

**THE STANDARD OF PRACTICE FOR HOME INSPECTIONS AND
THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE HOME INSPECTION PROFESSION**



**AMERICAN
SOCIETY
OF HOME
INSPECTORS**

www.ashi.org

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HOME INSPECTION

Home inspections were being performed in the mid 1950s and by the early 1970s were considered by many consumers to be essential to the real estate transaction. The escalating demand was due to a growing desire by consumers to learn about the condition of a house prior to purchase. Meeting the expectations of consumers required a unique discipline, distinct from construction, engineering, architecture, or municipal building inspection. As such, home inspection requires its own set of professional guidelines and qualifications. The American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) formed in 1976 and established the ASHI Standard of Practice for Home Inspections and Code of Ethics to help buyers and sellers make real estate transaction decisions based on accurate information.

American Society of Home Inspectors

As the oldest and most respected organization of home inspectors in North America, ASHI takes pride in its position of leadership. Its Membership works to build public awareness of home inspection and to enhance the technical and ethical performance of home inspectors.

Standard of Practice for Home Inspections

The ASHI Standard of Practice for Home Inspections guides home inspectors in the performance of their inspections. Subject to regular review, the Standard of Practice for Home Inspections reflects information gained through surveys of conditions in the field and of the consumers’ interests and concerns. Vigilance has elevated ASHI’s Standard of Practice for Home Inspections so that today it is the most widely-accepted home inspection guideline and is recognized by many government and professional groups as the definitive standard for professional performance.

Code of Ethics for the Home Inspection Profession

ASHI’s Code of Ethics stresses the home inspector’s responsibility to report the results of the inspection in a fair, impartial, and professional manner, avoiding conflicts of interest.

ASHI Membership

Selecting the right home inspector can be as important as finding the right home. ASHI Certified Inspectors have performed no fewer than 250 fee-paid inspections in accordance with the ASHI Standard of Practice for Home Inspections. They have passed written examinations testing their knowledge of residential construction, defect recognition, inspection techniques, and report-writing, as well as ASHI’s Standard of Practice for Home Inspections and Code of Ethics. Membership in the American Society of Home Inspectors is well-earned and maintained only through meeting requirements for continuing education.

Find local ASHI Inspectors by calling 1-800-743-2744 or visiting the ASHI Web site at www.ashi.org.

ASHI STANDARD OF PRACTICE FOR HOME INSPECTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The American Society of Home Inspectors®, Inc. (ASHI®) is a not-for-profit professional society established in 1976. Membership in ASHI is voluntary and its members are private home inspectors. ASHI's objectives include promotion of excellence within the profession and continual improvement of its members' inspection services to the public.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 The purpose of this document is to establish a minimum standard (Standard) for *home inspections* performed by *home inspectors* who subscribe to this Standard. *Home inspections* performed using this Standard are intended to provide the client with information about the condition of inspected *systems* and *components* at the time of the *home inspection*.

2.2 The inspector shall:

- A.** *inspect readily accessible*, visually observable, *installed systems* and *components* listed in this Standard.
- B.** provide the client with a written report, using a format and medium selected by the *inspector*, that states:
 - 1. those *systems* and *components* inspected that, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, are not functioning properly, significantly deficient, *unsafe*, or are near the end of their service lives,
 - 2. recommendations to correct, or monitor for future correction, the deficiencies reported in 2.2.B.1, or items needing *further evaluation* (Per Exclusion 13.2.A.5 the *inspector* is NOT required to determine methods, materials, or costs of corrections.),
 - 3. reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies reported in 2.2.B.1, that are not self-evident,
 - 4. those *systems* and *components* designated for inspection in this Standard that were present at the time of the *home inspection* but were not inspected and the reason(s) they were not inspected.
- C.** adhere to the ASHI® Code of Ethics for the Home Inspection Profession.

2.3 This Standard is not intended to limit the *inspector* from:

- A.** including other services or *systems* and *components* in addition to those required in Section 2.2.A.
- B.** designing or specifying repairs, provided the *inspector* is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
- C.** excluding *systems* and *components* from the *inspection* if requested or agreed to by the client.

3. STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

3.1 The inspector shall:

- A.** *inspect structural components* including the foundation and framing.
- B.** *describe*:
 - 1. the methods used to inspect *under-floor crawlspaces* and attics.
 - 2. the foundation.
 - 3. the floor structure.
 - 4. the wall structure.
 - 5. the ceiling structure.
 - 6. the roof structure.

3.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

- A.** provide *engineering* or architectural services or analysis.
- B.** offer an opinion about the adequacy of *structural systems* and *components*.
- C.** enter *under-floor crawlspace* areas that have less than 24 inches of vertical clearance between *components* and the ground or that have an access opening smaller than 16 inches by 24 inches.
- D.** traverse attic load-bearing *components* that are concealed by insulation or by other materials.

4. EXTERIOR

4.1 The inspector shall:

- A.** *inspect*:
 - 1. *wall coverings*, flashing, and trim.
 - 2. exterior doors.
 - 3. attached and adjacent decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings.
 - 4. eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
 - 5. vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the building.
 - 6. adjacent and entryway walkways, patios, and drive-ways.
- B.** *describe wall coverings*.

