

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.