



**The Standards of Practice
and
Code of Ethics
of the
*American Institute of
Inspectors®***

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The American Institute of Inspectors®, Inc., or A.I.I.™ is a NOT- FOR-PROFIT ASSOCIATION of individuals who themselves perform inspections of residential, industrial, and commercial properties, and prepare written reports on their condition and who have met the requirement for membership as determined by the Board of Directors.

This association was formed in order:

- **A.** TO build awareness and professionalism in the home inspector.
- **B.** TO promote excellence within the profession and to improve the inspection industry through the A.I.I.™ Philosophy of business expressed through the Association's Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and other mutual benefit criteria.
- **C.** TO provide members and others with a forum in which to enhance their professionalism through education, an informed exchange of ideas, and other related benefits which can be provided best by an international association.
- **D.** TO interact with related professions, the legal community and government bodies as a leading authority in the home and building inspection profession.

These Standards, and the accompanying Code of Ethics, are the minimum mandatory standards to which a member shall be held in order to maintain membership in the association.



CODE of ETHICS

The PHILOSOPHY required for success in the inspection industry is embodied in our Code of Ethics to which all members subscribe.

- 1.1 Members **SHALL** discharge their duties with fidelity to the public, their clients, and with fairness and impartiality to all.
- 1.2 Every effort **SHALL** be made to avoid a conflict of interest. The member shall have absolutely no vested interest in the outcome of the report. The inspection may not be used as a vehicle to deliberately obtain additional work in another field.
- 1.3 A.I.I.™ Certified Inspectors shall **NOT** overly scrutinize the property. The purpose of an A.I.I.™ Certified Inspection is to objectively state the conditions of the property so that the buyer can validate the purchase decision.
- 1.4 An A.I.I.™ Certified Member's inspection **SHALL** address the "Durability" and "Serviceability" of the components of a property as outlined in the A.I.I.™ Report Forms; and shall **NOT** be used to determine the "Desirability" or value of a property.
- 1.5 All members agree to submit to binding arbitration any disputes concerning the practice of their profession.
- 1.6 A member will **NOT** disclose any information concerning the results of the inspection without the approval of the client. A member shall **NOT** accept compensation from more than one interested party for the same service.
- 1.7 A member shall **NOT** accept nor offer commissions or allowances, directly or indirectly, from other parties to induce referrals or reciprocity in the practice of their business.
- 1.8 Members **SHALL** always advertise and seek business according to the A.I.I.™ Advertising Guidelines.
- 1.9 A member **SHALL** execute work in conformity with federal, state, and local laws, maintain all necessary licenses and qualifications, and refuse to be a party any action that violates these regulations.
- 1.10 Members **SHALL** make every effort to uphold, maintain, and improve the professional integrity, reputation and practice of the inspection industry.



2.0 PURPOSE and SCOPE

2.1 The inspector **SHALL**:

- **A.** Observe installed systems and components listed in these Standards.
- **B.** Submit a written report to the client which shall:
 1. Identify certain components specified in these Standards.
 2. State the observed general condition of the readily accessible items listed within these Standards: **(Statements of condition shall note any observed situation which is likely to affect the function or operation of a system or component.)**
 3. Any installed systems or components specified in these Standards which were not observed and state why they were not observed.
 4. Positively identify any observed potential or imminent hazard.
 5. Include the inspection of detached buildings located on the property when the detached building is listed as part of the property to be inspected, and the inspection is requested by the client.

2.2 These Standards are **NOT** intended to limit the inspector from:

- **A.** Reporting observations and conditions in addition to those required in Section 2.1
- **B.** Providing any additional inspection services.
- **C.** Excluding various installed systems or components and any other services from the inspection if requested by the client.

3.0 GENERAL LIMITATIONS and EXCLUSIONS

3.1 General limitations:

- **A.** Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards are visual and are **NOT** technically exhaustive.

3.2 General exclusions:

- **A.** The inspector will **NOT** report on:
 1. The causes of any situation which may adversely affect the function or operation of a system or component and indicates the need for correction.

2. The suitability of the property for any specialized use.
3. Compliance or non-compliance with governing codes, ordinances restrictive covenants, and statutes including, but not limited to local building codes, zoning and land use.
4. The market value of the property or its marketability.
5. The advisability or inadvisability of purchase of the property.
6. Any component or system which was not observed, except to report that it was not observed.
7. Any item(s) which are concealed or not readily accessible.

