fault circuit interrupter receptacles and circuit breakers observed and deemed to be GFCIs using a GFCI tester, where possible; and
- 12th for the presence of smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st the main service disconnect's amperage rating, if labeled; and
- 2nd the type of wiring observed.

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

- 1st deficiencies in the integrity of the service-entrance conductors' insulation, drip loop, and vertical clearances from grade and roofs;
- 2nd any unused circuit-breaker panel opening that was not filled;
- 3rd the presence of solid conductor aluminum branch-circuit wiring, if readily visible;
- 4th any tested receptacle in which power was not present, polarity was incorrect, the cover was not in place, the GFCI devices were not properly installed or did not operate properly, evidence of arcing or excessive heat, and where the receptacle was not grounded or was not secured to the wall; and
- 5th the absence of smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

- 1st insert any tool, probe or device into the main panelboard, sub-panels, distribution panelboards, or electrical fixtures.
- 2nd operate electrical systems that are shut down.
- 3rd remove panelboard cabinet covers or dead fronts.
- 4th operate or re-set over-current protection devices or overload devices.
- 5th operate or test smoke or carbon-monoxide detectors or alarms.

- 6th inspect, operate or test any security, fire or alarm systems or components, or other warning or signaling systems.

- 7th measure or determine the amperage or voltage of the main service equipment, if not visibly labeled.
- 8th inspect ancillary wiring or remote-control devices.
- 9th activate any electrical systems or branch circuits that are not energized.
- 10th inspect low-voltage systems, electrical de-icing tapes, swimming pool wiring, or any time-controlled devices.
- 11th verify the service ground.
- 12th inspect private or emergency electrical supply sources, including, but not limited to: generators, windmills, photovoltaic solar collectors, or battery or electrical storage facility.
- 13th inspect spark or lightning arrestors.
- 14th inspect or test de-icing equipment.
- 15th conduct voltage-drop calculations.
- 16th determine the accuracy of labeling.
- 17th inspect exterior lighting.

3.8. Fireplace

I. The inspector shall inspect:

- 1st readily accessible and visible portions of the fireplaces and chimneys;
- 2nd lintels above the fireplace openings;
- 3rd damper doors by opening and closing them, if readily accessible and manually operable; and
- 4th cleanout doors and frames.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st the type of fireplace.

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

- 1st evidence of joint separation, damage or deterioration of the hearth, hearth extension or chambers;
- 2nd manually operated dampers that did not open and close;
- 3rd the lack of a smoke detector in the same room as the fireplace;

- 4th the lack of a carbon-monoxide detector in the same room as the fireplace; and
- 5th cleanouts not made of metal, pre-cast cement, or other non-combustible material.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

- 1st inspect the flue or vent system.
- 2nd inspect the interior of chimneys or flues, fire doors or screens, seals or gaskets, or mantels.
- 3rd determine the need for a chimney sweep.
- 4th operate gas fireplace inserts.
- 5th light pilot flames.
- 6th determine the appropriateness of any installation.
- 7th inspect automatic fuel-fed devices.
- 8th inspect combustion and/or make-up air devices.
- 9th inspect heat-distribution assists, whether gravity-controlled or fan-assisted.
- 10th ignite or extinguish fires.
- 11th determine the adequacy of drafts or draft characteristics.
- 12th move fireplace inserts, stoves or firebox contents.
- 13th perform a smoke test.
- 14th dismantle or remove any component.
- 15th perform a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)-style inspection.
- 16th perform a Phase I fireplace and chimney inspection.

3.9. Attic, Insulation & Ventilation

I. The inspector shall inspect:

- 1st insulation in unfinished spaces, including attics, crawlspaces and foundation areas;
- 2nd ventilation of unfinished spaces, including attics, crawlspaces and foundation areas; and
- 3rd mechanical exhaust systems in the kitchen, bathrooms and laundry area.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st the type of insulation observed; and
- 2nd the approximate average depth of insulation observed at the unfinished attic floor area or roof structure.

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

- 1st the general absence of insulation or ventilation in unfinished spaces.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

- 1st enter the attic or any unfinished spaces that are not readily accessible, or where entry could cause damage or, in the inspector's opinion, pose a safety hazard.
- 2nd move, touch or disturb insulation.
- 3rd move, touch or disturb vapor retarders.
- 4th break or otherwise damage the surface finish or weather seal on or around access panels or covers.
- 5th identify the composition or R-value of insulation material.
- 6th activate thermostatically operated fans.
- 7th determine the types of materials used in insulation or wrapping of pipes, ducts, jackets, boilers or wiring.
- 8th determine the adequacy of ventilation.

