

COMMERCIAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Originally Adopted January 4, 2002
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Part I. Definitions and Scope

These Standards of Practice provide guidelines for a *commercial building inspection* and define certain terms relating to these *inspections*. **Italicized** words in these Standards are defined in Part IV, Glossary of Terms.

- A. A *commercial building inspection* is a survey and basic *operation* of the *systems* and *components* of a *building*. The purpose of the *inspection* is to provide the Client with information regarding the general *condition* of the *building(s)*.
- B. A *commercial building inspection* report identifies material deficiencies observed in the *inspected building's components* and *systems* which, in the opinion of the *Inspector*, are not *functioning* as intended or are at the ends of their service lives. The report may be written or verbal or any other agreed upon format.
- C. *Inspections* performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice are not *technically exhaustive* and shall apply to the *primary building(s)*.

Part II. Standards of Practice

A *commercial building inspection* includes the *readily accessible systems* and *components* or a *representative number* of multiple similar *components* listed in SECTIONS 1 through 8 subject to the limitations, exceptions, and exclusions in Part III.

SECTION 1 – Foundation, Basement, and Under-floor Areas

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
 1. Foundation *system*
 2. Floor framing *system*
 3. Under-floor ventilation
 4. Foundation anchoring and cripple wall bracing
 5. Wood separation from soil
 6. Insulation
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
 1. *Determine* size, spacing, location, or adequacy of foundation bolting/bracing *components* or reinforcing *systems*
 2. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

SECTION 2 – Exterior

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
 1. Surface grade directly adjacent to the *buildings*
 2. Doors and windows
 3. Attached decks, porches, patios, balconies, stairways, and their enclosures
 4. Wall cladding and trim
 5. Portions of walkways and driveways that are adjacent to the *buildings*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
 1. *Inspect* door or window screens, shutters, awnings, or security bars
 2. *Determine* whether a *building* is secure from unauthorized entry
 3. *Inspect* fences or gates or *operate* automated door or gate openers or their safety *devices*
 4. Use a ladder to *inspect systems* or *components*

SECTION 3 – Roof Covering

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
 1. Covering
 2. Drainage
 3. Flashings
 4. Penetrations
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
 1. Walk on the roof surface if in the opinion of the *Inspector* there is risk of damage or a hazard to the *Inspector*
 2. Warrant or certify that roof *systems*, coverings, or *components* are free from leakage

SECTION 4 – Roof Framing

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
 1. Framing
 2. Ventilation
 3. Insulation
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
 1. *Inspect* suspended ceiling *systems* or remove suspended ceiling panels
 2. *Inspect* mechanical attic ventilation *systems* or *components*
 3. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

SECTION 5 – Plumbing

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
 1. Water supply piping
 2. Drain, waste, and vent piping
 3. Faucets and *fixtures*
 4. Fuel gas piping
 5. Water heaters
 6. *Functional flow* and *functional drainage*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
 1. Fill any *fixture* with water or *inspect* overflow drains or drain-stops, or evaluate backflow *devices*, waste ejectors, sump pumps, or drain line cleanouts
 2. *Inspect* or evaluate water temperature balancing *devices*, temperature fluctuation, time to obtain hot water, water circulation, or solar heating *systems* or *components*
 3. *Inspect* whirlpool baths, steam showers, or sauna *systems* or *components*
 4. *Inspect* fuel tanks or *determine* if the fuel gas *system* is free of leaks
 5. *Inspect* wells or water treatment *systems*

SECTION 6 – Electrical

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
 1. Service *equipment*
 2. Electrical panels
 3. Circuit wiring
 4. Switches, receptacles, outlets, and lighting *fixtures*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
 1. *Inspect* high voltage *systems* or *components*
 2. *Operate* circuit breakers or circuit interrupters
 3. Remove covers from any electrical panel, *equipment*, or outlet
 4. *Inspect* de-icing *systems* or *components*
 5. *Inspect* private or emergency electrical supply *systems* or *components*

SECTION 7 – Central Heating and Cooling

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
 1. Central heating and cooling *equipment*
 2. Energy source and connections
 3. Combustion air and exhaust vent *systems*
 4. Condensate drainage
 5. Conditioned air distribution *systems*
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
 1. *Operate* heating, cooling, or ventilation *equipment*
 2. *Inspect* heat exchangers or electric heating elements
 3. *Inspect* radiant, solar, hydronic, or geothermal *systems* or *components*
 4. *Inspect* electronic air filtering or humidity control *systems* or *components*
 5. *Inspect* or review any *equipment* printouts or displays
 6. *Determine* volume, uniformity, temperature, airflow, balance, or leakage of any air distribution *system*

SECTION 8 – Building Interior

- A. Items to be *inspected*:
 1. Walls, ceilings, and floors
 2. Doors and windows
 3. Stairways, handrails, and guardrails
- B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
 1. *Inspect* window or floor coverings
 2. *Operate* or test smoke alarms or automated door safety *devices*
 3. *Determine* adequacy of exiting
 4. Use a ladder to *inspect systems* or *components*

