

**NORTH CAROLINA
HOME INSPECTORS'
STANDARDS OF PRACTICE**

This Section sets forth the minimum standards of practice required of North Carolina licensed home inspectors and licensed associate home inspectors. In this Section, the term "home inspectors" means both licensed home inspectors and licensed associate home inspectors.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Home inspections performed according to this Section shall provide the client with a better understanding of the property conditions, as inspected at the time of the home inspection.

Home inspectors shall:

- (1) Provide a written contract, signed by the client, before the home inspection is performed that shall:
 - (A) State that the home inspection is in accordance with the Standards of Practice of the North Carolina Home Inspector Licensure Board;
 - (B) Describe what services shall be provided and their cost; and
 - (C) State, when an inspection is for only one or a limited number of systems or components, that the inspection is limited to only those systems or components.
- (2) Inspect readily visible and readily accessible installed systems and components listed in this Section; and
- (3) Submit a written report to the client that shall:
 - (A) Describe those systems and components required to be described in this Section;
 - (B) State which systems and components designated for inspection in this Section have been inspected, and state any systems or components designated for inspection that were not inspected, and the reason for not inspecting;
 - (C) State any systems or components so inspected that do not function as intended, allowing for normal wear and tear, or adversely affect the habitability of the dwelling;
 - (D) State whether the condition reported requires repair or subsequent observation, or warrants further investigation by a specialist. The statements shall describe the component or system and how the condition is defective, explain the consequences of the condition, and direct the recipient to a course of action with regard to the condition or refer the recipient to a specialist; and
 - (E) State the name, license number, and signature of the person supervising the inspection and the name, license number, and signature of the person conducting the inspection.

This Section does not limit home inspectors from:

- (1) Reporting observations and conditions or rendering opinions of items in addition to those required in Paragraph (b) of this Rule; or
- (2) Excluding systems and components from the inspection if requested by the client, and so stated in the written contract.

GENERAL LIMITATIONS

Home inspections done in accordance with this Section are not technically exhaustive. This Section applies to buildings with four or fewer dwelling units, and individually owned residential units within multi-family buildings, and their attached garages or carports.

GENERAL EXCLUSIONS:

Home inspectors are **not required to report on:**

- (1) Life expectancy of any component or system;
- (2) The causes of the need for a repair;
- (3) The methods, materials, and costs of corrections;
- (4) The suitability of the property for any specialized use;
- (**5) Compliance or non-compliance with codes, ordinances, statutes, regulatory requirements or restrictions;**
- (6) The market value of the property or its marketability;
- (7) The advisability or inadvisability of purchase of the property;

- (8) Any component or system that was not inspected;
- (9) The presence or absence of pests such as wood damaging organisms, rodents, or insects; or
- (10) Cosmetic damage, underground items, or items not permanently installed.

Home inspectors are not required to:

- (1) Offer warranties or guarantees of any kind;
- (2) Calculate the strength, adequacy, or efficiency of any system or component;**
- (3) Enter any area or perform any procedure that may damage the property or its components or be dangerous to or adversely affect the health or safety of the home inspector or other persons;
- (4) Operate any system or component that is shut down or otherwise inoperable;
- (5) Operate any system or component that does not respond to normal operating controls;
- (6) Move personal items, panels, furniture, equipment, plant life, soil, snow, ice, or debris that obstructs access or visibility;
- (7) Determine the presence or absence of any suspected adverse environmental condition or hazardous substance, including toxins, carcinogens, noise, contaminants in the building or in soil, water, and air;
- (8) Determine the effectiveness of any system installed to control or remove suspected hazardous substances;
- (9) Predict future condition, including failure of components;**
- (10) Project operating costs of components;
- (11) Evaluate acoustical characteristics of any system or component;
- (12) Inspect special equipment or accessories that are not listed as components to be inspected in this Section; or
- (13) Disturb insulation, except as required in Rule .1114 of this Section.

Home inspectors shall not:

- (1) Offer or perform any act or service contrary to law; or
- (2) Offer or perform engineering, architectural, plumbing, electrical or any other job function requiring an occupational license in the jurisdiction where the inspection is taking place, unless the home inspector holds a valid occupational license, in which case the home inspector shall inform the client that the home inspector is so licensed, and therefore qualified to go beyond this section and perform additional inspections beyond those within the scope of the Standards of Practice.

STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

The home inspector shall inspect structural components including:

- (1) Foundation;
- (2) Floors;
- (3) Walls;
- (4) Columns or piers;
- (5) Ceilings; and
- (6) Roofs.

The home inspector shall describe the type of:

- (1) Foundation;
- (2) Floor structure;
- (3) Wall structure;
- (4) Columns or piers;
- (5) Ceiling structure; and
- (6) Roof structure.

The home inspector shall:

- (1) Probe structural components where deterioration is suspected; enter under floor crawl spaces, basements, and attic spaces except when access is obstructed, when entry could damage the property, or when dangerous or adverse situations are suspected; report the methods used to inspect under floor crawl spaces and attics; and report signs of abnormal or harmful water penetration into the building or signs of abnormal or harmful condensation on building components.

EXTERIOR

The home inspector shall inspect:

- (1) Wall cladding, flashings, and trim;
- (2) Entryway doors and a representative number of windows;
- (3) Garage door operators;
- (4) Decks, balconies, stoops, steps, areaways, porches and applicable railings;
- (5) Eaves, soffits, and fascias;
- (6) Driveways, patios, walkways, and retaining walls; and
- (7) Vegetation, grading, and drainage with respect only to their effect on the condition of the building.

