

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS
DRAFT STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR
RESIDENTIAL PRE-DRYWALL 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 pre-drywall inspections during construction of new residential structures and remodeling of existing residential structures.
- 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.** supplement inspections performed by contractors and by *government inspectors*;
 - C.** are conducted by a construction generalist, not by a *technical specialist*;
 - D.** 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;
 - E.** do not provide a warranty or guarantee regarding the condition of the property and of the inspected *components*.
- 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 one and two-family residential structures and to townhomes containing not more than four residential units.

2. INSPECTION TIMING

- 2.1 Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards should occur after the following *components* have been *installed* in the manner required by the *Authority Having Jurisdiction* for its pre-interior wall covering inspection:
- A. foundation *components*,
 - B. floor, wall, and roof structural *components*,
 - C. plumbing, electrical, and HVAC rough-in *components*,
 - D. windows and exterior doors.
- 2.2 Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards may occur at a time other than that described in 2.1 if agreed to by the *client*.

3. INSPECTION AND REPORT

- 3.1 *Inspectors* shall *inspect readily accessible*, visually observable, *installed components* designated in these Standards.
- 3.2 *Inspectors* shall issue a written report that:
- A. identifies *components* that, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, do not comply with *generally accepted construction practices*;
 - B. explains, briefly, the significance of non-compliance with *generally accepted construction practices*;
 - C. recommends action to correct or to *further evaluate components* identified in 3.2.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.

4. FOUNDATION

4.1 Inspectors shall:

A. inspect:

1. visible parts of footings, pier pads, and similar *components*,
2. visible parts of foundation walls,
3. structural columns,
4. concrete foundation slabs,
5. waterproofing and /or dampproofing,
6. foundation drains,
7. under-floor crawl spaces,
8. building setbacks from slopes,
9. foundation elevation relative to surrounding terrain,
10. retaining walls greater than four feet tall;

B. describe:

1. foundation(s),
2. foundation moisture control method(s),
3. under-floor crawl space ventilation method(s),
4. under-floor crawl space inspection method(s).

4.2 Inspectors are not required to:

- A. measure the foundation or to determine whether it is plumb, square, or properly located on the property;
- B. determine how water will flow on the property;
- C. determine whether the property or structure is in a flood hazard area.

5. FLOOR SYSTEM

5.1 Inspectors shall:

A. inspect:

1. floor joists, trusses, and similar *components*,
2. bridging, blocking, rim and band material, web stiffeners, filler and backer blocks, and similar *components*,
3. beams, girders, and similar *components*,
4. opening(s) in the floor system,
5. floor sheathing,
6. fasteners, straps, bolts, hangers, and similar *components*,
7. draftstops;

- B. describe:**
 1. floor structural *components*,
 2. floor sheathing.

6. WALL SYSTEM

6.1 *Inspectors shall:*

A. inspect:

1. vertical and horizontal structural *components*,
2. beams, headers, and similar *components*,
3. fasteners, straps, bolts, and similar *components*,
4. wall bracing,
5. vertical load paths,
6. fireblocking;

B. describe vertical structural *components*.

6.2 *Inspectors are not required to inspect fire separation distances or components between or within buildings.*

7. ROOF SYSTEM

7.1 *Inspectors shall:*

A. inspect:

1. ceiling joists, rafters, trusses, and similar *components*,
2. rafter ties, collar ties, bridging and lateral support members, purlins, web stiffeners, and similar *components*,
3. ridge boards, hip and valley rafters, beams, and similar *components*,
4. opening(s) in the roof system,
5. roof sheathing,
6. fasteners, straps, bolts, hangers, and similar *components*,
7. attic access openings,
8. attic ventilation;

B. describe:

1. roof structural *components*,
2. roof sheathing,
3. attic ventilation method(s).

8. ROOF COVERING

8.1 *Inspectors shall:*

A. inspect:

1. roof covering materials and visible underlayment,
2. sidewall, valley, drip edge, and penetration flashing,
3. skylights, exterior of chimneys, and other roof penetrations;

B. describe:

1. roof covering material(s),
2. roof inspection method(s).

