

Residential Standards of Practice



Standards of Practice



CANADIAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED HOME INSPECTORS

The Standards of Practice are a set of guidelines for home inspectors to follow in the performance of their inspections.

The Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics are recognized by many related professionals as the definitive standard for professional performance in the industry.

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The Canadian National Association of Certified Home Inspectors (CanNACHI) is a not for-profit association. CanNACHI's objectives include promotion of excellence within the profession and continual improvement of inspection services to the public.

(A) PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. The purpose of these Standards of Practice is to establish a standard for private, fee-paid home inspectors who are members of CanNACHI. Home Inspections performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client with information regarding the condition of the systems and components of the home as inspected at the time of the Home Inspection.
2. The Inspector shall inspect readily accessible and installed systems and components of homes listed in these Standards of Practice.
3. The Inspector shall report on those systems and components inspected which, in the professional opinion of the inspector, are significantly deficient or are near

the end of their service lives.

4. The Inspector shall report a reason why, if not self-evident, the system or component is significantly deficient or near the end of its service life.
5. The Inspector shall make recommendations (if he or she chooses to) to correct or monitor the reported deficiency.
6. The Inspector shall report on any systems and components designated for inspection in these Standards of Practice which were present at the time of the Home Inspection but were not inspected and a reason they were not inspected.
7. These Standards of Practice are not intended to limit inspectors from:
 - including other inspection services, systems or components in addition to those required by these Standards of Practice.
 - specifying repairs, provided the inspector is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
 - excluding systems and components from the inspection if requested by the client.

<i>The Inspector <u>is</u> required to:</i> <i>Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>	<i>The Inspector <u>is not</u> required to:</i> <i>Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>
<u>(B) ROOFING</u>	
1. Roof covering materials.	8. Accessories that do not make up part of the roofing such as lightning arrester systems, antennae, solar heating systems, de-icing equipment.
2. Roof penetrations and flashings.	9. Predict the service life expectancy of the roof.
3. Chimneys	10. Inspect underground downspout diverter drainage pipes.
4. Skylights	11. Move or disturb insulation.

5. Roof drainage components including gutters and downspouts.	12. Perform a water test
6. Evidence of water penetration.	13. Warrant or certify or guarantee the roof.
7. General structure of the roof from the readily accessible panels, doors or stairs or hatch	14. Walk on roofing where in judgement of the inspector could be dangerous or cause damage.
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<u>(C) EXTERIOR</u>	
1. Exterior wall covering/surfaces, eaves and trim.	10. Geological, hydrological and/or ground and soil conditions.
2. Doors, windows, and flashings.	11. Yard fencing
3. Garages and carports that are attached to the main building.	12. Seasonal accessories such as removable storm windows, Storm doors, screens and shutters.
4. All exterior doors, decks, stoops, steps, stairs, porches, railings, eaves, soffits and fascias.	13. Storage sheds and other structures not part of the building.
5. Balconies including stairs, guards and railings.	14. Any items or facilities not directly related to the building structure, such as swimming pools, saunas, hot tubs, tennis courts, etc.
6. Observe and report lot grading and vegetation as it affects the building.	15. Seawalls, break-walls and docks.
7. Retaining walls when these are likely to adversely affect the structure.	16. Playground equipment or recreation facilities
8. Walkways and driveways on the building.	17. Erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

9. Test the operation of power operated garage door openers, including the stop and automatic reverse functions.	18. Drain fields or dry-wells, septic systems or cesspools.
	19. Water wells or springs.
	20. Determine the integrity of the thermal window seals or damaged glass.
	21. Verify or certify safe operation of any auto reverse or related safety function of a garage doors.
<i>The Inspector <u>is</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>	<i>The Inspector <u>is not</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>
<u>(D) STRUCTURE</u>	
1. Visible foundation walls.	10. Inspect areas that are not reasonably accessible or visible.
2. Floors, columns, walls, roofs, attics.	11. Enter any crawlspaces that are not readily accessible or where entry could cause damage or pose a hazard to the inspector.
3. Report any general indications of foundation movement observed by the inspector, such as but not limited to drywall cracks, brick cracks, out-of-square door frames or floor slopes and concrete wall cracks.	12. Move stored items or debris.
4. Report on any cutting, notching and boring of framing members which may present a structural or safety concern.	13. Identify size, spacing, span, location or determine adequacy of foundation bolting, bracing, joists, joist spans or support systems.
5. Chimneys.	14. Provide any engineering or architectural service.
6. Wood in contact or near soil.	15. Report on the adequacy of any structural system or component.

