AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS
STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR
RESIDENTIAL PREDRYWALL INSPECTIONS

1. INSPECTION PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1.1 The purpose of these Standards of Professional Practice (Standards) is to establish a standard for *inspectors* who voluntarily use these Standards when performing residential predrywall inspections during construction of new residential structures and remodeling of existing residential structures.

1.2 Inspections performed in conformity 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 a construction 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 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 designated in these Standards;
B. excluding *components* from the inspection if requested by the *client*.

1.4 *Inspectors* who perform inspections in conformity with these Standards shall adhere to the ASHI® Code of Ethics For the Home Inspection Profession.

1.5 These Standards apply only to one and two-family residential structures, to townhouses, and to associated garages and carports.

2. INSPECTION TIMING

2.1 Inspections performed in conformity with these Standards should occur after the following *components* have been *installed*:

A. foundation *components*,
B. floor, wall, and roof structural *components*,
C. plumbing, electrical, and rough-in *components*,
D. windows and exterior doors.

2.2 Inspections performed in conformity with these Standards may occur at a time other than that described in 2.1 if agreed to by the *client*.

2.3 *Client* shall schedule the inspection with the builder or other property owner and shall obtain permission for the *inspector* to enter to the property. *Inspectors* are not required to *inspect* or report the condition of *components* that are not *installed*, visually observable, or that are not *readily accessible*.

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,* are significantly deficient;
B. provides the reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies reported in 3.2.A, that are not self-evident;
C. recommends correction, *further evaluation*, or monitoring of *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.

4. FOUNDATION

4.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect* the visible parts of:

1. footings, pier pads, and similar *components*,
2. foundation walls,
3. fasteners, straps, bolts, and similar *components*,
4. structural columns,
5. concrete foundation slabs,
6. waterproofing and/or dampproofing,
7. foundation drains,
8. under-floor crawl spaces,
9. retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the building;

B. *describe*:

1. foundation(s),
2. under-floor crawl space ventilation method(s),
3. 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;
D. determine the structural integrity of any *component*.

5. FLOOR SYSTEM

5.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect* the visible parts of:

1. floor joists, trusses, sill and sole plates, 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.

5.2 *Inspectors* are not required to determine the structural integrity of any *component*.

6. WALL SYSTEM

6.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect* the visible parts of*:*

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

B. *describe* vertical wall structural *components*.

6.2 *Inspectors* are not required to:

A. *inspect* fire separation distances or *components* between detached buildings;
B. determine the structural integrity of any *component*.

7. ROOF SYSTEM

7.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect* the visible parts of:

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) and penetration(s) in the roof system such as dormers,
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).

7.2 *Inspectors* are not required to determine the structural integrity of any *component*.

8. ROOF COVERING

8.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect* the visible parts of:

1. roof covering materials and underlayment,
2. sidewall, valley, 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. HEATING, VENTILATION, AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC) SYSTEM

9.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect* the visible parts of:

1. HVAC *components*,
2. distribution ducts, distribution pipes, and similar *components*,
3. for the presence of 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.

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 or adequacy of vents, flues, and similar *components*;
E. calculate ventilation requirements or to determine the adequacy of ventilation *components*.

10. PLUMBING SYSTEM

10.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect* the visible parts of:

1. interior water supply distribution *component*s,
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. backwater valves.

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,
5. the presence of fire suppression systems.

10.2 *Inspectors* are not required to calculate or determine:

A. the size and adequacy of water supply, DWV, and fuel distribution pipes,
B. the size and adequacy 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. the visible parts of the service drop, mast, and related *components*,
2. the visible parts of the service lateral,
3. the visible parts of service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways,
4. the visible parts of the service equipment,
5. the visible parts of grounding electrode(s) and grounding electrode conductor(s),
6. the visible parts of the panelboard(s), cabinet(s), and related *components*,
7. the visible parts of the branch circuit and feeder conductors, and raceways,
8. the visible parts of the bonding connections,
9. for the presence of switch boxes at stairways,
10. for the presence of lighting boxes at stairways, kitchens bathrooms, hallways, closets, basements, attics, crawl spaces, HVAC equipment, and exterior doors.

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 points of control or use (boxes) and between points of control or use;
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* any *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* the visible parts of:

A. physical attachment to the structure,
B. flashing,
C. 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* the visible parts of*:*

A. flashing and drainage components,
B. fastener type and placement,
C. horizontal support *components* such as lintels,
D. 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* the visible parts of:

A. stairways, including width, headroom, treads, risers, and guard walls,
B. light and ventilation source(s) in *habitable rooms*,
C. ceiling height in *habitable rooms*, bathrooms, hallways, and basements,
D. width of hallways,
E. clothes dryer, kitchen, and bathroom exhaust *components*.

15. FIREPLACES AND DECORATIVE GAS APPLIANCES

15.1 *Inspectors* shall:

A. *inspect* the visible parts of:

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 to make any determination not specifically required in these Standards.
B. Inspections performed in conformity with these Standards are not:

1. *numerically complete*,
2. required to identify or to report concealed conditions, latent defects, consequential damages, and *cosmetic issues*.

16.2 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. whether construction plans, drawings, and specifications are complete, correct, *internally consistent*, or in conformity with manufacturer's installation instructions,
4. whether or not 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, allergens, 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 hazardous substances and conditions,
13. operating costs of *components*,
14. acoustical properties of any *component*,
15. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties, and
16. whether any item, material, condition or *component* is subject to recall, controversy, litigation, product liability or other adverse claim or condition.

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. *inspect components* in areas not entered in conformity with 16.2.C;
6. perform any procedure or operation or to 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;*
7. *describe* or report on any *component* that is not designated 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*;
10. *inspect* or evaluate the maintenance and operation of the construction site including compliance with safety procedures and regulations;
11. determine causes of or reasons for the condition of *components* identified in 3.2.A.

C. *Inspectors* are not required to enter:

1. under-floor crawl spaces and attics that are not *readily accessible;*
2. areas that are restricted by the builder, trade contractors, or property owner.

D. *Inspectors* are not required to *inspect*:

1. or to confirm conformity with energy efficiency requirements including, but not limited to, air infiltration and air sealing, ventilation, insulation amount and installation, radiant barriers, and HVAC equipment efficiency;
2. *component* interiors that are not *readily accessible.*

GLOSSARY OF ITALICIZED TERMS

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

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

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

Further evaluation 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 conformity with these Standards

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

Inspect To visually examine *components* in conformity with these Standards

Inspector A person who is hired by a *client* to *inspect* a structure in conformity with these Standards

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 twelve feet

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*