

State of Florida – Standards of Practice for Home Inspection

61-30.801 Standards of Practice, General

(1) The purpose of these Standards of Practice is to establish a standard for home inspectors licensed under Chapter 468 Section XV of the Florida Statutes.

(2) Home inspections performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client with information regarding the overall condition of installed systems and components of the home based on observation of the visible and apparent condition

of the structure and components at the time of the home inspection and to report on the presence of any material defects. A home inspection does not include the prediction of future conditions.

(3) These standards shall not be construed as limiting the scope of the inspection process in those areas where the inspector is qualified and/or has special knowledge.

(4) The inspector shall inspect readily accessible, installed systems and components of homes listed in these Standards of Practice by using normal operating controls and opening readily openable access panels. Where multiple instances of the same Component exist, a representative number shall be inspected.

(5) The inspector shall describe, when required by these standards, systems or components by their type and/or significant characteristics.

(6) The Inspector shall report on those systems and components inspected which, in the professional opinion of the inspector:

(a) are not functioning properly, or

(b) are unsafe, i.e., create a significant risk of personal injury during normal, day-to-day use, or

(c) are significantly deficient, or

(d) are near the end of their service lives.

(7) If not self-evident to the client at the time of inspection, the inspector shall give a reason why, in his or her opinion, the system or component was reported as significantly deficient or near the end of its service life.

(8) Inspector shall make recommendations for correction and/or monitoring, or further evaluation of the deficiencies that the inspector observed.

(9) Inspector shall document any systems or components designated for inspection in these Standards of Practice which were present at the time of the home inspection but were not inspected and any reasons why they were not inspected.

(10) These Standards of Practice are not intended to limit inspectors from:

(a) Including other inspection services, in addition to those required by these Standards of Practice.

- (b) Specifying repairs, provided the inspector is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
- (c) Excluding systems and components from the inspection if agreed upon by the inspector and client.

61-30.802 Standards of Practice, Structure

- (1) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible structural components as described in 61-30.801(26), F.A.C., including visible portions of the foundation, walls, posts, beams, columns, joists, rafters, trusses, other framing and the ventilation of attics and foundation areas. The inspector shall inspect by probing of structural components where deterioration is visible or suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is not required when, in the opinion of the inspector, probing would only further damage any area already identified as defective or where no deterioration is visible or presumed to exist.
- (2) The inspector shall describe:
 - (a) the foundation;
 - (b) floor structure;
 - (c) wall structure;
 - (d) ceiling structure;
 - (e) roof structure.
 - (f) the methods used to inspect the attic space and under floor crawl space, if present.
- (3) The inspector is not required to enter or traverse any under-floor crawl space or attic, if in the opinion of the inspector:
 - (a) An unsafe or unsanitary condition exists;
 - (b) Enter areas in which inadequate clearance exists to allow the inspector safe entering or traversing;
 - (c) The potential exists to cause damage to insulation, ductwork, other components or stored items.
- (4) The inspector is not required to provide any engineering or architectural services or offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any structural system or component.

61-30.803 Standards of Practice, Electrical Systems

- (1) The inspector shall inspect:
 - (a) The service entrance conductors, drip loop, cables, and raceways;
 - (b) The main service equipment and main disconnects;
 - (c) The service grounding;
 - (d) The interior components of main service panels and sub panels;
 - (e) The conductors;
 - (f) The over current protection devices;

- (g) A representative number of readily accessible installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles;
- (h) The ground fault circuit interrupters;
- (i) The arc fault circuit interrupters.
- (2) The inspector shall describe:
 - (a) The amperage and voltage rating of the service;
 - (b) The location of main disconnect(s) and sub panels;
 - (c) The wiring methods or type;
 - (d) On the presence or absence of smoke detectors;
 - (e) On the presence or absence of Carbon Monoxide detectors.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) Remote control devices;
 - (b) Security alarm systems and components;
 - (c) Low voltage wiring, systems and components, ancillary wiring and systems and components not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system;
 - (d) Generators, photovoltaic solar collectors or battery or electrical storage devices and associated equipment.
- (4) The inspector is not required to:
 - (a) Measure amperage, voltage or impedance;
 - (b) Perform a load calculation;
 - (c) Insert any tool, probe, or device into any electrical component;
 - (d) Determine the accuracy of circuit labeling.