3.10. Doors, Windows & Interior

I. The inspector shall inspect:

- 1st a representative number of doors and windows by opening and closing them;
- 2nd floors, walls and ceilings;
- 3rd stairs, steps, landings, stairways and ramps;
- 4th railings, guards and handrails; and
- 5th garage vehicle doors and the operation of garage vehicle door openers, using normal operating controls.

II. The inspector shall describe:

- 1st a garage vehicle door as manually-operated or installed with a garage door opener.

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

1st improper spacing between intermediate balusters, spindles and rails for steps, stairways, guards and railings;

2nd photo-electric safety sensors that did not operate properly; and

3rd any window that was obviously fogged or displayed other evidence of broken seals.

IV. The inspector is not required to:

1st inspect paint, wallpaper, window treatments or finish treatments.

2nd inspect floor coverings or carpeting.

3rd inspect central vacuum systems.

4th inspect for safety glazing.

5th inspect security systems or components.

6th evaluate the fastening of islands, countertops, cabinets, sink tops or fixtures.

7th move furniture, stored items, or any coverings, such as carpets or rugs, in order to inspect the concealed floor structure.

8th move suspended-ceiling tiles.

9th inspect or move any household appliances.

10th inspect or operate equipment housed in the garage, except as otherwise noted.

11th verify or certify the proper operation of any pressure-activated auto-reverse or related safety feature of a garage door.

12th operate or evaluate any security bar release and opening mechanisms, whether interior or exterior, including their compliance with local, state or federal standards.

13th operate any system, appliance or component that requires the use of special keys, codes, combinations or devices.

14th operate or evaluate self-cleaning oven cycles, tilt guards/latches, or signal lights.

15th inspect microwave ovens or test leakage from microwave ovens.

16th operate or examine any sauna, steam-generating equipment, kiln, toaster, ice maker, coffee maker, can opener, bread warmer, blender, instant hot-water dispenser, or other small, ancillary appliances or devices.

17th inspect elevators.

18th inspect remote controls.

19th inspect appliances.

20th inspect items not permanently installed.

21st discover firewall compromises.

22nd inspect pools, spas or fountains.

23rd determine the adequacy of whirlpool or spa jets, water force, or bubble effects.

24th determine the structural integrity or leakage of pools or spas.

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. Examples include turning on the gas or water supply valves to the fixtures and appliances, and activating electrical breakers or fuses.
- **adversely affect:** To constitute, or potentially constitute, a negative or destructive impact.
- **alarm system:** Warning devices, installed or freestanding, including, but not limited to: carbon-monoxide detectors, flue gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment, ejector pumps, and smoke alarms.
- **appliance:** A household device operated by the use of electricity or gas. Not included in this definition are components covered under central heating, central cooling or plumbing.

- **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, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and administration of the construction contract.
- **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.
- **crawlspace:** The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the lowest floor's structural component.
- **decorative:** Ornamental; not required for the operation of essential systems or components of a home.
- **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 of a property.
- **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**).
- **foundation:** The base upon which the structure or wall rests, usually masonry, concrete or stone, and generally partially underground.
- **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.
- **general home inspection:** The process by which an inspector visually examines the readily accessible systems and components of a home and operates those systems and components utilizing this Standards of Practice as a guideline.

- **home inspection:** See **general home inspection**.
- **household appliances:** Kitchen and laundry appliances, room air conditioners, and similar appliances.
- **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.
- **inspected property:** The readily accessible areas of the buildings, site, items, components and systems included in the inspection.
- **inspection report:** A written communication (possibly including images) of any material defects observed during the inspection.
- **inspector:** One who performs a real estate 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 of a residential property 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.
- **recreational facilities:** Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, and other exercise, entertainment and athletic facilities.
- **report (verb form):** To express, communicate or provide information in writing; give a written account of. (See also **inspection report**.)
- **representative number:** A number sufficient to serve as a typical or characteristic example of the item(s) inspected.
- **residential property:** Four or fewer residential units.
- **residential unit:** A home; a single unit providing complete and independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.
- **safety glazing:** Tempered glass, laminated glass, or rigid plastic.
- **shut down:** Turned off, unplugged, inactive, not in service, not operational, etc.
- **structural component:** A component that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads).
- **system:** An assembly of various components which function as a whole.

- **technically exhaustive:** A comprehensive and detailed examination beyond the scope of a real estate home 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.
- **verify:** To confirm or substantiate.

These terms are found within the Standards of Practice. [Visit InterNACHI's full Glossary.](#)