7. Crawl spaces, basements.	
8. Observe and report any evidence of water penetration and condensation.	
9. Observe and report on any Evidence of deterioration from insects, rot, or fire.	
<i>The Inspector <u>is</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>	<i>The Inspector <u>is not</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>
<u>(E) INSULATION & VENTILATION</u>	
1. Insulation and vapour barriers in accessible attics, crawl spaces and unfinished basements.	5. Concealed insulation and vapour barrier systems.
2. Ventilation of attics and unheated crawl spaces.	6. Inspect areas that are not reasonably accessible or visible.
3. Report on the general absence or lack of insulation in unfinished and reasonably accessible or visible areas.	7. Move, touch, or disturb insulation or vapour barriers.
4. Operate exhaust fan ventilation systems. ie: kitchen and bathroom vents.	8. Identify the composition or exact R-value of insulation material.
	9. Determine the types of materials used in insulation or wrapping of pipes, ducts, jackets, boilers, and wiring.
	10. Determine the adequacy of ventilation.
<i>The Inspector <u>is</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>	<i>The Inspector <u>is not</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>

(F) ELECTRICAL

1. Service entrance cable and location and integrity of the insulation, drip loop, or separation of conductors at weatherheads and clearances from grade or rooftops.	14. Insert any tool, probe or device into the main panel board sub-panels, distribution panel boards, or electrical fixtures.
2. Main service panel, auxiliary panels and location.	15. Secondary wiring systems such as low voltage wiring, telephone wiring, cable television wiring, etc.
3. Test all ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) receptacles and GFCI circuit breakers observed and deemed to be GFCI's during the inspection.	16. Any components not related to the primary electrical systems such as security systems, swimming pool wiring and time-control devices.
4. Panel overcurrent protection and system grounding.	17. Inspect private or emergency electrical supply sources, including but not limited to generators, windmills, solar panels, or battery or electrical storage facilities.
5. Branch circuit wiring and related over current protection.	18. Provide or remove power for equipment.
6. Report on any unused circuit breaker panel openings that are not filled.	19. Inspect or test de-icing equipment.
7. Amperage ratings of the main service panel and accessible sub panels.	20. Conduct voltage drop calculations.
8. A representative number of switches, receptacles, lighting fixtures, AFCI receptacles.	21. Determine the accuracy of circuit labeling.
9. Test all accessible Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) receptacles and GFCI circuit breakers observed and deemed to be GFCI's during the inspection using a GFCI tester, where possible.	22. Verify or certify the service ground.
10. Outlets noted above are to be checked for polarity and grounding.	24. Test the operation of smoke detectors
11. All exterior outlets and those within 1.5 meters of plumbing fixtures will be checked for polarity, grounding and ground fault circuit protection.	25. Dismantle, remove, adjust or perform any task on any electrical equipment that would require a qualified trades person to perform.
12. Report the presence or absence of smoke detectors.	26. Insert or remove fuses, or operate circuit breakers.