4.2 The inspector is NOT required to inspect:

- A. screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories.
- B. fences, boundary walls, and similar structures.
- C. geological and soil conditions.
- D. recreational facilities.
- E. outbuildings other than garages and carports.
- F. seawalls, break-walls, and docks.
- G. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

5. ROOFING

5.1 The inspector shall:

A. inspect:

- 1. roofing materials.
- 2. roof drainage systems.
- 3. flashing.
- 4. skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.

B. describe:

- 1. roofing materials.
- 2. methods used to inspect the roofing.

5.2 The inspector is NOT required to inspect:

- A. antennas.
- B. interiors of vent systems, flues, and chimneys that are not readily accessible.
- C. other installed accessories.

6. PLUMBING

6.1 The inspector shall:

A. inspect:

- 1. interior water supply and distribution systems including fixtures and faucets.
- 2. interior drain, waste, and vent systems including fixtures.
- 3. water heating equipment and hot water supply systems.
- 4. vent systems, flues, and chimneys.
- 5. fuel storage and fuel distribution systems.
- 6. sewage ejectors, sump pumps, and related piping.

B. describe:

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

6.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

A. inspect:

- 1. clothes washing machine connections.
- 2. interiors of vent systems, flues, and chimneys that are not readily accessible.
- 3. wells, well pumps, and water storage related equipment.
- 4. water conditioning systems.
- 5. solar, geothermal, and other renewable energy water heating systems.
- 6. manual and automatic fire extinguishing and sprinkler systems and landscape irrigation systems.
- 7. septic and other sewage disposal systems.

B. determine:

- 1. whether water supply and sewage disposal are public or private.
- 2. water quality.
- 3. the adequacy of combustion air components.

C. measure water supply flow and pressure, and well water quantity.

D. fill shower pans and fixtures to test for leaks.

7. ELECTRICAL

7.1 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 subpanels.
- 6. conductors.
- 7. overcurrent protection devices.
- 8. a representative number of installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
- 9. ground fault circuit interrupters and arc fault circuit interrupters.

B. describe:

1. amperage rating of the service.
2. location of main disconnect(s) and subpanels.
3. presence or absence of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.
4. the predominant branch circuit wiring method.

7.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

A. inspect:

1. remote control devices.
2. or test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, security systems, and other signaling and warning devices.
3. low voltage wiring systems and components.
4. ancillary wiring systems and components not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system.
5. solar, geothermal, wind, and other renewable energy systems.

B. measure amperage, voltage, and impedance.

C. determine the age and type of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.

8. HEATING

8.1 The inspector shall:

A. open readily openable access panels.

B. inspect:

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

C. describe:

1. energy source(s).
2. heating systems.

8.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

A. inspect:

1. interiors of vent systems, flues, and chimneys that are not readily accessible.
2. heat exchangers.
3. humidifiers and dehumidifiers.
4. electric air cleaning and sanitizing devices.
5. heating systems using ground-source, water-source, solar, and renewable energy technologies.
6. heat-recovery and similar whole-house mechanical ventilation systems.

B. determine:

1. heat supply adequacy and distribution balance.
2. the adequacy of combustion air components.

9. AIR CONDITIONING

9.1 The inspector shall:

A. open readily openable access panels.

B. inspect:

1. central and permanently installed cooling equipment.
2. distribution systems.

C. describe:

1. energy source(s).
2. cooling systems.

9.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

A. inspect electric air cleaning and sanitizing devices.

B. determine cooling supply adequacy and distribution balance.

C. inspect cooling units that are not permanently installed or that are installed in windows.

D. inspect cooling systems using ground-source, water-source, solar, and renewable energy technologies.

10. INTERIORS

10.1 The inspector shall inspect:

A. walls, ceilings, and floors.

B. steps, stairways, and railings.

C. countertops and a representative number of installed cabinets.

D. a representative number of doors and windows.

E. garage vehicle doors and garage vehicle door operators.

F. installed ovens, ranges, surface cooking appliances, microwave ovens, dishwashing machines, and food waste grinders by using normal operating controls to activate the primary function.

10.2 The inspector is NOT required to inspect:

A. paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments.

B. floor coverings.

C. window treatments.

D. coatings on and the hermetic seals between panes of window glass.

- E. central vacuum *systems*.
- F. *recreational facilities*.
- G. *installed* and free-standing kitchen and laundry appliances not listed in Section 10.1.F.
- H. appliance thermostats including their calibration, adequacy of heating elements, self cleaning oven cycles, indicator lights, door seals, timers, clocks, timed features, and other specialized features of the appliance.
- I. operate, or confirm the operation of every control and feature of an inspected appliance.

11. INSULATION AND VENTILATION

11.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.
2. ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
3. kitchen, bathroom, laundry, and similar exhaust *systems*.
4. clothes dryer exhaust *systems*.

B. *describe*:

1. insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.
2. absence of insulation in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces.