8.2 *Inspectors* are not required to:

- A. walk on roofs;
- B. *inspect* roofs and other *components* from other than at ground level.

9. HVAC SYSTEM

9.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. HVAC equipment and related *components*,
2. distribution ducts, distribution pipes, and similar *components*,
3. for a heating and cooling source in *habitable rooms*,
4. condensate disposal *components*,
5. access to HVAC equipment,
6. vents, flues, and similar *components*,
7. clearance between vents, flues, and similar *components* and air intake openings,
8. equipment elevation, anchoring, and protection,
9. clearances to combustible materials,
10. provisions for combustion air;

B. *describe*:

1. HVAC equipment energy source(s),
2. HVAC equipment.

- 9.2 *Inspectors* are not required to:
- A. calculate or determine the size or adequacy of *HVAC* equipment and of distribution *components*;
 - B. test *HVAC* equipment and distribution components for leaks;
 - C. *inspect* solar, geothermal, wind, and other alternative energy systems;
 - D. calculate or determine the size of vents, flues, and similar *components*.

10. PLUMBING SYSTEM

10.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. interior water supply distribution *components*,
2. interior drain, waste, and vent (DWV) *components*,
3. supports and insulation for interior water supply and DWV *components*,
4. fuel storage and fuel distribution *components*, including supports,
5. vents, flues, and similar *components*, including clearance to combustible materials,
6. clearance between plumbing vents, fuel-burning equipment vents, flues, and similar *components* and air intake openings,
7. plumbing equipment, waste receptors, and fixtures,
8. clearances at fixtures to obstructions and to ceilings,
9. backflow prevention *components* and method(s),
10. backwater valves,
11. sewage pumps and ejectors and related *components*,
12. drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related *components*,
13. visible and accessible underground storm drainage *components*;

B. *describe*:

1. interior water supply distribution material(s),
2. interior DWV material(s),
3. interior fuel storage equipment and distribution material(s),
4. energy source for domestic hot water.

- 10.2 *Inspectors* are not required to calculate or determine:
- A. water supply, DWV, and fuel distribution pipe size,
 - B. the size of vents, flues, and similar components,
 - C. whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private,
 - D. water supply quality and quantity,
 - E. functionality of private waste disposal systems.
- 10.3 *Inspectors* are not required to *inspect*:
- A. private water storage and supply systems,
 - B. private waste disposal systems,
 - C. solar, geothermal, wind, and other alternative energy systems,
 - D. fire suppression systems,
 - E. landscape irrigation systems.
- 10.4 *Inspectors* are not required to test water supply, DWV, and fuel distribution *components*, waste receptors, and fixtures for leaks.

11. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

- 11.1 *Inspectors* shall:
- A. *inspect*:
 1. service drop, mast, and related *components*,
 2. visible *components* of a service lateral,
 3. service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways,
 4. service equipment,
 5. grounding electrode(s) and grounding electrode conductor(s),
 6. panelboard(s), cabinet(s), and related *components*,
 7. branch circuit and feeder conductors,
 8. outlets,
 9. for required receptacle outlets in kitchens, bathrooms, habitable rooms, laundry, hallways, basements, and service receptacles at HVAC equipment,
 10. for required switch outlets at stairways,
 11. for required lighting outlets at stairways, kitchens, bathrooms, hallways, closets, basements, attics, crawl spaces, and exterior doors,
 12. bonding connections;
 - B. *describe*:
 1. amperage and voltage rating of the service equipment,
 2. amperage and voltage rating of secondary panels,
 3. location of service equipment and of secondary panels.

- 11.2 *Inspectors* are not required to:
- A. calculate or determine service, feeder, and branch circuit load;
 - B. calculate or determine conductor size;
 - C. determine if branch circuits are correctly installed between panelboards and outlets and between outlets;
 - D. *inspect* audio, video, data, telephone, signaling, structured wiring, low voltage, and similar *components* that are not part of the primary electrical power distribution system;
 - E. *inspect* all *components* and circuits that serve or are related to swimming pools, spas, and hot tubs;
 - F. *inspect* solar, geothermal, wind, and other alternative energy systems.

