



# Standard



## Professional Standard of Practice for the Visual Inspection of Chiefly Residential Buildings

QUEBEC ASSOCIATION  
OF BUILDING INSPECTORS

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# Table of contents

Acknowledgements . . . . .	3
Introduction . . . . .	4
Chapter I Professional Standard of Practice . . . . .	5
Section I – Field of application . . . . .	5
Section II – Obligation to draft an inspection service agreement . . . . .	5
Section III – Interpretation . . . . .	5
Chapter II Characteristics of a visual building inspection . . . . .	6
Section I – Purpose of a visual building inspection . . . . .	6
Section II – Performance of a visual building inspection . . . . .	6
Section III – Absence of a technically exhaustive inspection . . . . .	6
Chapter III General limitations and exclusions . . . . .	7
Section I – Limitations of the inspection . . . . .	7
Section II – Exclusions of the inspection . . . . .	7
Chapter IV The visual building inspection report . . . . .	9
Section I – Obligation to draft a report . . . . .	9
Section II – Minimum content of the written report . . . . .	9
Section III – Additional information in the written report . . . . .	9
Section IV – Declarations by the seller . . . . .	9
Chapter V Inspection of building systems . . . . .	10
Section I – Structural components . . . . .	10
Section II – Exterior . . . . .	11
Section III – Roofing . . . . .	12
Section IV – Plumbing . . . . .	12
Section V – Electricity . . . . .	14
Section VI – Heating . . . . .	16
Section VII – Air conditioning and heat pump . . . . .	17
Section VIII – Interior . . . . .	18
Section IX – Insulation . . . . .	19
Section X – Ventilation . . . . .	19
Section XI – Occupant’s safety . . . . .	20
Appendix I Addendum to the Standard of Practice . . . . .	21
Appendix II Standard of Practice - Glossary . . . . .	24

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# Introduction

In light of the Real Estate law, Real Estate Brokers must recommend to the person proposing to acquire an immovable that the person has a full inspection performed by a professional or a building inspector who:

- has professional liability insurance covering fault, error and omission;
- uses a recognized inspection service agreement;
- performs inspections according to a recognized building inspection standard;
- submits a written report to the party that requested the inspection service.

This Standard of Practice and its Appendices are being published to inform the public on the nature and scope of visual building inspections performed by members of the QABI.

The purpose of the Standard is to provide guidelines for building inspectors with regard to the inspection itself as well as to the preparation of the inspection report, and to define certain terms related to building inspections in order to ensure a more consistent interpretation.

This Standard represents the minimum requirements for the performance of an inspection of any chiefly residential building by a member of the Quebec Association of Building Inspectors (hereinafter called the QABI).

Building industry organizations recognize the QABI Standard of Practice as the reference in the building inspection trade.

The Quebec Association of Building Inspectors (QABI), founded in 1990, is a volunteer membership, not-for-profit organization, representing the largest number of building inspectors in Quebec.

The Association aims to provide its members with:

- Strict supervision;
- A Standard of Practice governing the profession of building inspectors;
- A Code of Ethics;
- Regulation governing the professional act.

To ensure better public protection, member inspectors must uphold this Standard and abide by the Code of Ethics, in addition to holding and maintaining insurance coverage for professional liability (errors and omissions).

This Standard takes into account the fact that the visual inspection of a building does not constitute an exhaustive inspection. It is not an evaluation or a verification of compliance with building codes and standards or regulations governing the construction sector or the health and safety sector, neither or with standards and regulations governing insurability for the purpose of insuring risk.

*NOTE: For a better understanding of certain terms used in the present Standard, a definition is provided in Appendix II. The defined terms are identified in italics.*

# Professional Standard of Practice

## Section I – Field of application

Art. 1 This Standard of Practice applies to inspections of part or all of a building of a maximum of three (3) stories and a building area of a maximum of 600 square meters (excluding the *basement*), and used for the following purposes:

- 1.1 single-family dwelling, detached, semi-detached or rowhouse
- 1.2 multi-unit residential building;
- 1.3 residential building held in divided or undivided co-ownership;
- 1.4 residential building occupied in part for a residential occupancy and in part for a commercial occupancy, as long as the latter use does not exceed 40% of the building's total area, excluding the *basement*.