11.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to disturb insulation.

12. FIREPLACES AND FUEL-BURNING APPLIANCES

12.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. fuel-burning fireplaces, stoves, and fireplace inserts.
2. fuel-burning accessories *installed* in fireplaces.
3. chimneys and vent *systems*.

B. *describe systems* and *components* listed in 12.1.A.1 and .2.

12.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect*:

1. interiors of vent *systems*, flues, and chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
2. fire screens and doors.
3. seals and gaskets.
4. automatic fuel feed devices.

5. mantles and fireplace surrounds.
 6. combustion air *components* and to determine their adequacy.
 7. heat distribution assists (gravity fed and fan assisted).
 8. fuel-burning fireplaces and appliances located outside the *inspected* structures.
- B. determine draft characteristics.
- C. move fireplace inserts and stoves or firebox contents.

13. GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

13.1 General limitations

- A. The *inspector* is NOT required to perform actions, or to make determinations, or to make recommendations not specifically stated in this Standard.
- B. *Inspections* performed using this Standard:
1. are not *technically exhaustive*.
 2. are not required to identify and to report:
 - a. concealed conditions, latent defects, consequential damages, and
 - b. cosmetic imperfections that do not significantly affect a *component's* performance of its intended function.
- C. This Standard applies to buildings with four or fewer dwelling units and their attached and detached garages and carports.
- D. This Standard shall not limit or prevent the inspector from meeting state statutes which license professional home inspection and home inspectors.
- E. Redundancy in the description of the requirements, limitations, and exclusions regarding the scope of the *home inspection* is provided for emphasis only.

13.2 General exclusions

A. The *inspector* is NOT required to determine:

1. the condition of *systems* and *components* that are not *readily accessible*.
2. the remaining life expectancy of *systems* and *components*.
3. the strength, adequacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of *systems* and *components*.
4. the causes of conditions and deficiencies.
5. methods, materials, and costs of corrections.
6. future conditions including but not limited to failure of *systems* and *components*.
7. the suitability of the property for specialized uses.

8. compliance of *systems* and *components* with past and present requirements and guidelines (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, specifications, installation and maintenance instructions, use and care guides, etc.).
9. the market value of the property and its marketability.
10. the advisability of purchasing the property.
11. the presence of plants, animals, and other life forms and substances that may be hazardous or harmful to humans including, but not limited to, wood destroying organisms, molds and mold-like substances.
12. the presence of environmental hazards including, but not limited to, allergens, toxins, carcinogens, electromagnetic radiation, noise, radioactive substances, and contaminants in building materials, soil, water, and air.
13. the effectiveness of *systems installed* and methods used to control or remove suspected hazardous plants, animals, and environmental hazards.
14. operating costs of *systems* and *components*.
15. acoustical properties of *systems* and *components*.
16. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties.
17. whether items, materials, conditions and *components* are subject to recall, controversy, litigation, product liability, and other adverse claims and conditions.

B. The *inspector* is NOT required to offer:

1. or to perform acts or services contrary to law or to government regulations.
2. or to perform architectural, *engineering*, contracting, or surveying services or to confirm or to evaluate such services performed by others.
3. or to perform trades or professional services other than *home inspection*.
4. warranties or guarantees.

C. The *inspector* is NOT required to operate:

1. *systems* and *components* that are shut down or otherwise inoperable.
2. *systems* and *components* that do not respond to *normal operating controls*.
3. shut-off valves and manual stop valves.
4. *automatic safety controls*.

D. The *inspector* is NOT required to enter:

1. areas that will, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, likely be dangerous to the *inspector* or to other persons, or to damage the property or its *systems* and *components*.
2. *under-floor crawlspaces* and attics that are not *readily accessible*.

E. The *inspector* is NOT required to inspect:

1. underground items including, but not limited to, underground storage tanks and other underground indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active.
2. items that are not *installed*.
3. *installed decorative* items.
4. items in areas that are not entered in accordance with 13.2.D.
5. detached structures other than garages and carports.
6. common elements and common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties and cooperative housing.
7. every occurrence of multiple similar *components*.
8. outdoor cooking appliances.

F. The *inspector* is NOT required to:

1. perform procedures or operations that will, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, likely be dangerous to the *inspector* or to other persons, or to damage the property or its *systems* or *components*.
2. *describe* or report on *systems* and *components* that are not included in this Standard and that were not *inspected*.
3. move personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, and debris.
4. *dismantle systems* and *components*, except as explicitly required by this Standard.
5. reset, reprogram, or otherwise adjust devices, *systems*, and *components* affected by *inspection* required by this Standard.
6. ignite or extinguish fires, pilot lights, burners, and other open flames that require manual ignition.
7. probe surfaces that would be damaged or where no deterioration is visible or presumed to exist.

