

CALIFORNIA REAL ESTATE INSPECTION ASSOCIATION

Commercial Standards of Practice

Originally Adopted January 4, 2002

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Definitions and Scope

A. The inspection to be performed consists of non-intrusive visual observations to survey the readily *accessible*, easily visible material components, systems and equipment of the building. The inspection is designed to identify material physical deficiencies in the building's components, systems and equipment, as they exist at the time of the inspection. Unless otherwise agreed between the *Inspector* and client, the specific *systems*, *structures* and *components* of a *building* to be examined are listed in these Commercial Standards of Practice.

B. The term material physical deficiencies means the presence of conspicuous patent defects or material deferred maintenance of the building's material systems, components, or building equipment as observed during the *inspection*. This definition specifically excludes deficiencies that may be remedied with routine maintenance, miscellaneous minor repairs, and normal operating maintenance, and excludes incidental conditions that generally do not present material physical deficiencies of the building.

C. These Standards provide *inspection* guidelines, make public the services provided by private fee-paid *inspectors*, and define certain terms relating to these *inspections*.

D. Unless otherwise agreed between the *inspector* and client, these Standards shall apply to the *primary building(s)* and its associated *primary parking structure(s)* or *surfaces*. The *inspection* shall be limited to those specific *systems*, *structures* and *components* that are present and visually *accessible*. *Components* and *systems* shall be operated with *normal user controls* only and as *conditions* permit. *Inspections* performed in accordance with these Standards are not intended to be *technically exhaustive*.

E. *Inspection reports* shall describe and identify in written format the inspected *systems*, *structures*, and *components* of the *building* and shall identify those material physical deficiencies discovered during the *inspection*. The inspection report will contain a representative indication of the property condition at the time of the inspection and will be dependent on the information available to the inspector at that time.

F. The inspector and the client may expressly agree, orally or in writing, to limit or increase the scope of the inspection, including, but not limited to, having an oral consultation in lieu of providing a written inspection report. Such an agreement, however, shall not be deemed a waiver or an increase of any legal or contractual duty or obligation of the Inspector, nor shall Inspector's actions be deemed to waive, cancel, or modify these Standards.

G. *Inspection reports* may contain recommendations regarding *conditions* reported or recommendations for *further evaluation* by *appropriate persons*.

II. Standards of Practice

SECTION 1 - Foundations, Basements, and Under-floor Areas

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Foundation and other support *components*.
2. Under-floor ventilation.
3. Location of under-floor *access* opening(s).
4. Wood separation from soil.
5. Presence of drainage *systems* or sump pumps within foundation footprint.
6. Presence or absence of seismic anchoring and bracing *components*.

B. The *inspector* is not required to:

1. *Enter* under-floor areas that are not *accessible* or where entry could cause damage or pose a hazard to the inspector.
2. Move stored items, vegetation or debris, or perform any excavations or other *intrusive* testing to gain *access*.
3. *Operate* or *evaluate* adequacy of sump pumps or drainage *systems*.
4. Identify size, spacing, location or adequacy of foundation bolting and bracing *components* or reinforcement *systems*.
5. Perform any *intrusive examination* or testing, or use any *special equipment* such as, but not limited to, levels, probes or meters.

SECTION 2 - Exteriors

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Surface grade, hardscaping and drainage within six feet of the inspected *building* or associated *primary parking structure(s)* or *surfaces*.
2. Wall cladding, veneers, flashing, trim, eaves, soffits and fascias.
3. Exterior portions of a *representative sampling* of doors and windows.
4. Attached decks, porches, balconies, stairs, columns, walkways, guard-rails and handrails.

B. The *inspector* is not required to:

1. *Operate* or *evaluate* any mechanical, electro-mechanical, or underground drainage *systems*.
2. *Operate* or *evaluate* storm windows, storm doors, screening, shutters or awnings.
3. *Operate* or *evaluate* remote-control devices, door operators, or gate operators.
4. *Examine* detached buildings and structures (other than the *primary parking structure*), patio enclosures, fences, and retaining walls.
5. *Examine* items not visible from a readily *accessible* walking surface.
6. Perform a water test, warrant or certify against leakage of all exterior surfaces and components.