## Section II – Obligation to draft an inspection service agreement

Art. 2 An inspection performed in accordance with this Standard is subject to a typical inspection service agreement published by the Quebec Association of Building *Inspectors*.

## Section III – Interpretation

Art. 3 Any term not defined in this Standard shall have the meaning commonly assigned to it by the various trades and professions, according to context.

Art. 4 The definitions included in this Standard's Glossary form an integral part of the Standards.

Art. 5 Unless otherwise dictated by the context, any word used in the masculine form also includes the feminine form and vice versa, and any word used in the singular form also includes the plural form and vice versa.

# Characteristics of a visual building inspection

## Section I – Purpose of a visual building inspection

Art. 6 The purpose of a visual building inspection performed in accordance with this Standard is to provide the *client* with the information needed to gain a better understanding of the condition of the building *described* in the inspection service agreement, as observed at the time of inspection.

## Section II – Performance of a visual building inspection

Art. 7 The building inspection performed in accordance with this Standard is an attentive visual examination that is not meant to be *technically exhaustive*.

Art. 8 The building inspection consists in visually observing and reporting on the physical condition of the readily accessible *installed systems and components* listed in this Standard.

Art. 9 The building inspection may include the provision of additional inspection services, subject to a written agreement to this effect.

## Section III – Absence of a technically exhaustive inspection

Art. 10 Because this Standard of Practice does not cover *technically exhaustive* inspections, the *inspector* must recommend a *technically exhaustive* inspection by a specialist when a sufficient number of clues leads him to suspect that a potentially major deficiency or defect exists in one of the building's *systems or components*.



# General limitations and exclusions

## Section I – Limitations of the inspection

Art. 11 Inspections performed in accordance with this Standard of Practice is subject to certain limitations. Namely, the *inspector* is not required to:

- 11.1 enter any area or perform any procedure which may damage the property or its *components* or which may present a risk for the safety of the *inspector* or other persons, such as walking on the roof, entering a *crawl space* or attic space;
- 11.2 *operate* any *system* or *component* which is *shut down* or which does not respond to *normal operating controls*;
- 11.3 move personal items, furniture, material and equipment, ceiling tiles, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris which obstruct access or visibility;
- 11.4 analyze or emit an opinion on the presence or absence of hazardous substances, including mold, micro-organisms and other carcinogens or toxins, of environmental hazards or contaminants in air, soil or water and of noise or sound proofing;
- 11.5 determine the presence or absence of wood-damaging organisms, rodents, insects or other pests.

## Section II – Exclusions of the inspection

Art. 12 The visual inspection and written report do not cover the following elements:

- 12.1 the remaining life expectancy of any *component* or system, nor the calculation or assessment of the effectiveness and/or relevance thereof, nor a projection of its operating cost;
- 12.2 an evaluation of the methods, materials and costs related to any corrective action required to *systems* and *components*, nor the causes of the origin of the corrective action required;
- 12.3 the evaluation of the market value of the property;
- 12.4 a recommendation on whether or not to purchase the property;
- 12.5 *supplemental heating devices* and any type of *solid fuel burning heating device*;



## General limitations and exclusions

- 12.6 Any underground *buried components*, including weeping fields, underground tanks and reservoirs, wells and underground piping, drainage piping *systems* and foundation drains;
- 12.7 garages, carports and other dependencies that are not attached to the main building;
- 12.8 pools, spas, saunas, whirlpool baths and other such equipment;
- 12.9 inspection and testing or operating of any *installed* fire alarm system, burglar alarm system, automatic sprinkler *system* or other fire protection equipment, electronic or automated installations and any lifting equipment, elevator, freight elevator, wheelchair lift, climbing chair, escalator or others;
- 12.10 compliance with building codes and standards or regulations governing the construction sector or the health and safety sector, or with standards and regulations governing insurability of the building for all insurance risks.



# The visual building inspection report

## Section I – Obligation to draft a report

Art. 13 After analyzing the visual observations in accordance with this Standard, the *inspector* shall submit a written report to the *client*.