14. GLOSSARY OF ITALICIZED TERMS

Automatic Safety Controls Devices designed and *installed* to protect *systems* and *components* from unsafe conditions

Component A part of a *system*

Decorative Ornamental; not required for the proper operation of the essential *systems* and *components* of a home

Describe To identify (in writing) a *system* and *component* by its type or other distinguishing characteristics

Dismantle To take apart or remove *components*, devices, or pieces of equipment that would not be taken apart or removed by a homeowner in the course of normal maintenance

Engineering The application of scientific knowledge for the design, control, or use of building structures, equipment, or apparatus

Further Evaluation Examination and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesman, or service technician beyond that provided by a *home inspection*

Home Inspection The process by which an *inspector* visually examines the *readily accessible systems* and *components* of a home and *describes* those *systems* and *components* using this Standard

Inspect The process of examining *readily accessible systems* and *components* by (1) applying this Standard, and (2) operating *normal operating controls*, and (3) opening *readily openable access panels*

Inspector A person hired to examine *systems* and *components* of a building using this Standard

Installed Attached such that removal requires tools

Normal Operating Controls Devices such as thermostats, switches, and valves intended to be operated by the homeowner

Readily Accessible Available for visual inspection without requiring moving of personal property, dismantling, destructive measures, or actions that will likely involve risk to persons or property

Readily Openable Access Panel A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is *readily accessible*, within normal reach, can be opened by one person, and is not sealed in place

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

Representative Number One *component* per room for multiple similar interior *components* such as windows and electric receptacles; 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

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

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 investigation that involves *dismantling*, the extensive use of advanced techniques, measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, or other means

Under-floor Crawl Space The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the floor

Unsafe A condition in a *readily accessible, installed system* or *component* that is judged by the *inspector* to be a significant risk of serious bodily injury during normal, day-to-day use; the risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted residential construction practices

Wall Covering A protective or insulating layer fixed to the outside of a building such as: aluminum, brick, EIFS, stone, stucco, vinyl, and wood

Wiring Method Identification of electrical conductors or wires by their general type, such as non-metallic sheathed cable, armored cable, and knob and tube, etc.



ASHI[®] CODE OF ETHICS

For the Home Inspection Profession

Integrity, honesty, and objectivity are fundamental principles embodied by this Code, which sets forth obligations of ethical conduct for the home inspection profession. The Membership of ASHI has adopted this Code to provide high ethical standards to safeguard the public and the profession.

Inspectors shall comply with this Code, shall avoid association with any enterprise whose practices violate this Code, and shall strive to uphold, maintain, and improve the integrity, reputation, and practice of the home inspection profession.

1. Inspectors shall avoid conflicts of interest or activities that compromise, or appear to compromise, professional independence, objectivity, or inspection integrity.

- A. Inspectors shall not inspect properties for compensation in which they have, or expect to have, a financial interest.
- B. Inspectors shall not inspect properties under contingent arrangements whereby any compensation or future referrals are dependent on reported findings or on the sale of a property.
- C. Inspectors shall not directly or indirectly compensate realty agents, or other parties having a financial interest in closing or settlement of real estate transactions, for the referral of inspections or for inclusion on a list of recommended inspectors, preferred providers, or similar arrangements.
- D. Inspectors shall not receive compensation for an inspection from more than one party unless agreed to by the client(s).
- E. Inspectors shall not accept compensation, directly or indirectly, for recommending contractors, services, or products to inspection clients or other parties having an interest in inspected properties.
- F. Inspectors shall not repair, replace, or upgrade, for compensation, systems or components covered by ASHI Standards of Practice, for one year after the inspection.

2. Inspectors shall act in good faith toward each client and other interested parties.

- A. Inspectors shall perform services and express opinions based on genuine conviction and only within their areas of education, training, or experience.
- B. Inspectors shall be objective in their reporting and not knowingly understate or overstate the significance of reported conditions.
- C. Inspectors shall not disclose inspection results or client information without client approval. Inspectors, at their discretion, may disclose observed immediate safety hazards to occupants exposed to such hazards, when feasible.

3. Inspectors shall avoid activities that may harm the public, discredit themselves, or reduce public confidence in the profession.

- A. Advertising, marketing, and promotion of inspectors' services or qualifications shall not be fraudulent, false, deceptive, or misleading.
- B. Inspectors shall report substantive and willful violations of this Code to the Society.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS
STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR
RESIDENTIAL SWIMMING POOL AND SPA INSPECTIONS

1. INSPECTION PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1** The purpose of these Standards of Professional Practice (Standards) is to establish a uniform standard for *inspectors* who voluntarily use these Standards when performing residential *swimming pool/spa* inspections.
- 1.2** Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards:
- A. provide the *client* with additional objective information about the condition of inspected *components* at the time of the inspection;
 - B. are conducted by an inspection generalist, not by a *technical specialist*;
 - C. are general and do not include or confirm conformity with:
 - 1. building codes and other governmental laws and regulations,
 - 2. manufacturer's installation instructions,
 - 3. construction plans, drawings, and specifications;
 - D. do not provide a warranty or guarantee regarding the condition of the inspected *swimming pools/spas*;
 - E. do not identify and report all possible *safety* issues regarding the installation, operation, maintenance, and use of inspected *swimming pools/spas*.
- 1.3** These Standards do not limit *inspectors* from:
- A. including other services or *components* in addition to those required in these Standards;
 - B. excluding *components* from the inspection if requested by the *client*.
- 1.4** *Inspectors* who perform inspections in accordance with these Standards shall adhere to the ASHI® Code of Ethics For the Home Inspection Profession.
- 1.5** These Standards apply only to *swimming pools/spas* located on property containing a one or two-family residential structure. These standards do not apply to *swimming pools/spas* used for commercial or competitive uses.