SECTION 3 - Roof System

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Roof coverings.
2. Flashing, vents, skylights and other penetrations.
3. Roof drainage *systems*.
4. Framing and sheathing.
5. *Accessibility and access* opening(s).
6. Insulation material(s).
7. Ventilation.

B. The *inspector* is not required to:

1. Walk on the roof surface if, in the opinion of the inspector, there is a possibility of damage to the surface or a hazard to the *inspector*.
2. Perform a water test, warrant or certify against roof leakage or predict life expectancy.
3. *Enter* attic areas that, in the opinion of the inspector, are not *accessible* or where entry could cause damage.
4. Move insulation materials or identify composition or "R" value of insulation material.
5. Activate thermostatically operated fans.

SECTION 4 - Plumbing System

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Supply, waste, and vent piping.
2. Fixtures, faucets and drains.
3. Water heating equipment, including combustion air, venting, connections, energy sources, seismic bracing, and temperature-pressure relief valves.
4. *Functional flow* of water supply and *functional drainage* at fixtures.
5. Gas piping and connectors.
6. *Cross-connections*.

B. The *inspector* is not required to:

1. *Operate* any valve other than fixture faucets and hose faucets attached to the *building*.
2. *Operate* any *system, fixture or component that is shut down or disconnected*.
3. *Examine* or verify operation of water supply or pressure assistance *systems*, including, but not limited to: wells, pumps, tanks, and related equipment.

4. Verify *functional flow* or pressure at any *fixture* or faucet where the flow end is capped or connected to an *appliance*, or measure pressure, volume or temperature.
5. *Examine* or *operate* any sewage disposal *system* or component including, but not limited to: septic tanks and/or any underground *system* or portion thereof, or ejector pumps for rain or waste.
6. *Examine* the overflow device of any fixture.
7. *Evaluate* the potability of water, compliance with local or state conservation or energy standards, or proper design or sizing of any water, waste, and venting *components, fixtures, or piping*.
8. Identify whether water supply and waste disposal *systems* are public or private.
9. *Evaluate* time to obtain hot water at fixtures, or perform testing of any kind to water heater elements.
10. *Examine* ancillary *systems* or *components* such as, but not limited to: those relating to solar heating, hot water circulation, irrigation, water conditioning, water filtration, swimming pools or spas and related equipment, and fire suppression systems.
11. Test shower pans for leakage or fill any fixture with water during *examination*.
12. *Evaluate* the gas supply *system* for leaks or pressure.
13. *Determine* effectiveness of anti-siphon, back-flow prevention, temperature-pressure relief valves, or drain-stop devices.
14. *Determine* whether there are sufficient clean-outs for effective clearing of drains.
15. *Evaluate* gas, liquid propane, oil, or other storage tanks.

SECTION 5 - Electrical System

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Service conductors, equipment, and capacity.
2. Panels and overcurrent protection devices.
3. Service and equipment grounding.
4. Wiring types and methods.
5. *A representative sampling* of switches, receptacles, and light *fixtures*.
6. Ground-fault circuit-interrupters.

B. The *inspector* is not required to:

1. *Operate* electrical *systems* or *components* that are *disconnected* or *shut down*.
2. *Disconnect* any energized *system* or *appliance*.
3. Remove deadfront covers, panels, or plates.
4. *Operate* overcurrent protection devices, or *evaluate* compatibility of overcurrent protection devices with the panelboard manufacturer.
5. *Examine* or test smoke detectors.
6. *Operate* circuit-interrupter devices.
7. *Examine* de-icing equipment, or private or emergency electrical supply sources, including but not limited to: generators, windmills, photovoltaic solar collectors, or battery or electrical storage facilities.