## Section II – Minimum content of the written report

Art. 14 The inspection report shall:

- 14.1 identify the person who requested the inspection and the subject of the inspection;
- 14.2 indicate the date, time, weather conditions and the names of the persons present at the time of the inspection;
- 14.3 include a brief description of the building;
- 14.4 include a table of contents and page numbers;
- 14.5 treat the *systems* and *components* as prescribed in the Standard;
- 14.6 *mention the installed systems and components* that:
  - 14.6.1 were actually inspected and, where required, *describe* the method used for the inspection;
  - 14.6.2 were not inspected and the reasons why they were not inspected;
  - 14.6.3 require repairs, correction or replacement, including visible elements that present a safety condition;
- 14.7 note all signs of water penetration, water staining or condensation and all signs or stains having an appearance of mold, on the *systems* and *components* of the main building;
- 14.8 include photos in support of the *Inspector's* main observations;
- 14.9 indicate the name of the *inspector*, the name and address of the business or company of the *inspector*;
- 14.10 be signed and authenticated by the *inspector* who performed the inspection.

## Section III – Additional information in the written report

Art. 15 The report may include information, observations or descriptions in addition to those required under Article 14.

## Section IV – Declarations by the seller

Art. 16 The *inspector* must apprise himself of the written declarations made by the seller on the appropriate form to this effect. If the seller refuses or if this form cannot be obtained for any reason, the *inspector* shall *mention* it in his report and indicate the reasons.

# Inspection of building systems

## Section I – Structural components

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 17 The *inspector* shall *observe* and *describe* the following *structural components* and *mention* their condition in the report:

- 17.1 foundations;
- 17.2 floors;
- 17.3 walls;
- 17.4 columns;
- 17.5 beams;
- 17.6 ceilings;
- 17.7 roofs.

Art. 18 The *inspector* shall *probe* the *structural components* which appear to have deterioration. However, probing is not required when it would result in damaging the building or putting the *inspector* or other persons at risk.

Art. 19 The *inspector* shall enter *crawl spaces* and *attic spaces* that are accessible through a passage that is safe, secure and of adequate size and that does not require the use of tools, except where access is obstructed, where entry could damage the property or where *dangerous or adverse conditions* are suspected.

Art. 20 The *inspector* shall report the methods used to *observe crawl spaces* and *attic spaces*.

### Specific exclusions

Art. 21 The *inspector* does not have to *probe* all the *components* which are identical or alike and which appear to have deterioration, but only a represented number at random, sufficient to permit the *inspector* to develop a reasonable opinion on their condition.

Art. 22 The *inspector* is not required to:

- 22.1 offer any *engineering*, architectural or any other specialized analysis;
- 22.2 offer any opinion as to the capacity or the projected performance of the structural system.

# Inspection of building systems

## Section II – Exterior

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 23 The *inspector* shall *observe* and *describe* the following exterior *components* and *mention* their condition in the report:

- 23.1 exterior wall cladding, siding, trim and flashings;
- 23.2 *permanent windows and doors*, flashings and mouldings;
- 23.3 walkways, decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches and railings, garage and car ports or driveways;
- 23.4 eaves, including fascia and soffits;

The *inspector* shall *mention* in the report:

- 23.5 the presence of electric garage door openers and safety devices;
- 23.6 whether or not any electric garage door opener automatically reverses or stops when meeting reasonable resistance during closing.
- 23.7 the presence of vegetation, soil grading slopes, water drainage *systems*, and retaining walls when any one or the other of these *systems* can have an effect on the condition of the main building.

Art. 24 The *inspector* shall:

- 24.1 *operate* all permanent exterior doors, including garage doors that are *operated* manually or using a permanently *installed* electric door opener;

### Specific exclusions

Art. 25 The *inspector* is not required to *observe* the following non-permanent *components*:

- 25.1 storm windows, storm doors, screening, shutters, awnings and similar seasonal accessories;
- 25.2 fences;
- 25.3 glazing or barred window protection;
- 25.4 garage door remote control openers;
- 25.5 soil *geology*, composition and/or other conditions of the soil including any *underground component*;
- 25.6 *dykes*, retaining walls and docks bordering a body water;
- 25.7 *recreational facilities*.