2. INSPECTION AND REPORT

2.1 *Inspectors shall inspect readily accessible, visually observable, installed components designated in these Standards.*

2.2 *Inspectors shall issue a written report that:*

- A.** *identifies components that, in the professional judgment of the inspector, are not functioning properly, significantly deficient, unsafe, or are near the end of their service lives;*
- B.** *provides the reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies reported in 2.2.A, that are not self-evident;*
- C.** *recommends correction, further evaluation, or monitoring of components identified in 2.2.A;*
- D.** *identifies components designated for inspection in these Standards that were present during the inspection but were not inspected and the reason(s) why they were not inspected;*
- E.** *includes the following statement in its entirety and without change near the beginning of every report issued in conformity with these Standards.*

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc. (ASHI) does not verify the qualifications of inspectors who use these Standards and has no authority or control over the quality of inspections undertaken or performed using these Standards. These Standards are general in nature and are not intended to in any way discourage or limit additional or more detailed inspections. ASHI disclaims all liability for any and all personal and bodily injuries and damages, including but not limited to incidental and consequential damages, which may occur as a result of inspections performed using these Standards. No warranty, expressed or implied, is intended or offered by ASHI in the use of these Standards. ASHI assumes no risk and makes and implies no representations of any kind to inspectors, consumers, or others.

3.0 SWIMMING POOL AND SPA INSPECTION

3.1 *Inspectors shall:*

A. *inspect:*

- 1. the visible parts of interior finish materials,
- 2. the visible parts of decks, steps inside the *swimming pool/spa* shell, and coping,
- 3. the visible parts of pumps, motors, blowers, skimmer, filters, drains, heaters, *automatic safety controls*, gauges, visible piping and valves, conduit,

4. *cross connections* in the water supply system,
5. external bonding of the pump motors, blowers, heaters and other *components* that are required to be bonded,
6. operation of *readily accessible* lights, ground fault circuit interrupters, electrical *components*, and timer assemblies that are related to the pool or spa,
7. the visible parts of permanently *installed* handrails and ladders,
8. for the presence of *safety barriers* and *alarms*,
9. for the presence of *entrapment prevention components*,
10. vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the swimming pool or spa;

B. describe:

1. type of *swimming pool/spa*,
2. interior finish materials,
3. type of filter,
4. types of *safety barriers*,
5. type of cleaning system (if present),
6. energy source for heater (if present);

C. operate the systems using *normal operating controls*;

D. open *readily openable access panels*.

3.2 Inspectors are not required to:

- A. test, operate, or evaluate *components* when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage;
- B. test, operate, or evaluate *automatic safety controls* and manual or automatic valves;
- C. touch *swimming pool/spa* water to examine the structure, *components*, and features, including their composition and quality;
- D. test, operate, or evaluate electric resistance heaters;
- E. determine structural integrity;
- F. *inspect* any equipment or *component* that is *shut down* or that is not responding to *normal operating controls*, including conditions caused by the absence of a required energy source such as electricity or gas;

- G. *inspect*, test, operate, or evaluate: low voltage or *electronic controls*, water chemistry or clarity, out-of-level conditions, presence or absence of bacteria/algae, backwash functions, aerators, automatic cleaning systems, automatic water fill systems, water treatment systems, chemical dispensers, thermostats, heating elements, heat exchangers, solar and other alternative energy heating systems, water features, covers and related *components*, accessories, leaks in shell, underground *components*, temporary *safety barriers* and *alarms*, stray voltage, and the interior of filters including filter cartridges;
- H. *inspect*, test, operate, or evaluate diving and jump boards, slides, play equipment and similar *components*; and the suitability of the pool for the use of such *components* and for activities such as diving; and
- I. determine the adequacy of: system or *component* design, *structural components*, equipment and *component* compatibility, flow rates, high or low pressure conditions, filters, heaters, *safety barriers* and *alarms*, and *entrapment prevention components*.

4. GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

4.1 General Limitations

- A. *Inspectors* are not required to perform any action or make any determination not specifically required in these Standards.
- B. Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards are not:
 - 1. *numerically complete*, and
 - 2. required to identify or to report concealed conditions, latent defects, and consequential damages, and *cosmetic issues*.