SECTION 6 - Heating and Cooling System

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Heating and cooling equipment.
2. Venting and combustion *systems*.
3. Energy source and connections.
4. Heating and cooling distribution *system(s)* including a *representative sampling* of ducting, duct insulation, outlets, radiators, piping *systems* and valves.
5. Condensate drains.

B. The *inspector* is not required to:

1. *Examine or evaluate condition* of heat exchangers.
2. *Determine* uniformity, temperature, airflow or air balance to any room or *building* or *determine* leakage in any distribution component.
3. *Examine* any distribution *component*, when *access* would require steps or a ladder.
4. *Examine* electric heater elements or heat pump fluid/gas materials, or *examine* below ground/slab *systems*, ducts, fuel tanks and related *components*.
5. *Determine* or *examine* thermostat calibration, temperature anticipation, automatic setbacks or clocks, or any sensors.
6. *Examine* radiant or geothermal heat pump *systems*.
7. *Examine* any solar-energy heating *systems* or *components*.
8. *Examine* air-filtering *systems*.
9. *Operate* heat pump *systems* when the ambient air temperature may damage the equipment, or *operate* any heat pump *system* in "emergency" heat mode.
10. *Examine* humidity control *systems* and *components*.
11. *Operate* any heating or cooling equipment.
12. *Evaluate* the *building* or equipment for proper percentage of outside or makeup air or *evaluate* other related devices or controls.
13. *Shut down* and open any boiler or other related equipment.
14. *Examine* electrical current, flow, or voltage at any component.
15. *Examine* fluids or gases, or leakage.
16. *Examine* any non-central cooling unit(s), evaporative coolers, gas-fired, solar or geothermal cooling *system* or food, wine or similar storage cooling *system*.
17. Enter or climb on cooling towers or evaluate water treatment of cooling tower.
18. *Examine* temperatures, pressures, or any equipment printouts or displays.

SECTION 7 – Fireplaces and Chimneys

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Chimneys, flues, dampers and associated *components*.
2. Fireboxes, hearth extensions and *permanently installed* accessory *components*.
3. Manufactured solid-fuel or gas-burning *appliances*.

- B. The *inspector* is not required to:
1. *Determine* adequacy of draft, perform a smoke test, or *dismantle* or remove any *component*.
 2. *Examine* the structural integrity of fireplaces and chimneys.
 3. *Examine* or *operate* ancillary or non-*permanently installed components*.

SECTION 8 - Building Interior

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Walls, ceilings and floors.
2. Security bars, ventilation *components*, and a *representative sampling* of doors and windows.
3. Stairs, handrails, and guardrails.
4. *Permanently installed* cabinet surfaces and countertop surfaces.
5. Safety glazing in locations subject to human impact.

B The *inspector* is not required to:

1. *Operate* or *evaluate* security bar release and opening mechanisms, whether interior or exterior, including compliance with local, state, or federal standards.
2. *Determine* whether a *building* or any area of the property is secure from forcible or unauthorized entry.
3. *Evaluate* the *condition* of floor, wall or ceiling finishes or coverings, or other surfaces for other than *evidence* of moisture damage.
4. *Examine* window or door coverings or treatments.
5. *Evaluate* fastening of countertops, furniture or cabinets supported by floors, ceilings and/or walls.
6. *Evaluate* separation or firewalls, ceilings, and floors, including, but not limited to, fire-resistivity or acoustical characteristics.
7. *Examine* the floor surface when concealed by any floor coverings.
8. *Examine* or *evaluate* ancillary *systems* or *components* such as, but not limited to: those relating to ingress and egress.

SECTION 9 (OPTIONAL) - Other Built-In Appliances and Systems

The *inspector* may *examine* any of the following at his/her discretion, as agreed with client:

Attic power vents, central vacuum, cook-tops and exhaust fans, ranges, dishwashers, food waste disposers, garage door openers, hydrotherapy tubs, ovens, microwave ovens, refrigerators, freezers, trash compactors, or built-in fans.