# Inspection of building systems

## Section III – Roofing

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 26 The *inspector* shall *observe* and *describe* the following roofing *components* and *mention* their condition in the report:

- 26.1 roof covering materials;
- 26.2 roof water drainage *systems*;
- 26.3 flashings;
- 26.4 skylights, chimney exterior and structural *roof penetrations*.

Art. 27 The *inspector* shall *mention* in the report the methods used to *observe* the roofing.

### Specific exclusions

Art. 28 The *inspector* is not required to:

- 28.1 *observe* attached accessories including but not limited to solar *systems*, antennae, and lightning rods and other such accessories;
- 28.2 *observe* the inside of chimneys.

## Section IV – Plumbing

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 29 The *inspector* shall *operate* all toilet flush valves, fixture faucets and hose faucets.

Art. 30 The *inspector* shall *observe* and *describe* the following interior water distribution *components* and *mention* their condition:

- 30.1 materials of water supply piping to inside the building;
- 30.2 the main water entry shutoff valve and its *location*;
- 30.3 materials of water distribution piping;

The *inspector* shall *mention* in the report:

- 30.4 the condition of interior fixtures and faucets;
- 30.5 if the *functional flow* from the plumbing fixtures is functional;
- 30.6 the presence of *faulty connections* (problem or cross connections);

# Inspection of building systems

- 30.7 the presence of water leaks;
- 30.8 the presence or absence of exterior faucets;
- 30.9 the presence of yellowish or reddish water in the sump pumps and drainage pits.

Art. 31 The *inspector* shall *observe* and *describe* the following interior water drainage system components and *mention* their condition:

- 31.1 traps, drain and vent piping materials;

The *inspector* shall *mention* the presence or the absence of the following elements of the interior drainage system components:

- 31.2 water leaks;
- 31.3 interior and exterior floor drains;
- 31.4 back flow valves;
- 31.5 cleanouts;
- 31.6 sump pumps and drainage pits;

The *inspector* shall *mention* in the report:

- 31.7 the *functional flow* of the water drainage system.

Art. 32 The *inspector* shall *mention* the following elements of the water heater equipment for the production of domestic hot water, including:

- 32.1 heating equipment and capacity;
- 32.2 the *location* and the year of manufacture;
- 32.3 energy source;
- 32.4 the presence or absence of a shut-off valve;
- 32.5 the presence or absence of an automatic safety device and its drainage installation;
- 32.6 fuel reservoir, including:
  - 32.6.1 *location*;
  - 32.6.2 year of manufacture;
  - 32.6.3 leaks;
  - 32.6.4 supports;
  - 32.6.5 supply pipe;
  - 32.6.6 fill and ventilation piping;
- 32.7 the exterior of chimneys, exhaust systems, flues and vents;
- 32.8 the presence or absence of vacuum breakers (anti-siphon) when such is required.

# Inspection of building systems

Art. 33 The *inspector* shall *mention* the presence of the following installations and verify their operation by using their *normal operating controls*:

- 33.1 solid waste pumps;
- 33.2 laundry pumps;
- 33.3 sump pumps.

## Specific exclusions

Art. 34 The *inspector* is not required to determine whether a water supply system or waste disposal system is public or private.

Art. 35 The *inspector* is not required to *operate* safety devices and shutoff valves.

Art. 36 The *inspector* is not required to *observe* or *operate*:

- 36.1 water conditioning systems;
- 36.2 automatic fire sprinkler systems;
- 36.3 lawn sprinkler systems;
- 36.4 water supply quality and quantity;
- 36.5 garbage disposal and compacting systems.

## Section V – Electricity

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 37 The *inspector* shall *observe* and *describe* the following electrical components and *mention* their condition in the report:

- 37.1 service type (overhead or underground);
- 37.2 grounding equipment;
- 37.3 main service box (protective device and location of box);
- 37.4 main and secondary distribution panels (protective device, posted capacity, location);
- 37.5 branch circuit wiring, their over current devices, and the compatibility of their ampacities and voltages;

# Inspection of building systems

The *inspector* shall mention in the report:

- 37.6 nominal rating according to main fuses or circuit breakers on the main *service box*;
- 37.7 the operation of a *representative number of installed* lighting fixtures and switches located inside or outside the building;
- 37.8 if polarity and grounding of a *representative number* of outlets have been verified;
- 37.9 operation of *installed* ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) and the absence of GFCI's in areas where required;
- 37.10 the presence or absence of arc fault interrupters.