4.2 General Exclusions

- A. *Inspectors* are not required to determine:
 - 1. condition of *components* that are not *installed* or that are not visible and *readily accessible*;
 - 2. strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any *component*, including *structural components*;
 - 3. methods, materials, or costs of corrections;
 - 4. future conditions including, but not limited to, *component* failure and the life expectancy of *components*;
 - 5. the suitability of a *swimming pool/spa* or of a *component* for any specialized use;
 - 6. the presence or absence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to, toxins, allergens carcinogens, electromagnetic radiation, noise, radioactive substances, and contaminants in soil, water, and air;

7. the presence or absence of potentially hazardous or damaging plants and animals including, but not limited to, wood destroying organisms and diseases harmful to humans including molds and mold-like substances;
8. operating costs of *components*;
9. acoustical properties of any *component*;
10. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties;
11. causes of or reasons for the condition of *components* identified in 2.2.A;
12. the *safety* of using the *swimming pool/spa* or any *component*;
13. the risks or benefits of adding new *components* and of modifying existing *components*;
14. whether the *swimming pool/spa* or any *component* is free from leakage of any kind;
15. whether any item, material, condition or *component* is subject to recall, controversy, litigation, products liability or other adverse claim or condition;
16. the adequacy of operation, maintenance, and use of the *swimming pool/spa* and of any *component*.

B. *Inspectors* are not required to:

1. perform any act or service contrary to law or regulation;
2. perform architectural, engineering, or surveying services or to confirm or evaluate such services performed by others;
3. perform any trade or any professional service other than as required in these Standards;
4. offer or provide warranties or guarantees of any kind;
5. perform any procedure or operation or enter any area that may, in the opinion of the *inspector*, be dangerous to the *inspector* or to other persons, or that may cause damage to the property or to *components*;
6. move personal property, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris;
7. *inspect installed decorative items*;
8. *inspect component interiors* that are not *readily accessible*; and
9. *dismantle any component*, except as explicitly required by these Standards.

GLOSSARY OF ITALICIZED TERMS

Alarm See *safety barrier*

Automatic safety controls Devices designed and *installed* to protect *components* from *unsafe* conditions

Client A person who hires an *inspector* to perform an inspection in accordance with these Standards

Component A primary part of a functionally related group that works together as a system, not including ancillary parts, such as signage and depth markers, that do not contribute to the intended function of the system

Coping The decorative material around the perimeter above a *swimming pool/spa*, usually located just above the tile

Cosmetic issues Defects that are superficial and that do not significantly affect a *component's* ability to function properly

Cross connection Any connection between two otherwise separate piping systems whereby there may be a flow from one system to another

Decorative Ornamental; not required for the proper operation of the *swimming pool/spa components*

Describe To identify (in writing) a *component* by its type or by other distinguishing characteristics

Dismantle To take apart or remove any *component*, device, or equipment that is bolted, screwed, or fastened by other means and that a homeowner would not take apart or remove in the course of normal household maintenance

Electronic controls Digital, computerized or solid state equipment operation management devices

Entrapment prevention component A *component*, such as a suction outlet cover, *installed* within the *swimming pool/spa* water circulation system that helps prevent a person from being held underwater at a suction outlet

Further evaluate Examination and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesman, or service technician using techniques and/or expertise that are beyond the scope of inspections performed in accordance with these Standards

Inspect To visually examine *components* in accordance with these Standards, using *normal operating controls* and opening *readily openable access panels*

Inspector A person who is hired by a *client* to *inspect* a *swimming pool/spa* in accordance with these Standards

Installed A *component* that is connected or set in position and prepared for use

Normal operating controls Devices such as thermostats and switches intended to be operated by the homeowner

Numerically complete An inspection that *inspects* every individual occurrence of a *component*

Readily accessible A *component* that is located where access will not involve risk to persons or property, and that is visible without: (1) moving matter of any kind, and (2) using tools, and (3) using a ladder taller than twelve feet

Readily openable access panel A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is *readily accessible*, within normal reach, can be removed by one person, and is not sealed in place

Safety Freedom from danger, risk, or injury

Safety barrier a *component*, such as a fence or a door or a window *alarm*, that helps restrict access to a *swimming pool/spa*

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

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

Swimming pool/spa A contained body of water eighteen inches or more in depth at any point and intended for swimming or immersion

Technical specialist A person who, by reason of training, education, and experience, has expertise in a specific trade or profession that is beyond that of an *inspector*, and who might, by reason of this expertise, or by the use of specialized tools, instruments, measurements, testing, calculations, or other means discover issues not discovered by an *inspector*

Unsafe A condition in a *readily accessible, installed* system or *component* that, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, presents a significant risk of bodily injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted *swimming pool/spa* construction methods.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS
AUXILIARY STANDARD OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
FOR RESIDENTIAL DECK INSPECTIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THIS STANDARD

- 1.1** The purpose of this Auxiliary Standard of Professional Practice for Residential Deck Inspections (Deck Standard) is to establish a voluntary standard for *inspectors* who perform a fee-for-service *residential deck inspection*. This Deck Standard does not apply to inspection of a *residential deck* performed during a *home inspection* using *The ASHI Standard of Practice for Home Inspections* (ASHI SoP). A *residential deck inspection* performed using this Deck Standard is an additional service that is a more thorough and detailed inspection of *residential deck components* than is performed using the ASHI SoP.
- 1.2** This Deck Standard does not limit inspectors from:
- A.** including other services or *components* in addition to those required by this Deck Standard; and
 - B.** excluding *residential deck components* from a *residential deck inspection*, if agreed to in writing by the *client*.
- 1.3** An *inspector* who performs a *residential deck inspection* using this Deck Standard shall adhere to the ASHI® Code of Ethics for the Home Inspection Profession.