13. Report the presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring if readily visible.	
<p><i>The Inspector <u>is</u> required to:</i> <i>Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i></p>	<p><i>The Inspector <u>is NOT</u> required to:</i> <i>Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i></p>
<p><u>(G) PERMANENTLY INSTALLED HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEMS</u></p>	
1. The heating systems using normal operating controls and describe the energy source and heating method.	12. Inspect or evaluate interiors of flues or chimneys, fire chambers, heat exchangers, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, electronic air filters, solar heating systems or fuel tanks.
2. Furnace and distribution system, including fans, ducts, dampers, supports, filters, insulation, and registers.	13. Determine the uniformity, temperature, flow, balance, distribution, size, capacity, adequacy, BTU, or supply adequacy of the heating system.
3. Boilers and distribution system including pumps, piping, valves, supports, insulation, radiators and convectors.	14. Any portable heating/cooling, humidifying, dehumidifying or air cleaning equipment.
4. Flue piping, vents, and chimneys.	15. Activate any HVAC systems when ambient temperatures or when other circumstances are not conducive to safe operation or may damage the equipment.
5. Heat recovery ventilator.	16. Evaluate fuel quality.
6. Interior fuel storage equipment supply piping, venting, supports, and evidence of leakage.	17. Verify thermostat calibration, heat anticipation or automatic setbacks, timers, programs or clocks.
7. Cooling equipment and distribution system including fans, ducts, dampers, supports, filters, insulation, registers and piping.	18. Examine electrical current, coolant fluids or gases, or coolant leakage.
8. The presence of a designated shut off switch and a fuel shut off valve.	19. Dismantle, remove, adjust or perform any function on any heating or cooling equipment that would require a qualified tradesperson to perform.

9. The presence of a heat source in each room.	20. Light or ignite pilot flames.
10. Test system using the thermostat or other similar standard operating controls.	21. Change settings or conditions on equipment excluding thermostats.
11. Readily accessible and removable panel covers designed for homeowner access may be removed for inspection purposes.	
<i>The Inspector <u>is</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>	<i>The Inspector <u>is NOT</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>
<u>(H) PLUMBING</u>	
1. Verify the presence of and identify the location of the main water shutoff valve.	14. Ignite or extinguish fires, pilot lights, change settings or conditions on equipment.
2. Water supply piping into house and within house, pipe supports and insulation.	15. Determine the exact flow rate, volume, pressure, temperature, or adequacy of the water supply.
3. Drain, waste, and vent piping, pipe supports and insulation.	16. Inspect interiors of flues or chimneys, water softening or filtering systems, well pumps, tanks, safety or shut-of valves, floor drains, lawn sprinkler systems or fire sprinkler systems.
4. Inspect the water heating equipment, including combustion air, venting, connections, energy sources, seismic bracing, and verify the presence or absence of temperature-pressure relief valves and/or Watts 210 valves.	17. Operate any valves other than those used on a regular or daily basis.
5. Inspect the drainage sumps and test pumps with accessible floats.	18. Determine the water quality or potability or the reliability of the water supply or source.
6. Presence of cross-connections that could contaminate the potable water.	19. Foundation drainage system and yard piping.

7. Water volume and pressure should be tested by opening the faucets to obtain a reasonable flow of one or more fixtures simultaneously, and at various locations in the house.	20. Inspect clothes washing machines or their connections.
8. Water drainage should be tested by draining one or more fixtures simultaneously, and at various locations in the house..	21. Test shower pans, tub and shower surrounds or enclosures for leakage.
9. Test the water supply by operating valves and faucets.	22. Evaluate the compliance with local conservation or energy standards, or the proper design or sizing of any water, waste or venting components, fixtures or piping.
10. Leaks in the piping systems.	23. Determine the effectiveness of anti-siphon, back-flow prevention or drain-stop devices.
11. Determine if the water supply is public or private.	24. Determine whether there are sufficient clean-outs for effective cleaning of drains.
12. Inspect and report on the general condition of toilets, proper mounted on the floor, leak,s and general functionality.	25. Evaluate gas, liquid propane or oil storage tanks.
13. Determine the presence and location of accessible clean-outs for the drain/waste/vent piping.	26. Inspect any private sewage waste disposal or septic system or component there of.
	27. Inspect water treatment systems or water filters.
	28. Inspect water storage tanks, pressure pumps or bladder tanks.
	29. Evaluate wait time to obtain hot water at fixtures, or perform testing of any kind to water heater elements.
	30. Test, operate, open or close safety controls, manual stop valves and/or temperature or pressure relief valves.
	31. Determine the existence or condition of polybutylene plumbing.
	32. Dismantle, remove, adjust or perform any function on any plumbing equipment that