• **3.2 B.** The inspector will **NOT**:

1. Offer or perform any act or service contrary to law.
 2. Offer or perform engineering or architectural services.
 3. Calculate the strength, adequacy, or efficiency of any system or component.
 4. Enter any area or perform any procedure which may damage the property or its components or be dangerous to the inspector or other persons.
 5. Operate any system or component which is shut down or otherwise inoperable.
 6. Operate any system or component which does not respond to normal operating controls.
 7. Move personal items, furniture, equipment, plant life, soil, snow, ice, or debris which obstructs access or visibility.
 8. Remove access panels and covers which are not readily detachable without tools, except electrical main, distribution, and sub-panels.
 9. Will not make any determination about damage caused to the structure or any systems by termites and/or any other insects, or organisms, if contradictory to state law. However, any findings which tend to indicate that termites or other insects may have infested the inspected property shall be described. **(Inspectors [who are not licensed pest inspectors] shall comply with any and all State regulations that may apply to Pest Reports.)**
 10. Determine the presence or absence of any suspected hazardous substance including but not limited to: Toxins, carcinogens, noise, contaminants in soil, water and air.
- Limitations and exclusions specific to individual systems are listed in the following sections.



4.0 SYSTEM: STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

4.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe and report on:

- A. Structural components including:
 1. Foundations
 2. Floors
 3. Walls
 4. Ceilings
 5. Stairs
 6. Roofs
- B. Sumps, sump pumps, and related equipment.

4.2 The inspector **SHALL**:

- A. Identify the type of:
 1. Foundation
 2. Floor structure
 3. Wall structure
 4. Roof structure
- B. Probe structural components where deterioration is suspected. However, probing is **NOT** required when probing would damage any finished surface.
- C. Enter under-floor crawl spaces and attic spaces except when access is obstructed; when headroom is less than 18 inches in crawl spaces or 36 inches in attic spaces; when entry could damage the property; or when dangerous or adverse situations are suspected.
- D. Report the methods used to observe underfloor crawl spaces and attics when these areas are not entered or when access or visibility is limited.

5.0 SYSTEM: EXTERIOR

5.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe and report on:

- A. Exterior wall coverings, flashings and trim
- B. Primary windows and doors
- C. Garage-door operators.
- D. Decks, balconies, stoops steps, areaways, and porches including railings.
- E. Eaves, soffits, and fascias.
- F. Vegetation, grading, drainage, driveways, patios, walkways and retaining walls with respect to their effect on the condition of the building.

5.2 The inspector **SHALL**:

- A. Identify exterior wall covering materials.
- B. Operate all exterior doors including garage doors, manually or by using permanently installed controls of any garage door operator.

- C. Report whether or not any garage door operator will automatically reverse when meeting reasonable resistance during closing.

5.3 The inspector is **NOT** required to report on:

- A. Garage door operator remote control transmitters
- B. Geological conditions
- C. Soil conditions
- D. Recreational facilities
- E. Foundation drainage systems
- F. Outbuildings other than garages and carports

6.0 SYSTEM: ROOFING

6.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe the roof to determine its approximate remaining life and report on:

- A. Roof coverings
- B. Roof drainage systems
- C. Flashings
- D. Skylights, chimneys and roof penetrations.
- E. Signs of leaks or abnormal condensation on building components.

6.2 The inspector **SHALL**:

- A. Identify the type of roof covering materials
- B. Report the methods used to observe the roofing.

6.3 The inspector is **NOT** required to:

- A. Walk on the roofing when walking could damage the property or be unsafe to the inspector.

7.0 SYSTEM: PLUMBING

7.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe and report on

- A. Interior water distribution system including:
 1. Water supply and distribution piping materials.
 2. Fixtures and faucets
 3. Functional flow
 4. Leaks
 5. Cross connections
- B. Interior drain, waste and vent system including:
 1. Traps, drains waste, and vent piping, and piping supports.
 2. Leaks
 3. Functional drainage
- C. Hot water systems including:
 1. Water heating equipment
 2. Normal operating controls



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3. Automatic safety controls
4. Combustion air and venting
5. Clearance to combustibles

• D. Fuel storage and distribution of systems including:

1. Interior fuel storage equipment, supply piping, venting, and supports.
2. Leaks

7.2 The inspector **SHALL**:

- A. Identify:
 1. Water supply and distribution piping materials
 2. Drain, waste, and vent piping materials
 3. Water heating equipment.
- B. Operate all plumbing fixtures and faucets where the faucets are not connected to a household appliance, (except sprinkler systems and hose bibs).