2. RESIDENTIAL DECK INSPECTION OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

- 2.1** The objectives of a *residential deck inspection* are to:
- A.** determine if, at the time of the *residential deck inspection*, the inspected *residential deck components* substantially conform to a *deck construction guideline* selected by the *inspector*; the *inspector* may select more than one *deck construction guideline*; and
 - B.** identify *residential deck components* that are *unsafe*, or are near the end of their expected service lives at the time of the *residential deck inspection*.
- 2.2** A *residential deck inspection* performed using this Deck Standard:
- A.** is not *technically exhaustive*;
 - B.** is general and does not include:
 - 1. government laws and regulations, except those contained in a *deck construction guideline* selected by the *inspector*,
 - 2. manufacturer's installation instructions; and
 - C.** does not provide a warranty or guarantee regarding the condition of the inspected *residential deck*.

3. INSPECTION AND REPORT

- 3.1 The *inspector*, using the *inspector's* professional judgment, shall determine and identify:
- A. one or more *deck construction guidelines* that the *inspector* will use during the *residential deck inspection*; and
 - B. the *residential decks* that shall be inspected during the *residential deck inspection*.
- 3.2 The *inspector* shall *inspect* the *readily accessible*, visually observable, *installed residential deck components* specified in this Deck Standard.
- 3.3 The *inspector* shall issue a written report, using a medium and a format selected by the *inspector*, that:
- A. identifies the determinations made in 3.1;
 - B. identifies *residential deck components* that, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, do not substantially conform to the *deck construction guidelines* selected by the *inspector*, are *unsafe*, or that are near the end of their expected service lives;
 - C. provides the reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies reported in 3.3.B that are not self-evident;
 - D. recommends correction, *further evaluation*, or monitoring of *residential deck components* identified in 3.3.B; and
 - E. identifies *residential deck components* specified for inspection in this Deck Standard that were present during the inspection but were not inspected and a reason why they were not inspected.

4. FLASHING

- 4.1 The *inspector* shall *inspect* the visible:
- 1. *residential deck* ledger flashing for decks attached to the building,
 - 2. flashing at doors that open on to the *residential deck*, and
 - 3. flashing and sealants where *residential deck components* penetrate the wall covering.

5. DECK LEDGER

5.1 This section applies only when the *residential deck* is attached to the building.

5.2 The *inspectors* shall *inspect* the visible:

1. deck ledger board,
2. fasteners that attach the deck ledger board to the building,
3. lateral load connectors,
4. building rim joist or rim board at the location where the deck ledger board is attached to the building,
5. building floor joists or floor trusses at the location where the deck ledger board is attached to the building, and
6. building foundation, at the location where the deck ledger board is attached to the foundation.

6. FLOOR SYSTEM

6.1 The *inspector* shall *inspect* the visible:

1. floor joists, including connections to beams and deck ledgers,
2. rim joists,
3. beams,
4. fasteners, connectors, and similar *residential deck components*, and
5. decking/planking and similar *residential deck components*.

7. POSTS, COLUMNS, AND FOOTINGS

7.1 The *inspector* shall *inspect* the visible:

1. posts, columns, and similar *residential deck components*,
2. fasteners, connectors, and similar *residential deck components*, and
3. footings.

8. BRACING

8.1 The *inspector* shall *inspect* the visible:

1. bracing members, and
2. fasteners, connectors, and similar *residential deck components*.

9. GUARDS AND HANDRAILS

9.1 The *inspector* shall *inspect* the visible:

1. guards and stair guards,
2. handrails,
3. guard and handrail support posts,
4. guard and handrail in-fill *residential deck components*, and
5. fasteners, connectors, and similar *residential deck components*.

10. STAIRS

10.1 The *inspector* shall *inspect* the visible stair and step:

1. stringers, including their connection to the *residential deck*,
2. stringer support posts,
3. risers,
4. treads,
5. landings, and
6. fasteners, connectors, and similar *residential deck components*.

11. OTHER COMPONENTS

11.1 The *inspector* shall report the presence of suspected excessive loads such as spas and hot tubs.

11.2 The *inspector* shall report the absence of exterior light fixtures where recommended.

12. GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

A. The *inspector* is **NOT** required to perform actions, make determinations, identify or report about *residential deck components*, or make recommendations unless specifically required by this Deck Standard.

B. *Residential deck inspections* performed using this Deck Standard are **NOT** required to identify or to report:

1. conditions including, but not limited to, vertical and lateral loads imposed by people, property, and acts of god such as earthquakes, flooding, snow, and wind,
2. latent defects, consequential damages, and *cosmetic issues*,
3. *residential deck components* that are concealed or otherwise not visible, or that are **NOT** readily accessible,
4. the condition of *components* that are not *residential deck components*, and
5. *residential deck components* that were **NOT** inspected by reason of 12.D.6.

