

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

**1. INSPECTION PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- 1.1** The purpose of these Standards of 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.** do not confirm compliance 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*.
- 1.3** These Standards do not limit *inspectors* from:
- A.** including other services or *components* in addition to those required in these Standards;
  - B.** designing or specifying repairs, provided the *inspector* is appropriately qualified and willing to do so;
  - C.** 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 Code of Ethics of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI).
- 1.5** These Standards apply to *swimming pools/spas* located on property containing a one and two-family residential structure.

## 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. explains, briefly, the significance of failure to address *components* identified in 2.2.A;
- C. recommends action to correct, monitor for future action, or to *further evaluate 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. identifies *components* designated for inspection in these Standards that were not present during the inspection.

## 3.0 SWIMMING POOL AND SPA INSPECTION

3.1 *Inspectors shall:*

A. *inspect:*

- 1. interior finish materials,
- 2. decks, steps and *coping*,
- 3. 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 equipment,
- 6. operation of underwater lights, ground fault circuit interrupters, visible electrical components and timer assemblies,
- 7. permanently installed handrails and ladders,
- 8. child safety barriers and alarms,
- 9. entrapment prevention *components*;

**B. describe:**

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

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

D. open *readily openable access panels*.

**3.2** *Inspectors* are not required to:

- A. operate *components* when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage;
- B. operate *automatic safety controls* and manual or automatic valves;
- C. come into contact with *swimming pool/spa* water to examine the structure or *components*;
- D. verify operation of 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*: low voltage or *electronic controls*, water chemistry or clarity, out-of-level conditions, presence or absence of bacteria/algae, operation of 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, diving and jump boards, slides and related components, covers and related components, play equipment, accessories, leaks in shell, and underground components;
- H. determine the adequacy of: system or *component* design, *structural components*, equipment and *component* compatibility, flow rates, high or low pressure conditions, filters, heaters, child safety barriers.

## 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 concealed conditions, latent defects, and consequential damages.

### 4.2 General Exclusions

- A. *Inspectors* are not required to determine:
  1. condition of *components* that are not *installed* or that are not *readily accessible*;
  2. strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any *component*;
  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, carcinogens, electromagnetic radiation, noise, radioactive substances, and contaminants in soil, water, and air;
  7. the presence or absence of potentially hazardous 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; and
  12. the safety of using the *swimming pool/spa* or 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 *swimming pool/spa* inspection;
  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, soil, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris;
  7. *inspect* for *cosmetic issues*;
  8. *inspect installed decorative* items;
  9. *inspect component* interiors that are not *readily accessible*; and
  10. *dismantle* any component, except as explicitly required by these Standards.

## GLOSSARY OF ITALICIZED TERMS

**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 part of a functionally related group that works together as a system

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

**Cosmetic issues** defects that do not affect the ability of a *component* 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 would not be taken apart or removed by a homeowner in the course of normal household maintenance

**Electronic Controls** Digital, computerized or solid state equipment operation management devices

**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 and report, in writing, on the condition of *components* in accordance with these Standards, using *normal operating controls* and opening *readily openable access panels*

**Inspector** A person who has the appropriate qualifications and 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** Available for visual inspection without requiring moving of personal property, *dismantling*, destructive measures, or any action 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 removed by one person, and is not sealed in place

**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, 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.