7.3 The inspector is **NOT** required to:

- A. State the effectiveness of anti-siphon devices
- B. Determine whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private.
- C. Operate Automatic safety controls.
- D. Operate any valve except water closet flush valves and fixture faucets.
- E. Report on:
 1. Water conditioning systems
 2. Fire and lawn sprinkler systems
 3. On-site water supply quality and quantity
 4. On-site waste disposal systems
 5. Foundation irrigation systems
 6. Spas, except as to functional flow and functional drainage
 7. Pools

8.0 SYSTEM: ELECTRICAL

8.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe and report on:

- A. Service entrance conductors condition.
- B. Service equipment, grounding equipment, main over-current device, main and distribution panels.
- C. Amperage and voltage ratings of the service.
- D. Branch circuit conductors, their over-current devices, and the compatibility of their amp capacities and voltages.
- E. The operation of a representative number of installed lighting fixture, switches and receptacles located inside the house and garage, and on its exterior walls.
- F. The polarity and grounding of all receptacles within six feet of interior plumbing fixtures, and all

accessible receptacles in the garage and attached to the exterior.

- G. The operation of Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFI).

8.2 The inspector **SHALL**:

- A. Identify:
 1. Service amperage and voltage
 2. Service entry conductor condition, if visible
 3. Service type as being overhead or underground
 4. Location of main and distribution panels.

- B. Report any observed aluminum branch circuit wiring.

8.3 The inspector is **NOT** required to:

- A. Insert any tool, probe or testing device inside the panels.
- B. Test or operate any over-current device except Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters.
- C. Dismantle any electrical device or control other than to remove the covers of the main and auxiliary distribution panels.
- D. Observe or report on:
 1. Low voltage systems
 2. Alarm systems
 3. Intercom systems

9.0 SYSTEM: HEATING

9.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe and report on:

- A. Permanently installed heating systems including:
 1. Heating equipment
 2. Normal operating controls
 3. Automatic safety controls
 4. Exteriors of chimneys, flues, and vents
 5. Combustion air supply
 6. Solid fuel heating devices
 7. Clearance to combustibles
 8. Heat distribution systems including blowers, pumps, ducts, piping, radiators, convectors, registers, air filters.
 9. The presence of an installed heat source in each room.

9.2 The inspector **SHALL**:

- A. Identify:
 1. Energy source
 2. Heating equipment and distribution type
- B. Operate the system(s) using normal operating controls.
- C. Open readily openable access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance.



9.3 The inspector is **NOT** required to:

- A. Operate heating systems when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage.
- B. Operate Automatic safety controls
- C. Ignite or extinguish solid fuel fires.
- D. Report on:
 1. The interior of flues or combustion chambers
 2. Fireplace insert flue connections
 3. Humidifiers
 4. Electronic air filters
 5. The uniformity or adequacy of heat supply to the various rooms.

10.0 SYSTEM: CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING

10.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe and report on:

- A. Central air conditioning including:
 1. Cooling and air handling equipment
 2. Normal operating controls
- B. Distribution systems including:
 1. Ducts, registers, and air filters
 2. The presence of an installed cooling source in each room

10.2 The inspector **SHALL**:

- A. Identify:
 1. Energy sources
 2. Cooling equipment type
- B. Operate the systems using normal operating controls.
- C. Open readily openable access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance.

10.3 The inspector is **NOT** required to:

- A. Operate cooling systems when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage
- B. Observe or report on non-central air conditioners
- C. Report on the uniformity or adequacy of cold air supply to the various rooms

11.0 SYSTEM: INTERIORS

11.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe and report on:

- A. Wall, ceiling, and floor surfaces

- B. Steps, stairways, balconies, and railings
- C. Cabinets and counters
- D. Windows, and doors including hardware
- E. Fire resistant separation walls, ceilings, and doors between a dwelling unit and an attached garage.