Art. 38 The *inspector* shall open main *service boxes* and *distribution panels* when it is safe to do so. If he cannot open these, he shall indicate the reasons in his inspection report.

## Specific exclusions

Art. 39 The *inspector* is not required to:

- 39.1 insert any tools, *probes* or testing devices inside any electrical box or panel;
- 39.2 test or *operate* any over current device and arc fault interrupters except ground fault circuit interrupters;
- 39.3 *dismantle* any electrical device or control.

Art. 40 The *inspector* is not required to observe or *operate*:

- 40.1 low voltage *systems*;
- 40.2 telephone, security, cable TV or other ancillary wiring that is not a part of the primary electrical distribution system.

# Inspection of building systems

## Section VI – Heating

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 41 The *inspector* shall observe and *describe* permanently *installed* heating systems, whether primary, secondary or other, including:

- 41.1 energy source;
- 41.2 type of heating equipment;
- 41.3 *normal operating controls*;
- 41.4 *automatic safety controls*;
- 41.5 the material and the condition of the exterior of chimneys, the flues and dampers;
- 41.6 heat distribution systems, including:
  - 41.6.1 ducts;
  - 41.6.2 piping;
  - 41.6.3 radiators;
  - 41.6.4 the condition of registers and air filters.

The *inspector* shall *mention* in the report:

- 41.7 the presence or absence of a permanently *installed* heat source in each habitable room, unfinished *basement* areas and *crawl spaces*.
- 41.8 fuel tank, including:
  - 41.8.1 *location*;
  - 41.8.2 year of manufacture;
  - 41.8.3 leaks;
  - 41.8.4 supports;
  - 41.8.5 the *location* and the condition of supply piping;
  - 41.8.6 fill and vent piping.

Art. 42 The *inspector* shall *operate* permanently *installed* heating systems using *normal operating controls*.

Art. 43 The *inspector* shall open access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance, where this operation does not require any tools.



## Specific exclusions

Art. 44 The *inspector* is not required to observe or verify:

44.1 The interior of the following elements:

44.1.1 chimneys;

44.1.2 flues;

44.1.3 dampers;

44.1.4 heating devices or apparatus.

44.2 humidifiers;

44.3 electronic air filters;

44.4 the uniformity or adequacy of heat supply to each habitable room.

## Section VII – Air conditioning and heat pump

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 45 The *inspector* shall *operate* the systems using *normal operating controls*

Art. 46 The *inspector* shall observe and *describe* the central cooling system, including their:

46.1 energy source;

46.2 cooling equipment type and *location*;

46.3 drainage installation.

Art. 47 The *inspector* shall observe and *describe* in the report the distribution system air ducts.

## Specific exclusions

Art. 48 The *inspector* is not required to observe movable and/or portable air conditioning systems.

Art. 49 The *inspector* is not required to verify the uniformity, adequacy or appropriateness of cool-air supply to the rooms.

# Inspection of building systems

## Section VIII – Interior

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 50 The *inspector* shall observe and *describe* the material of the finishes for the following *components* and *mention* their condition in the report:

- 50.1 walls, floors and ceilings;
- 50.2 steps, stairways, balconies and railings;
- 50.3 kitchen and bathroom cabinets and counters;
- 50.4 interior windows and doors, including the condition of their hardware;
- 50.5 walls, doors and ceilings separating the habitable spaces and a garage.

Art. 51 The *inspector* shall *operate a representative number* of permanent windows and interior doors.

Art. 52 The *inspector* shall *mention* any indications or signs of water penetration or condensation and he shall also *mention* any signs of what appears to be mold on interior building *components*. If applicable, the *inspector* shall use a moisture detector to confirm or refute the presence of moisture in suspected areas and nowhere else.