12. WINDOWS AND DOORS

- 12.1 *Inspectors* shall *inspect*:
- 1. physical attachment to the structure,
 - 2. flashing,
 - 3. absence of safety glazing where required,
 - 4. escape openings, window wells, the egress door, and door landings.
- 12.2 *Inspectors* are not required to determine the presence, absence, and orientation of low emissivity coatings.

13. EXTERIOR WALL COVERINGS

- 13.1 *Inspectors* shall *inspect*:
- 1. flashing and drainage components,
 - 2. fastener type and placement,
 - 3. joint treatments,
 - 4. horizontal support components such as lintels,
 - 5. vertical support components such as wall ties.
- 13.2 *Inspectors* are not required to determine whether proposed or installed horizontal support components are structurally adequate to support imposed loads.

14. INTERIORS

14.1 *Inspectors shall inspect:*

1. stairways, including width, headroom, treads, risers, and guards,
2. light and ventilation source(s) in *habitable rooms*,
3. ceiling height in *habitable rooms*, bathrooms, hallways, and basements,
4. width of hallways,
5. clothes dryer, kitchen, and bathroom exhaust *components*.

15. FIREPLACES AND DECORATIVE GAS APPLIANCES

15.1 *Inspectors shall:*

A. *inspect:*

1. fireplace and chimney *components*,
2. decorative gas appliances, vents, and related *components*,
3. clearances between *components* and combustible materials;

B. *describe:*

1. fireplace(s) and chimney(s), and
2. decorative gas appliances(s).

16. GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

16.1 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.

16.2 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. whether construction plans, drawings, and specifications are complete, correct, *internally consistent*, in compliance with *generally accepted construction practices*, and in compliance with manufacturer's installation instructions,
4. whether *client* selections and optional features have been installed,
5. methods, materials, or costs of corrections,
6. future conditions including, but not limited to, *component* failure and the life expectancy of *components*,
7. the suitability of the property for any specialized use,
8. market value of the property or its marketability,
9. the advisability of purchase of the property,
10. 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,
11. 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,
 12. the adequacy or effectiveness of any system *installed* or method used to control or remove suspected hazardous substances and conditions,
 13. operating costs of components,
 14. acoustical properties of any component,
 15. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties.

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 pre-interior wall covering inspection;
4. offer or provide warranties or guarantees of any kind;
5. *inspect* any areas not entered in accordance with 17.2.C;
6. perform any procedure or operation 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*;
7. *describe* or report on any *component* that is not included in these Standards and that was not inspected;
8. move personal property, construction materials and equipment, temporary construction *components*, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.
9. *dismantle* any component, except as explicitly required by these Standards.

- C. *Inspectors* are not required to enter:
1. areas 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,
 2. under-floor crawl spaces and attics that are not *readily accessible*,
 3. areas that are restricted by the builder or property owner.
- D. *Inspectors* are not required to *inspect*:
1. or to confirm compliance with energy efficiency requirements including, but not limited to, air infiltration, insulation, radiant barriers, and *HVAC* equipment efficiency,
 2. *component* interiors that are not *readily accessible*.

GLOSSARY OF ITALICIZED TERMS

Authority Having Jurisdiction A governmental entity authorized to perform building code and other official inspections and to issue binding interpretations about the application of building codes and regulations

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

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

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

Generally accepted construction practices Written material that is published by an organization such as Air Conditioning Contractors of America, American Forest and Paper Association, or the International Code Council

Habitable rooms Living, sleeping, eating and cooking rooms; not including bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, storage and utility rooms

HVAC Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning

Inspect To visually examine and report, in writing, on the condition of *components* in accordance with these Standards

Inspector A person who has the appropriate qualifications and who is hired by a *client* to *inspect* a structure in accordance with these Standards and who, in most cases, is not authorized to perform building code and other official inspections

Inspector, government A person authorized by the *Authority Having Jurisdiction* to conduct building code and other official inspections

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

Internally consistent Measurements, specifications, and requirements are identical on all pages of a multi-page document

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

Readily accessible A *component* that is located in an area where access is granted by the builder or property owner, and 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 thirteen feet

Technical specialist A person who, by reason of training, education, and experience, has expertise, beyond that of an *inspector*, in a specific trade or profession, 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*