61-30.804 Standards of Practice, HVAC Systems

- (1) Heating and air conditioning components:
 - (a) The inspector shall inspect the following readily accessible heating and air conditioning components:
 1. Installed heating equipment;
 2. Fuel storage and fuel distribution systems;
 3. Vent systems, flues, and chimneys;
 4. Ductwork and air distribution components;.
 5. The mechanical ventilation systems.
 - (b) The inspector shall describe within the heating and air conditioning component:
 1. The heating system energy source(s);
 2. The heating method by its distinguishing characteristics;
 3. The heating system capacity in BTUs or kilowatts;
 4. The location and condition of the air handler unit / furnace.
 - (c) With regards to heating and air conditioning components, the inspector is not required to inspect:
 1. The interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible;
 2. Heat exchangers;
 3. Humidifiers or dehumidifiers;
 4. Electronic air filters, sanitizers, or UV lights;
 5. Solar space heating systems.
- (2) HVAC distribution systems
 - (a) The inspector shall inspect readily accessible HVAC distribution systems.

(b) The inspector shall describe within the HVAC distribution systems:

1. The energy source;
2. The cooling method by its distinguishing characteristics;
3. The presence of condensate over flow warning/shutoff devices.

(c) With regards to HVAC distribution systems, the inspector is not required to inspect:

1. Electronic air filters, sanitizers, or UV lights;
2. Humidistats;
3. Automatic HVAC zoned systems, dampers, controls, that are not readily accessible;
4. Inspect removable window air conditioning systems.

(3) The inspector is not required to:

- (a) Determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance;
- (b) Operate heat pump systems when ambient temperatures pose the potential for damage to the air conditioning system;
- (c) Determine cooling supply adequacy, distribution balance or indoor air quality;
- (d) Operate the air conditioning system when ambient temperatures pose the potential for damage to the air conditioning system.

61-30.805 Standards of Practice, Roof Covering

(1) The inspector shall inspect:

- (a) The roofing materials;
- (b) The flashings;
- (c) The skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations;
- (d) The roof drainage systems;
- (e) The ventilation of attics and foundation areas;

(2) The inspector shall describe:

- (a) The roofing materials;
- (b) The methods used to inspect the roof;
- (c) The absence of insulation in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces.

(3) The inspector is not required to inspect:

- (a) Components or systems that are not readily accessible;
- (b) Antenna or other installed accessories;
- (c) Interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible.

(4) The inspector is not required to walk on the roof surface when, in the opinion of the inspector, the following conditions exist:

- (a) The roof slope is excessive to safely walk on;
- (b) There is no safe access to the roof;
- (c) The climatic conditions render the roof unsafe to walk on;
- (d) The condition of the roofing material or roof decking renders the roof unsafe to walk on;
- (e) Walking on the roof may cause damage to the roof covering materials;

(f) Walking will place any liability or danger to the homeowner or other representatives involved in the home inspection process.

(5) The inspector is not required to disturb insulation.

61-30.806 Standards of Practice, Plumbing System

(1) The inspector shall inspect:

(a) The interior water supply piping and distribution systems including all fixtures, faucets, and components;

(b) The drain, waste and vent systems, including all plumbing fixtures;

(c) The water heating equipment;

(d) The vent systems, flues, and chimneys;

(e) The drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping.

(2) The inspector shall describe:

(a) The materials used for water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping;

(b) The water heating equipment including the energy source;

(c) The location of main water and main fuel shut-off valves.

(3) The inspector is not required to inspect:

(a) The wells or water storage related equipment;

(b) The water conditioning systems;

(c) The solar water heating systems; (d) The fire sprinkler systems;

(e) The private waste disposal systems;

(f) The test shower pans, tub and shower surround for leakage;

(g) The irrigation system(s).

(4) The inspector is not required to determine:

(a) Whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private;

(b) The quantity or quality of the water supply, including the quantity or quality of the irrigation system supply, or if the function flow at the time of the inspection or thereafter will meet the client's needs;

(c) Operate safety valves or shut-off valves.