11.2 The inspector **SHALL**:

- A. Identify window types
- B. Operate all accessible primary windows and interior doors

11.3 The inspector is **NOT** required to report on:

- A. Finishes on the interior walls, ceilings, and floors
- B. Carpeting
- C. Draperies, blinds, or other window treatments
- D. Household appliances
- E. Recreational facilities

12.0 SYSTEM: INSULATION AND VENTILATION

12.1 The inspector **SHALL** observe and report on:

- A. Insulation of unfinished attic and foundation areas
- B. Ventilation of attics and foundation areas
- C. Kitchen, bath, and laundry venting systems.

12.2 The inspector **SHALL** identify:

- A. Observe insulation in unfinished attics
- B. Observe insulation in under-floor crawl spaces

12.3 The inspector is **NOT** required to report on:

- A. Insulation and vapor retarders concealed in ceilings or exterior walls.
- B. Venting equipment which is integral with household appliances.



Glossary of Terms

- **Automatic (System) Safety Controls:** Devices designed and installed to protect systems and components from excessively high or low pressures and temperatures, excessive electrical current, loss of water, loss of ignition, fuel leaks, fire, freezing, or other unsafe conditions.
- **Central Air Conditioning:** A system which uses ducts to distribute cooled and/or dehumidified air to more than one room at a time, and which is not plugged into an electrical convenience outlet.
- **Clearance to Combustibles:** The distance between a heat producing appliance, chimney, chimney connector, vent, vent connector, or plenum and other surfaces. Also, in garages, the distance between the floor and an installed source of ignition.
- **Cross Connections:** Any physical connection or arrangement between potable water and any source of contamination.
- **Dangerous or Adverse situations:** Situations which pose a threat of injury to the inspector, and those situations which require use of special protective clothing or safety equipment.
- **Dismantle:** To take apart or remove any component, device or piece of equipment that is bolted, screwed, (or fastened by other means), that would not be removed by a homeowner in the course of normal household maintenance.
- **Engineering:** Analysis or design work requiring extensive preparation and experience in the use of mathematics, chemistry, physics, and the engineering sciences.
- **Functional Drainage:** A drain is functional when it empties in a reasonable amount of time and does not overflow when another fixture is drained simultaneously.
- **Functional Flow:** A reasonable flow at the highest fixture in a dwelling when another fixture is operated simultaneously.
- **Household Appliances:** Kitchen, laundry, and similar appliances are not included in these Standards since a visual inspection may not indicate the effectiveness of their operation.
- **Identify:** Report in writing a system or component by its type, or other observed characteristics, to distinguish it from other systems or components used for the same purpose.
- **Inspector:** Any person who examines any component of a building, through visual means and through normal user controls, without the use of mathematical sciences.
- **Installed:** Attached (connected) to the structural, mechanical, plumbing or electrical system of the house such that the item installed cannot be removed without the use of tools.



- **Normal Operating Controls:** Homeowner operated devices such as a thermostat, wall switch or safety switch.
- **Observe:** The act of making a visual examination.
- **Operate:** To cause systems or equipment to function.
- **Primary Windows and Doors:** Windows and exterior doors which are designed to remain in their respective openings year round.
- **Readily Openable Access Panel:** A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance which has removable or operable fasteners or latch devices in order to be lifted off, swung open, or otherwise removed by one person (without the use of tools) and its edges and fasteners are not painted in place. Limited to those panels within normal reach or from a 4-foot stepladder, and which are not blocked by stored items, furniture, or building components.
- **Recreational Facilities:** Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, and other exercise entertainment, or athletic equipment.
- **Representative Number:** For multiple identical components such as windows and electric outlets - one such component per room. For multiple identical exterior components - one such component on each side of the building.
- **Roof Drainage Systems:** Gutters, downspouts, leaders, splashblocks, and similar components used to carry water off a roof and away from a building.
- **Shut Down:** A piece of equipment or system is shut down when it cannot be operated by the device or control which a homeowner would use to normally operate. IF the safety switch, fuse, or circuit breaker is in the "off" position the Inspector is NOT required to operate the equipment or system.
- **Solid Fuel Heating Device:** Any wood, coal, or other similar organic fuel burning device, including but not limited to fireplaces whether masonry or factory built, fireplace inserts and stoves, wood stoves (room heaters), central furnaces, and combinations of these devices.
- **Structural Component:** A building component which supports interior or exterior finish materials or other building components.
- **Technically Exhaustive:** An inspection is technically exhaustive when it involves the extensive use of measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, and other means to develop scientific or engineering findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- **Under-floor Crawl Space:** The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the lowest floor structural component.