### Specific exclusions

Art. 53 The *inspector* is not required to observe:

- 53.1 paint, wallpaper and other finishes on the interior walls and ceilings;
- 53.2 carpeting;
- 53.3 draperies, blinds and other window treatments;
- 53.4 *household appliances*;
- 53.5 *recreational facilities*.

Art. 54 The *inspector* is not required to evaluate the acoustical characteristics of any *system* or component.

# Inspection of building systems

## Section IX – Insulation

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 55 The *inspector* shall observe and *describe* in the report all insulation materials and vapour barriers seen in unfinished spaces (attics, walls, ceilings and floors);

### Specific exclusion

Art. 56 With respect to the building insulation, the *inspector* is not required to report on the building's compliance with standards, or on the uniformity and adequacy of the insulation in the building.

## Section X – Ventilation

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report.

Art. 57 The *inspector* shall observe and *describe* in the report:

- 57.1 ventilation of attics, *basement* areas and *crawl* spaces;
- 57.2 kitchen and bathroom venting *systems*;
- 57.3 dryer venting system.

The *inspector* shall:

- 57.4 *mention* the presence of an air exchanger and its *location*;
- 57.5 open the access panel for the air exchanger.

### Specific exclusion

Art. 58 With respect to the building ventilation and interior air quality, the *inspector* is not required to report on the building's compliance with standards, or on the uniformity, adequacy or need for building ventilation and for the interior air quality.

# Inspection of building systems

## Section XI – Occupant's safety

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 59 The *inspector* shall observe and *describe* in the report all visible unsafe installations relating to the following elements, unless these elements have been reported in other sections of the report:

- 59.1 banisters, railings and handrails;
- 59.2 electrified *components* located at a dangerous distance from a water source;
- 59.3 means and points of egress;
- 59.4 access to pools, whirlpool baths, spas or other types of water basins;
- 59.5 landings
- 59.6 operable windows whose sill is at an unsafe distance on the inside of a room;
- 59.7 stairways;
- 59.8 fire separation walls in the attic space;
- 59.9 the presence or absence of a clearance of insulating materials and other combustible materials around chimneys that are visible and accessible.

Art. 60 The *inspector* shall observe and *describe* in the report the presence or absence of *safety components*, including:

- 60.1 smoke detectors;
- 60.2 carbon monoxide detectors.

# Addendum to the Standard of Practice

## Introduction

This Appendix is an integral part of the Professional Standard of Practice for the Visual Inspection of Chiefly Residential Buildings and must be used as a supplement or addendum to the preceding sections of this Standard.

### A1 Multi-unit residential building

A1.1 Unless the context dictates otherwise, all residential units and other visible and accessible areas of the building must be inspected.

A1.2 Representative observations

If not all units in the building are inspected, the number of units inspected should be sufficient to allow the *inspector* to form a reasonable opinion concerning the apparent conditions of the *systems* and *components* inspected. To ensure representative observations of the building, the inspection shall include, as a minimum, a sampling of areas located in the *basement*, the ground floor, the top floor and the other floors.

### A2 Residential building held in undivided co-ownership

A2.1 Performance of inspection

The inspection of a residential building held in undivided co-ownership consists in inspecting the *systems* and *components installed* inside and outside the building which is identified in the inspection service agreement.

### A3 Residential building held in divided co-ownership

A3.1 Obligation to use a pre-established appendix with the inspection service agreement

A3.1.1 The inspection of a residential building held in divided co-ownership must include an appendix pre-established for this purpose, which must be combined with the standard inspection service agreement as specified in Art. 2 of this Standard.

A3.2 Performance of inspection

A3.2.1 The inspection of a residential building held in divided co-ownership consists exclusively in inspecting the *systems* and *components installed* horizontally, at the surface of the interior finish of the walls and vertically, from the surface of the ceiling finish to the surface of the floor finish.

# Addendum to the Standard of Practice

A3.2.2 The inspection of a residential building held in divided co-ownership may include an inspection of *systems* and *components* in the common portions of the building under the care, custody and control of the Syndicate of Co-owners.

If applicable, a written authorization shall be provided by the Syndicate of Co-owners.

## A4 Residential building with partial commercial use

A4.1 Unless otherwise dictated by the context, all areas must be inspected.