61-30.807 Standards of Practice, Interior Components

(1) The inspector shall inspect:

(a) Interior walls, ceilings, and floors;

(b) Steps, stairways, and railings;

(c) Countertops and representative number of installed cabinets;

(d) Garage doors and garage door operators;

(e) A representative number of doors and windows and their operating locks and latches or other opening mechanisms;

(f) The interior doors and windows, and their operating mechanisms, locks and latches;

(g) The insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.

(2) The inspector shall describe:

- (a) The insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces;
- (b) The absence of insulation in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces;
- (3) The inspector is not required to disturb insulation.
- (4) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) Paint, wallpaper, window treatments, and other specialty finish treatments;
 - (b) Carpeting;
 - (c) Window treatments;
 - (d) Central vacuum systems;
 - (e) Household appliances;
 - (f) Recreational facilities.
- (5) The inspector is not required to open or operate any windows or doors and access covers that are permanently or temporarily secured by mechanical means, are painted shut, or are blocked by stored items or furniture.

61-30.808 Standards of Practice, Fireplaces And Solid Fuel Burning Appliances

- (1) The inspector shall inspect:
 - (a) System components;
 - (b) Vent systems, flues, and chimneys.
- (2) The inspector shall describe:
 - (a) Fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances;
 - (b) Chimneys.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) The fire screens and doors, if not permanently attached;
 - (b) The seals and gaskets;
 - (c) The automatic fuel feed devices;
 - (d) The mantles and fireplace surrounds;
 - (e) The combustion make-up air devices;
 - (f) The heat distribution assists whether gravity controlled or fan assisted.
- (4) The inspector is not required to:
 - (a) Ignite or extinguish fires
 - (b) Light gas fireplaces or heaters, or other unlit pilot light device;
 - (c) Determine draft characteristics;
 - (d) Move fireplace inserts or stoves or firebox contents.

61-30.809 Standards of Practice, Household Appliances

- (1) The inspector shall inspect household appliances for normal operation - using normal operating controls to activate a primary function.
- (2) The inspector shall describe the type of household appliance.
- (3) The inspector is not required to:
 - (a) Activate any system or appliance that is shut down, disconnected, or otherwise rendered inoperable;

- (b) Operate or evaluate any system, component or appliance that does not respond to normal user controls;
- (c) Operate any gas appliance that requires the manual lighting of a pilot light or burner device;
- (d) Operate any system, appliance or feature that requires the use of special codes, keys, combinations, or devices or where user manual reference is required;
- (e) Operate any system, component, or appliance where in the opinion of the inspector, damage may occur;
- (f) Determine thermostat(s) calibration, adequacy of heating elements, operate or evaluate self cleaning cycles, door seals, indicator lights, timers, clocks or timed features, defrost cycles or frost free features, or other specialist feature as it applies to the appliance device;
- (g) Determine leakage from microwaves ovens;
- (h) Determine the presence or operation of back draft damper devices in exhaust devices;
- (i) Move any appliance;
- (j) Confirm operation of every control or feature of a system or appliance.

61-30.810 Standards of Practice, Exterior Components

- (1) The inspector shall inspect:
 - (a) The exterior wall cladding, flashing and trim;
 - (b) All exterior doors;
 - (c) The attached decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings;
 - (d) The eaves, soffits and fascias where accessible from the ground level;
 - (e) The walkways, patios, and driveways leading to the dwelling entrances;
 - (f) The ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
- (2) The inspector shall describe the exterior siding/cladding.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) Window and door screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal or protective accessories and devices;
 - (b) Fences;
 - (c) Geological, geotechnical or hydrological; \
 - (d) Recreational facilities;
 - (e) Outbuildings;
 - (f) Swimming pools, seawalls, break-walls, boat lifts and / or docks;
 - (g) Erosion control and earth stabilization measures.
- (4) The inspector is not required to move furniture, appliances, lawn and garden equipment, tools, stored items, wall decorations, floor covering, clothing or any items that block the view and access to components or structure.