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Optional *systems*, *components* and *appliances* specifically *examined* during the *inspection*.
2. *Basic condition* of optional *systems*, *components* and *appliances* specifically included in the *inspection*.

B. The *inspector* is not required to:

1. Activate any *system* or *appliance*.
2. Determine thermostat(s) calibration, adequacy of heating elements, *operate* or *evaluate* self-cleaning oven cycles, signal lights, or automatic setbacks or clocks.
3. Determine leakage from microwave ovens.
4. Determine the presence or *operation* of backdraft damper devices in exhaust systems.
5. Examine any ancillary or non-built-in appliances.

SECTION 10 (OPTIONAL) - Pools and Spas

The *inspector* may examine the following at his/her discretion, as agreed with client:

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Location and type of pool or spa *examined*.
2. *Conditions* limiting or otherwise inhibiting *inspection*.
3. Enclosure and related gates.
4. Hardscaping and drainage related to the inspected pool or spa.
5. *Condition* of visible portions of *systems*, *structures*, or *components*.
6. Normally necessary and present equipment such as: lights, GFCI devices, pumps, heaters, filters, and related mechanical and electrical connections.

B. The *inspector* is not required to:

1. Examine any above-ground, movable, freestanding or otherwise non-permanently installed pool or spa, or self-contained equipment.
2. Come into contact with pool or spa water to *examine* the *system*, *structure*, or *components*.
3. Determine adequacy of spa jet water force or bubble effect.
4. Determine structural integrity or leakage of any kind.
5. Evaluate thermostat(s) or their calibration, heating elements, chemical dispensers, water chemistry or conditioning devices, low voltage or computer controls, adequacy of bonding or grounding systems, timers, sweeps or cleaners, pool or spa covers and related *components*.
6. Operate or evaluate filter backwash *systems*.
7. Examine accessories, such as, but not limited to: aerators or air-blowers, diving or jump boards, ladders, skimmers, slides or steps.

III. LIMITATIONS, EXCEPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

- A. The *inspector* may exclude from the *inspection* any *system*, *structure*, or *component* of the *building* which is *inaccessible*, concealed from view, or cannot be *inspected* due to circumstances beyond the control of the *inspector*, or which the client has agreed is not to be *inspected*. If an *inspector* excludes any specific *system*, *structure*, or *component* of the *building* from the *inspection*, the *inspector* shall confirm in the *report*, or during an *oral consultation*, such specific *system*, *structure*, or *component* of the *building* not *inspected* and the reason(s) for such exclusion(s).
- B. The *inspector* may limit the *inspection* to individual specific *systems*, *structures*, or *components* of the *building*. In such event, the *inspector* shall confirm in the *report*, or during an *oral consultation*,

that the *inspection* has been limited to such individual specific *systems, structures, and components* of the *building*.

- C. The following are excluded from the scope of an *inspection* unless otherwise specifically agreed between the *inspector* and client:
1. *Systems, structures, or components* not specifically identified in these Standards.
 2. Certain factors relating to any *systems, structures, or components* of the *building*, including, but not limited to: adequacy, efficiency, durability or remaining useful life, costs to repair, replace or operate, fair market value, marketability, quality, or advisability of purchase.
 3. Building code or zoning ordinance violations.
 4. Geological stability or soils conditions or structural stability or engineering analysis.
 5. All wood-destroying organism.
 6. Interior partition walls; tenant improvements and non-*building* equipment.
 7. Americans With Disabilities Act inspections.
 8. Water testing for roof, wall or window leaks. Concealed roofing membrane integrity.
 9. Concealed floor cracks and all underground *components*.
 10. Product recalls or other such notices.
 11. Specific *components* noted in the inspection report as being beyond the scope of the *inspection*.
 12. Thermostatic, motion and time clock controls.
 13. Permits or public records research.
 14. Fire and life safety systems.
 15. Elevators or lifts.
 16. *Building* security and security *systems*.
 17. Installation guidelines and manufacturer's specifications.
 18. *Examination of conditions* related to animals, rodents, insects, wood-destroying insects, organisms, mold, and mildew or the damage caused thereby.
 19. Personal property.
 20. Removing equipment or *component* covers, panels or plates.
 21. Common areas, or *systems, structures, or components* thereof, including, but not limited to, those of a common interest development as defined in California Civil Code Section 1351 et seq.
- D. The *inspector* is not required to perform any of the following as part of an *inspection*:
1. Move any items or other obstruction(s) such as, but not limited to: equipment, furniture, floor or wall coverings, window coverings, snow, ice, water, debris, and foliage that may obstruct visibility or access.