A4.2 Representative observations

If not all areas of the building are inspected, the number of units inspected should be sufficient to allow the *inspector* to form a reasonable opinion concerning the apparent conditions of the *systems* and *components* inspected. To ensure representative observations of the building, the inspection shall include, as a minimum, a sampling of areas located in the *basement*, the ground floor, the top floor and the other floors.

## A5 Fire protection and life safety

A5.1 When any of the safety installations below are present in a building identified in articles A1 to A4, the *inspector* shall *mention* it in the report. The *inspector* shall also *mention* the presence or absence of a maintenance service performed by a specialized firm for these safety installations:

A5.1.1 automatic sprinklers;

A5.1.2 fire alarm system;

A5.1.3 emergency electric power (generator or other);

A5.1.4 portable fire extinguishers;

A5.1.5 lifting equipment, including:

A5.1.5.1 elevators;

A5.1.5.2 escalators;

A5.1.5.3 moving walks;

A5.1.5.4 wheelchair lifts and climbing chairs;

A5.1.5.5 freight elevators;

A5.1.5.6 mechanical winches;

A5.1.6 emergency lighting;

A5.1.7 electrical rooms.

## Specific exclusions

A5.2 In the area of fire protection and life safety in buildings, the *inspector* is not required to:

- A5.2.1 examine plans, specifications or activation and maintenance reports;
- A5.2.2 examine the building's fire safety plan;
- A5.2.3 inspect the site and visually inspect labels, thicknesses, distances, devices and condition of *components*;
- A5.2.4 verify the operation of mechanical and electrical devices for all:
  - A5.2.4.1 passive fire protection and life safety *components*;
  - A5.2.4.2 active fire protection and life safety *components*;
  - A5.2.4.3 organizational fire protection and life safety *components*.

# Standard of Practice - Glossary

**Active fire protection and life safety components**

Include automatic water sprinklers, standpipes, pull stations, smoke and heat detectors, telephone communication, special elevators and the installation of smoke control and smoke exhaust systems.

**Attic space**

The space between the ceiling of the highest floor and the roof or a knee wall.

**Automatic safety controls**

Any device 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.

**Basement**

One or more floor of a building located under the first floor.

**Buried**

Object placed in the ground, underground, after having dug the ground.

**Central air conditioning**

A system which uses ducts to distribute cooled and/or dehumidified air to more than one room at once and which is not simply plugged into an electrical outlet.

**Client**

Person or organization for whom the report is being drafted, as per the agreement.

**Component**

A readily accessible and observable part of a system, such as a floor or wall. (The term does not apply to individual pieces such as boards or nails where many similar pieces make up the component.)

**Crawl space**

An empty space of low height between the floor of the lowest story and the ground, designed for the installation of technical components.

**Dangerous or adverse conditions**

Situations which pose a threat of injury to the inspector or which require the use of special protective clothing or safety equipment.

**Decorative or non-permanent component**

Individual component or accessory that is not part of or essential to a system or component of the building or the operation thereof, in particular alarm systems, motion detector or decorative lighting systems, antennae, lightning rods, flags or other.

**Describe**

Report on a system or component in writing by briefly indicating its type, its material or other observed characteristics with sufficient detail to distinguish it from other systems or components used for the same purpose. Example: "hot air furnace oil fed"; "kitchen cabinets of wood".

**Dismantle**

To take apart or remove any component, device or piece of equipment that is bolted, screwed or fastened by other means and that would not be dismantled by a homeowner in the course of normal household maintenance.



# Standard of Practice - Glossary

**Distribution panel**

Metallic box having various electrical circuits consisting of fuses or breakers.

**Dwelling room**

Furnished room used for living.

**Dyke**

Long structure used to contain, retain or stop water or water movement.

**Easily accessible**

Access easily without requiring displacement, nor dismantling of personal objects, nor destructive measurements, nor any action which could present a risk for the safety of persons or property.

**Engineering**

Analysis or design work requiring extensive preparation and experience in the use of mathematics, chemistry, physics, and the engineering sciences.

**Faulty connection (problem or cross connection)**

Any physical connection or arrangement between potable water and any source of contamination.