61-30.811 Standards of Practice, Site Conditions that Affect the Structure

- (1) The inspector shall inspect the vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls on the property when any of these are likely to adversely affect the structure.
- (2) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) Geological, geotechnical or hydrological site conditions;
 - (b) Erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

61-30.812 Standards of Practice, General Limitations And Exclusions

- (1) General limitations for inspections:
 - (a) Inspections are visual non-invasive only and are not technically exhaustive.
 - (b) Inspections may not identify concealed conditions or latent defects.
 - (c) Inspections are subjective and rely upon the inspector's opinion, judgment, training, and experience.
- (2) Generally, the inspector is not required to perform any action or make any determination unless specifically stated in these Standards of Practice.
- (3) Inspectors are not required to determine:
 - (a) The condition of systems or components which are not readily accessible;
 - (b) The remaining life of any system or component;
 - (c) The strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any system or component;
 - (d) The causes of any condition or deficiency;
 - (e) The methods, materials, or costs of corrections;
 - (f) Future conditions including, but not limited to, failure of systems and components;
 - (g) The suitability of the property for any specialized use;
 - (h) Compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.), manufacturer specifications, installation procedures or instructions;
 - (i) The market value of the property or its marketability;
 - (j) The advisability of the purchase of the property;
 - (k) The presence of potentially hazardous plants or animals including, but not limited to wood destroying organisms or diseases harmful to humans;
 - (l) The presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to fungi, molds, toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water, and air;
 - (m) The effectiveness of any system installed or methods utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances;
 - (n) The operating costs of systems or components;
 - (o) The acoustical properties of any system or component;
 - (p) Conditions that might affect the ability to obtain insurance and/or the price of insurance;
- (4) Inspectors are not required to offer to:
 - (a) Perform any act or service contrary to law;

- (b) Perform engineering/architectural services;
- (c) Perform work in any trade or any professional service other than home inspection;
- (d) Give warranties or guarantees of any kind.
- (5) Inspectors are not required to operate:
 - (a) Any system or component which is shut down or otherwise inoperable or could cause damage;
 - (b) Any system or component which does not respond to normal operating controls;
 - (c) Shut-off valves of any type;
 - (d) Automatic safety controls, valves or devices of any type.
- (6) Inspectors are not required to enter:
 - (a) 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. This situation will be noted in the home inspection report;
 - (b) The under-floor crawl space or attics which are not readily accessible. This situation will be noted in the home inspection report.
- (7) Inspectors are not required to inspect:
 - (a) Underground items including, but not limited to underground storage tanks or other indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active;
 - (b) Systems or components which are not installed or readily accessible;
 - (c) Installed decorative items;
 - (d) Systems or components located in areas that are not entered in accordance with these Standards of Practice;
 - (e) Detached structures other than garages and carports;
 - (f) Common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing.
- (8) Inspectors are not required to:
 - (a) Perform any procedure or operation which will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely to be dangerous to the inspector or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components. This situation will be noted in the home inspection report.
 - (b) Describe or report on any system or component that is not included in these Standards and was not inspected;
 - (c) Move furniture, appliances, lawn and garden equipment, tools, stored items, personal belongings, wall or floor decorations, floor covering, suspended ceilings, clothing, debris, soil, snow, ice or any items or material that blocks view and/or access to areas, components or structure. This situation will be noted in the home inspection report;
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- (d) Dismantle any system or component, except as explicitly required by these Standards of Practice;
- (e) Inspect recreational facilities;

(f) Utilize special instruments, tools, or measuring devices of any kind to measure moisture, humidity, water or air volume, water or air flow, water potability, air quality, temperature, voltage, amperage, electrical grounding, polarity, and continuity, VOC's, microwaves, electromagnetic fields, and other similar kinds of conditions or activities;

(g) Inspectors are not required to determine the calibration of measuring devices including timers, clocks, thermostats, and gauges;

(h) Operate equipment, appliances, or devices on more than one cycle, zone, or phase or operate any device, appliance, system, or equipment which in the opinion of the inspector may fail during the act of inspection;

(i) Provide any information from any source regarding property ownership, property boundaries, liens, outstanding loans, code violations, reports of hazardous materials, manufacturers' recalls, Consumer Protection Agency bulletins, and other similar kinds of public information;

(j) Determine the integrity of thermal glass seals;

(k) Determine the presence of manufacturers' defects in any product, material, component, equipment, or system, or information related to recall notices;

(l) Determine installation conformance to manufacturers' instructions for any product, component, element, device, or system.