2. *Determine* causes for the need of repair or replacement, or specify repair or replacement procedures or materials.
3. *Determine* existence of latent deficiencies or defects.
4. *Dismantle* any *system, structure, or component*, or perform any *intrusive* or *destructive examination*, test or analysis.
5. Obtain or review information from any third-parties including, but not limited to: government agencies (such as permits), *component* or *system* manufacturers (including product defects, recalls or similar notices), contractors, managers, sellers, occupants, neighbors, consultants, homeowner or similar associations, attorneys, agents or brokers.
6. *Activate* or *operate* any *system or component* that is *shut down* or does not respond to *normal user controls*, nor *access* any area or *operate* any *component* or *system* which may jeopardize the safety of the *inspector*, or any other person or thing.
7. Research the history of a property, *report* on its potential for alteration, modification, extendibility, or its suitability for a specific or proposed use or occupancy.
8. Offer any form of guarantee or warranty.
9. *Examine* or *evaluate* the acoustical or other nuisance characteristics of any *system, structure, or component* of a *building*, complex, adjoining properties, or neighborhood.
10. *Operate* or *evaluate* any recreational *system, structure or component*.
11. *Operate* or *evaluate* low voltage electrical (less than single-phase line voltage, typically 120-volts), antennas, security *systems*, cable or satellite television, telephone, remote controls, radio controls, timers, intercoms, computers, photo-electric, motion sensing, or other such similar non-primary electrical power devices, *components*, or *systems*.
12. Use any *special equipment* to *examine* any *system, structure, or component* of a *building*.
13. Probe or exert pressure on any *component, system or structure*.
14. *Examine* or *evaluate* fire-resistive qualities of any *system, structure or component* of the *building*.
15. *Examine* every individual *component* of a *system or structure*, where such *components* are typically replicated, including, but not limited to: doors, windows, switches and receptacles. A *representative sampling* may be performed in order to *examine* such *systems, structures, or components* of a *building*.
16. *Determine* the age of construction or installation of any *system, structure, or component* of a *building*, or differentiate between original construction or subsequent additions, improvements, renovations or replacements thereto.

IV - GLOSSARY of TERMS

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

- Accessible:** Can be approached or entered by the *inspector* safely without difficulty or damage to the *system, structure, or component*.
- Appliance:** See "*Component*."
- Appropriate persons:** An individual other than *inspector* herein, qualified by virtue of special knowledge, training or resources to further *examine* a *system, structure, or component*, as in the manner of a specialist.