Part III. Limitations, Exceptions, and Exclusions

A. The following are excluded from a *commercial building inspection*:

1. *Systems* or *components* of a *building*, or portions thereof, which are not *readily accessible*, not *permanently installed*, or not *inspected* due to circumstances beyond the control of the *Inspector* or which are specifically excluded by the *Inspector*
2. Site improvements or amenities, including, but not limited to; accessory *buildings*, fences, planters, landscaping, irrigation, swimming pools, spas, ponds, waterfalls, fountains or their *components* or accessories
3. Signage
4. Deficiencies that fall within the scope of routine maintenance
5. Nonessential features of *inspected appliances*
6. *Systems* or *components*, or portions thereof, which are under ground, under water, or where the *Inspector* must come into contact with water
7. *Determining* compliance with manufacturers' installation guidelines or specifications, building codes, accessibility standards, conservation or energy standards, regulations, ordinances, covenants, or other restrictions
8. *Building* ingress or egress, compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act or other accessibility standards, regulations, ordinances, covenants, or other restrictions
9. *Determining* adequacy, efficiency, suitability, quality, age, or remaining life of any *building*, *system*, or *component*, or marketability or advisability of purchase
10. Structural, architectural, geological, environmental, hydrological, land surveying, or soils-related examinations
11. Acoustical or other nuisance characteristics of any *system* or *component* of a *building*, complex, adjoining property, or neighborhood
12. *Conditions* related to animals, insects, or other organisms, including fungus and mold, and any hazardous, illegal, or controlled substance, or the damage or health risks arising there from
13. Risks associated with events or *conditions* of nature including, but not limited to; geological, seismic, wildfire, and flood
14. Water testing any *building*, *system*, or *component* or *determine* leakage in shower pans, pools, spas, or any body of water
15. *Determining* the integrity of hermetic seals at multi-pane glazing
16. Differentiating between original construction or subsequent additions or modifications
17. Reviewing information from any third-party, including but not limited to; product defects, construction documents, and recalls or similar notices
18. Specifying repairs/replacement procedures or estimating cost to correct
19. Communication, computer, security, or low-voltage *systems* and remote, timer, sensor, or similarly controlled *systems* or *components*
20. Fire extinguishing and suppression *systems* and *components* or *determining* fire resistive qualities of materials or assemblies
21. Elevators, escalators, lifts, and dumbwaiters
22. Fireplaces and their chimneys
23. Lighting pilot lights or activating or *operating* any *system*, *component*, or *appliance* that is *shut down*, unsafe to *operate*, or does not respond to *normal user controls*
24. *Operating* shutoff valves or *shutting down* any *system* or *component*
25. Dismantling any *system*, *structure*, or *component* or removing access panels

B. The *Inspector* may, at his or her discretion:

1. *Inspect* any *building*, *system*, *component*, *appliance*, or improvement not included or otherwise excluded by these Standards of Practice. Any such *inspection* shall comply with all other provisions of these Standards unless agreed otherwise.
2. Include photographs in the written report or take photographs for *Inspector's* reference.

Part IV. Glossary of Terms

***NOTE:** All definitions apply to derivatives of these terms when *italicized* in the text.

Appliance: An item such as an oven, dishwasher, heater, etc. which performs a specific *function*

Building: The subject of the *inspection*

Commercial Building: A structure other than a residential dwelling structure of one to four units or its primary parking structure. Refer to Part I, "Definitions and Scope", Paragraph A

Component: A part of a *system*, *appliance*, *fixture*, or *device*

Condition: Conspicuous state of being

Determine: Arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to a *building inspection*

Device: A *component* designed to perform a particular task or *function*

Equipment: An *appliance*, *fixture*, or *device*

Fixture: A plumbing or electrical *component* with a fixed position and *function*

Function: The normal and characteristic purpose or action of a *system*, *component*, or *device*

Functional Drainage: The ability to empty a plumbing *fixture* in a reasonable time

Functional Flow: The flow of the water supply at the highest and farthest *fixture* from the *building* supply shutoff valve when another *fixture* is used simultaneously

High Voltage: Electrical energy 600 volts or more

Inspect: Refer to Part I, "Definition and Scope", Paragraph A

Inspector: One who performs a *commercial building inspection*

Normal User Control: Switch or other *device* that activates a *system* or *component* and is provided for use by an occupant of a *building*

Operate: Cause a *system*, *appliance*, *fixture*, or *device* to *function* using *normal user controls*

Permanently Installed: Fixed in place, e.g. screwed, bolted, nailed, or glued

Primary Building: A *building* that an *Inspector* has agreed to *inspect*

Primary Parking structure: A *building* for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the *primary building*

Readily Accessible: Can be reached, entered, or viewed without difficulty, moving obstructions, or requiring any action which may harm persons or property

Representative Number: Example, an average of one *component* per area for multiple similar *components* such as windows, doors, and electrical outlets

Shut Down: Disconnected or turned off in a way so as not to respond to *normal user controls*

System: An assemblage of various *components* designed to *function* as a whole

Technically Exhaustive: Examination beyond the scope of a *commercial building inspection*, which may require disassembly, specialized knowledge, special equipment, measuring, calculating, quantifying, testing, exploratory probing, research, or analysis