C. The *inspector* is **NOT** required to determine:

1. strength, adequacy, effectiveness, structural integrity, and efficiency of any *residential deck component*, including structural components,
2. manufacturer, species, grade, type, and effectiveness of preservative treatment, and similar characteristics of lumber and other *residential deck components*, unless this information is clearly visible, readable, and *readily accessible* during the *residential deck inspection*,
3. type, application method, and level of corrosion resistance applied to fasteners, connectors, and similar *residential deck components*, unless this information is clearly visible, readable, and *readily accessible*, during the *residential deck inspection*,
4. type, length, and other characteristics of fasteners unless this information is clearly visible, readable, and *readily accessible* during the *residential deck inspection*,
5. if cuts in preservative treated lumber have been field-treated with a preservative,
6. methods, materials, and costs of corrections,
7. future conditions including, but not limited to, *residential deck component* failure and the remaining life expectancy of *residential deck components*,
8. presence of plants, animals, and other life forms and substances that may be hazardous or harmful to humans including, but not limited to, wood destroying organisms, molds and mold-like substances,
9. presence of environmental hazards including, but not limited to, allergens, toxins, carcinogens, electromagnetic radiation, noise, radioactive substances, and contaminants in building materials, soil, water, and air,
10. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties,
11. whether any item, material, condition, or *residential deck component* is subject to recall, controversy, litigation, product liability or other adverse claim or condition, and
12. compliance of *residential deck components* with past requirements and guidelines (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, specifications, installation and maintenance instructions, use and care guides, etc.).

D. The *inspector* is **NOT** required to:

1. perform any act or service contrary to law or regulation;
2. perform architectural, engineering, or surveying services, or to confirm or evaluate such services performed by others;
3. perform any trade or any professional service other than as required in this Deck Standard;
4. provide warranties or guarantees of any kind;
5. *inspect* every occurrence of multiple similar *residential deck components*;
6. perform any procedure or operation or to enter any area that may, in the opinion of the *inspector*, be dangerous to the *inspector*, to other persons, or that may cause damage to the property or to *components*;

7. move personal property, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris;
8. dismantle any *residential deck component*; and
9. determine causes of or reasons for the condition of *residential deck components* identified in 3.3.B.

13. DEFINITIONS OF ITALICIZED TERMS

Client A person who hires an *inspector* to perform a *residential deck inspection*.

Component A primary part of a functionally related group that works together as a system, not including ancillary parts that do not contribute to the intended function of the system.

Cosmetic issues Defects that are superficial, and that do not affect a *component's* ability to function properly.

Deck construction guideline A written and recognized authoritative reference that describes a recognized and generally accepted deck construction practices; examples include, but are not limited to, The American Wood Council publication *Design for Code Acceptance 6 (DCA-6)*, and *The International Residential Code for One and Two-Family Dwellings*. Parts of a *deck construction guideline* that are identified as Appendix, Commentary, or that have similar identifications, are not part of a *deck construction guideline*. References in a *deck construction guideline* to other standards, guidelines, and documents are not part of a *deck construction guideline*; examples include, but are not limited to, the *National Design Specification*, and ASTM standards.

Further evaluation Additional examination and analysis by a qualified professional.

Home inspection An inspection performed using *The ASHI Standard Of Practice For Home Inspections*.

Inspect The process of examining *readily accessible residential deck components* using this Deck Standard.

Inspector A person who has the qualifications to perform a *residential deck inspection* using this Deck Standard.

Installed A *residential deck component* that is connected or set in position and prepared for use.

Readily accessible A *residential deck component* that is located in an area where access will not involve risk to persons or property, and that is visible without: (1) moving matter or material of any kind, and (2) using tools, and (3) using a ladder taller than twelve feet.

Residential deck A wood-framed structure that is located outside of the building. A *residential deck* may include structures such as a balcony, deck, landing, stairway, and porch. A *residential deck* may be attached to the building, or it may be free-standing.

Residential deck component A *component* that is *installed* and that is part of a *residential deck*.

Residential deck inspection The inspection by a qualified *inspector* of *residential deck components* specified in this Deck Standard.

Technically Exhaustive An investigation that involves the use of advanced techniques, instruments, testing, calculations, engineering, or other means.

Unsafe A condition in a *readily accessible, installed residential deck component* that is judged by the *inspector* to be a significant risk of serious bodily injury during normal, day-to-day use; the risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted *deck construction guidelines*.

APPENDIX A

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc. (ASHI) does not verify the qualifications of inspectors who use this Deck Standard, and has no authority or control over the inspections undertaken or performed using this Deck Standard. This Deck Standard is not intended to discourage or limit additional or more detailed inspections. ASHI disclaims all liability for any and all personal and bodily injuries and damages, including but not limited to incidental and consequential damages, which may occur as a result of inspections performed using this Deck Standard. No warranty, expressed or implied, is intended or offered by ASHI in the use of this Deck Standard. ASHI, its officers, directors, employees, and agents assume no risk, and make and imply no representations of any kind, to inspectors, consumers, third parties, and others.