Building:	The <i>primary building</i> subject of the <i>inspection</i> , designed and erected for the purpose of human occupancy or use.
Built-in:	See " <i>Permanently installed.</i> "
Component:	A <i>permanently installed appliance, fixture, element, or part of a system.</i>
Condition:	The plainly visible and conspicuous state of being of a material object or thing.
Cross-connection:	A connection between two otherwise separate systems, one of which is potable water and the other waste, sewage or other source of contamination.
Destructive:	To demolish, damage, or probe any <i>system, structure, or component</i> , or to <i>dismantle</i> any <i>system or component</i> that would not be taken apart by an ordinary person in the course of normal maintenance.
Determine:	To arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to <i>examination.</i>
Disconnected:	See " <i>Shut down.</i> "
Dismantle:	See " <i>Destructive.</i> "
Enter:	See " <i>Accessible.</i> "
Evaluate:	To assess the <i>systems, structures, or components</i> of a <i>building.</i>
Evidence:	Plainly visible and conspicuous material objects or other things presented to the senses that would tend to produce conviction in the mind of an ordinary person as to the existence or non-existence of a fact.
Examine:	To visually look for and identify <i>material physical deficiencies</i> in <i>systems, structures, or components</i> of a <i>building</i> through a non-intrusive physical <i>inspection.</i>
Fixture:	See " <i>Component.</i> "
Function:	Performing its normal, proper and characteristic action.
Functional Drainage:	The emptying of a plumbing fixture in a reasonable amount of time, without overflow, when another fixture is drained simultaneously.
Functional flow:	A reasonable flow of water supply at the highest and farthest fixture from the <i>building</i> main when another fixture is operated simultaneously.
Further evaluation:	A degree of <i>examination</i> beyond that of a typical and customary non-intrusive physical <i>examination.</i>
Inspection:	The act of performing an <i>inspection.</i> (Refer to Section I, "Definitions and Scope" Paragraph A).
Inspector:	One who performs an <i>inspection.</i>
Intrusive:	See " <i>Destructive.</i> "
Material Physical deficiency:	(Refer to Section I, "Definitions and Scope" Paragraph B).
Normal user controls:	Devices that would be <i>operated</i> by the ordinary occupants of a <i>building</i> , requiring no specialized skill or knowledge.
Operate:	To cause <i>systems</i> or equipment to <i>function</i> with <i>normal user controls.</i>

Operational:	<i>Systems or components</i> capable of being safely operated.
Oral Consultation:	A limited visual <i>inspection</i> of specific <i>systems, structures</i> or <i>components</i> of a <i>building</i> where no written <i>report</i> is prepared by the <i>inspector</i> and the <i>inspector's</i> findings, opinions, conclusions and recommendations are orally communicated by the <i>inspector</i> to the Client.
Permanently Installed:	Fixed in place (e.g. screwed, bolted, or nailed), as distinct from <i>components, systems, or appliances</i> considered portable or freestanding.
Primary building:	A <i>building</i> that an <i>inspector</i> has agreed to <i>inspect</i> , excluding all accessory buildings with the exception of the <i>primary parking structure</i> .
Primary parking structure and surfaces:	A <i>building</i> and appurtenant surfaces for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the <i>primary building</i> .
Report:	The <i>inspection report</i> is a written document prepared for a fee and issued after an <i>inspection</i> identifying and describing the <i>inspected systems, structures, and components</i> of the <i>building</i> and identifying <i>material physical deficiencies</i> discovered therein.
Representative sampling:	A small quantity of <i>components</i> of any <i>system</i> or <i>structure</i> enough like others in its class or kind to serve as an example of its class or kind.
Shut down:	Turned off, inactive, not in-service, non- <i>operational</i> .
Special equipment:	Any tools or devices other than those normally used by an <i>inspector</i> to perform a typical and customary non-invasive physical <i>examination</i> of the <i>systems, structures, and components</i> of a <i>building</i> , including, but not limited to: levels, probes, meters, video or audio devices and measuring devices.
Structure:	An assemblage of various <i>systems</i> and <i>components</i> to <i>function</i> as a whole.
System:	An assemblage of various <i>components</i> to <i>function</i> as a whole.
Technically exhaustive:	A comprehensive and detailed <i>examination</i> beyond the scope of an <i>inspection</i> which would include, but would not be limited to: specialized knowledge or training, <i>special equipment</i> , measurements, calculations, testing, research, or analysis. Also, where the cost of obtaining information or the time required to conduct a technically exhaustive inspection and prepare the <i>inspection report</i> could outweigh the usefulness of the information and could be detrimental to the orderly and timely completion of Client's transaction.