	would require a qualified tradesperson to perform.
<i>The Inspector <u>is</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>	<i>The Inspector <u>is NOT</u> required to: Observe and report on the systems and components herein.</i>
<u>(I) INTERIORS</u>	
1. Floors, walls, ceilings and trim.	8. Treatments such as paint, wallpaper, carpeting, blinds, drapes, and other similar treatments.
2. Fire separating walls and party walls.	9. Kitchen, bathroom, and laundry appliances.
3. Stairs, guards and railings.	10. Observe fireplace insert installation.
4. Observe condition of permanently installed counters and cabinets.	11. Any items or facilities not directly related to the interior systems and components such as swimming pools, saunas, hot tubs, ponds and water falls.
5. Evidence of water penetration and condensation.	12. Move furniture, stored items, or any coverings like carpets or rugs in order to inspect the concealed floor structure.
6. The presence or absence of smoke detectors.	13. Move drop / suspended ceiling tiles.
7 Randomly select and operate where reasonably accessible a representative number of doors and windows.	14. Operate or examine any sauna, steam-jenny, kiln, toaster, plug-in kitchen appliances, or other ancillary devices.
	15. Inspect elevators, remote controls, appliances, or any items not permanently installed.
	16. Examine or operate any above-ground, movable, freestanding, or non-permanently installed pool/spa, recreational equipment or self-contained equipment.

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| | 17. Test the operation of smoke detectors.
18. Solid Fuel burning appliances including wood burning fireplaces and wood stoves. |
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(J) GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

A. General limitations:

1. Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice are not technically exhaustive.
2. will not identify concealed conditions or latent defects.
3. These Standards of Practice are applicable to buildings with four or fewer dwelling units and their attached garages or carports.

B. General exclusions:

1. The inspector is not required to perform any action or make any determination unless specifically stated in these Standards of Practice, except as may be required by lawful authority.
 - Inspectors are NOT required to **determine**:
 1. the condition of systems or components which are not readily accessible.
 2. the remaining life of any system or component.
 3. the strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any system or component.
 4. the causes of any condition or deficiency.
 5. the methods, materials, or costs of corrections.
 6. future conditions including, but not limited to, failure of systems and components.
 7. the suitability of the property for any specialized use.
 8. compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.).
 9. the market value of the property or its marketability.
 10. the advisability of the purchase of the property.

11. the presence of potentially hazardous plants or animals including, but not limited to wood destroying organisms or diseases harmful to humans.
12. the presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water, and air.
13. the effectiveness of any system installed or methods utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.
14. the operating costs of systems or components.
15. the acoustical properties of any system or component.

C. Inspectors are NOT required to **offer**:

1. or perform any act or service contrary to law
2. or perform engineering services.
3. or perform work in any trade or any professional service other than home inspection.
4. warranties or guarantees of any kind.

D. Inspectors are NOT required to **operate**:

1. any system or component which is shut down or otherwise inoperable.
2. any system or component which does not respond to normal operating controls.
3. shut-off valves.

E. Inspectors are NOT required to **enter**:

1. any area which will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be dangerous to the inspector or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components.
2. the under-floor crawl spaces or attics which are not readily accessible.

F. Inspectors are NOT required to **inspect**:

1. underground items including, but not limited to underground storage tanks or other underground indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active.
2. systems or components which are not installed.

3. decorative items.
4. systems or components located in areas that are not entered in accordance with these Standards of Practice.
5. detached structures.
6. common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing.

G. Inspectors are NOT required to:

1. perform any procedure or operation which will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be dangerous to the inspector or other persons or damage the property or it's systems or components.
2. move suspended ceiling tiles, personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.
3. dismantle any system or component, except as explicitly required by these Standards of Practice