**First floor**

Highest floor whose floor is at a maximum of 2 m above average ground level.

**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 water flow at the highest fixture in a dwelling when another fixture is operated simultaneously is considered functional water flow.

**Geology**

The scientific study and description of the different materials that the earth is composed of.

**Household appliance**

Any kitchen or laundry appliance, portable air conditioner or similar appliance.

**Immediate repair**

Repair which, if not done immediately, could result in a deterioration of the component, another component or system, or endanger the safety of the building's occupants or other persons who have access.

**Inspector**

Any person who examines the systems and components of a building in accordance with the present Standard of Practice.

**Installed**

Attached or connected to the building or to the building's plumbing, mechanical or electrical systems in such a way that the installed item requires tools for removal.

**Location**

Provide sufficient detail to permit to locate the element or the component.

# Standard of Practice - Glossary

**Look at**

To make a visual examination.

**Major repair**

A repair that is important by its nature, cost or consequences if not made.

**Mention**

Simply indicate, without detail and without describing.

**Normal operating controls**

Any homeowner operated device such as a thermostat, wall switch or safety switch.

**Observe**

To examine carefully, to observe, to note.

**Operate**

Take the necessary steps so that a system or equipment will function.

**Organizational fire protection and life safety components**

The prior organizing of emergency measures, evacuation procedures, maintenance schedules and regular verification of mechanical and electrical installations, and normal precautions for the storage of hazardous materials.

**Passive fire protection and life safety components**

Including the division of space, building's fire resistance, firewalls, closures, interior finishes and means of evacuation.

**Penetrate**

Enter a space in order to observe all the visible components installed in the space.

**Permanent windows and doors**

Windows and/or exterior doors, which are designed to remain in place year round.

**Probe**

Lightly prick or pierce into with a pointed tool.

**Readily operable 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, whose edges and fasteners are not painted in place. Limited to those panels within normal reach or from a 1-2 meter 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, or other facilities for physical activity or entertainment facilities.

**Representative number**

One component per room if there are multiple identical components such as windows or electrical outlets. One component on each side of the building if there are multiple identical exterior components. One component if there are multiple identical structural components such as joists, roof trusses and others.

**Roof drainage system**

Gutters, downspouts, splash blocks and similar components used to carry water off a roof and away from a building.

# Standard of Practice - Glossary

**Roof penetration**

The point where any fixed building structure exits the roof.

**Safety glazing**

Tempered glass, laminated glass, or plastic material.

**Service box**

An assembly consisting of a metal box or cabinet constructed so that it may be effectively locked or sealed, containing either fuses and a switch for a circuit or a circuit breaker, and of such design that either the switch or circuit breaker may be manually operated when the box is closed.

**Shut down**

A piece of equipment or a system is shut down when it cannot be operated in a manner that a home owner would normally use. If the safety switch, circuit breaker or fuse is in the tripped position, the inspector is not required to operate the equipment or system.

**Solid fuel burning heating device**

Any wood, coal, or other similar organic fuel burning device, including but not limited to a fireplace (masonry or factory-built), fireplace insert, stove, central heat generator, etc.

**Story**

Portion of a building contained between the top surface of a floor and that of the floor immediately above it, or in its absence, by the ceiling above.

**Structural component**

A component of the building which provides support for interior or exterior cladding materials or supports other components of the building.

**Supplemental heating device**

Any devices or accessories added to supplement the main heating system, either to provide additional heat or to heat in case of failure of the system. Supplemental heating devices include, but are not limited to, all stoves and fireplaces, regardless of type of fuel or energy source used.

**System**

A combination of interacting or interdependent components, assembled to carry out one or more functions.

**Technically exhaustive**

An inspection is technically exhaustive when it is done by a specialist who may make extensive use of measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, and other means to develop scientific or engineering findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

**Underground component**

System or component buried in the ground inside or outside of the building, including sewer, foundation drain or underground oil tank, and that is not accessible without excavation or the use of a specialized tool.

**Water supply quality**

Quality of water supplied to the site. It depends on the bacterial, chemical, mineral salt, and solid material content of the water.

**Water supply quantity**

Quantity of water supplied to the site. It is based on rate of flow.



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