The home inspector shall:

- (1) Describe wall cladding materials;
- (2) Operate all entryway doors;
- (3) Operate garage doors manually or by using permanently installed controls for any garage door operator;
- (4) Report whether or not any garage door operator will automatically reverse or stop when meeting reasonable resistance during closing; and
- (5) Probe exterior wood components where deterioration is suspected.

The home inspector is not required to inspect:

- (1) Storm windows, storm doors, screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories;
- (2) Fences;
- (3) For the presence of safety glazing in doors and windows;
- (4) Garage door operator remote control transmitters;
- (5) Geological conditions;
- (6) Soil conditions;
- (7) Recreational facilities (including spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, and other exercise, entertainment, or athletic facilities); except as otherwise provided in this statute.
- (8) Detached buildings or structures; or
- (9) For the presence or condition of buried fuel storage tanks.

ROOFING

The home inspector shall inspect:

- (1) Roof coverings;
- (2) Roof drainage systems;
- (3) Flashings;
- (4) Skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations; and
- (5) Signs of leaks or abnormal condensation on building components.

The home inspector shall:

- (1) Describe the type of roof covering materials; and
- (2) Report the methods used to inspect the roofing.

The home inspector is not required to:

- (1) Walk on the roofing; or
- (2) Inspect attached accessories including solar systems, antennae, and lightning arrestors.

PLUMBING

The home inspector shall inspect:

- (1) Interior water supply and distribution system, including: piping materials, supports, and insulation; fixtures and faucets; functional flow; leaks; and cross connections;
- (2) Interior drain, waste, and vent system, including: traps; drain, waste, and vent piping; piping supports and pipe insulation; leaks; and functional drainage;
- (3) Hot water systems including: water heating equipment; normal operating controls; automatic safety controls; and chimneys, flues, and vents;

- (4) Fuel storage and distribution systems including: interior fuel storage equipment, supply piping, venting, and supports; leaks; and
- (5) Sump pumps.

The home inspector shall describe:

- (1) Water supply and distribution piping materials;
- (2) Drain, waste, and vent piping materials;
- (3) Water heating equipment, including fuel or power source, storage capacity, and location; and
- (4) The location of any main water supply shutoff device.
- (5) The home inspector shall operate all plumbing fixtures, including their faucets and all exterior faucets attached to the house, except where the flow end of the faucet is connected to an appliance.

The home inspector is not required to:

- (1) State the effectiveness of anti-siphon devices;
- (2) Determine whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private;
- (3) Operate automatic safety controls;
- (4) Operate any valve except water closet flush valves, fixture faucets, and hose faucets;
- (5) Inspect:
 - (A) Water conditioning systems;
 - (B) Fire and lawn sprinkler systems;
 - (C) On-site water supply quantity and quality;
 - (D) On-site waste disposal systems;
 - (E) Foundation irrigation systems;
 - (F) Bathroom spas, except as to functional flow and functional drainage;
 - (G) Swimming pools;
 - (H) Solar water heating equipment; or
- (6) Inspect the system for proper sizing, design, or use of proper materials.

ELECTRICAL

The home inspector shall inspect:

- (1) Service entrance conductors;
- (2) Service equipment, grounding equipment, main over current device, and main and distribution panels;
- (3) Amperage and voltage ratings of the service;
- (4) Branch circuit conductors, their over current devices, and the compatibility of their ampacities;
- (5) The operation of a representative number of installed ceiling fans, lighting fixtures, switches and receptacles located inside the house, garage, and on the dwelling's exterior walls;
- (6) The polarity and grounding of all receptacles within six feet of interior plumbing fixtures, and all receptacles in the garage or carport, and on the exterior of inspected structures;
- (7) The operation of ground fault circuit interrupters; and
- (8) Smoke detectors.

The home inspector shall describe:

- (1) Service amperage and voltage;
- (2) Service entry conductor materials;
- (3) The service type as being overhead or underground; and
- (4) The location of main and distribution panels.
- (5) The home inspector shall report the presence of any readily accessible single strand aluminum branch circuit wiring.
- (6) The home inspector shall report on the presence or absence of smoke detectors, and operate their test function, if accessible, except when detectors are part of a central system.

The home inspector is not required to:

- (1) Insert any tool, probe, or testing device inside the panels;
- (2) Test or operate any over current device except ground fault circuit interrupters;
- (3) Dismantle any electrical device or control other than to remove the covers of the main and auxiliary distribution panels; or
- (4) Inspect:

- (A) Low voltage systems;
- (B) Security system devices, heat detectors, or carbon monoxide detectors;
- (C) Telephone, security, cable TV, intercoms, or other ancillary wiring that is not a part of the primary electrical distribution system; or
- (D) Built-in vacuum equipment.

HEATING

The home inspector shall inspect permanently installed heating systems including:

- (1) Heating equipment;
- (2) Normal operating controls;
- (3) Automatic safety controls;
- (4) Chimneys, flues, and vents, where readily visible;
- (5) Solid fuel heating devices;
- (6) Heat distribution systems including fans, pumps, ducts and piping, with supports, insulation, air filters, registers, radiators, fan coil units, convectors; and
- (7) The presence or absence of an installed heat source for each habitable space.

The home inspector shall describe:

- (1) Energy source; and
- (2) Heating equipment and distribution type.
- (3) The home inspector shall operate the systems using normal operating controls.
- (4) The home inspector shall open readily operable access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance.

The home inspector is not required to:

- (1) Operate heating systems when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage;
- (2) Operate automatic safety controls;
- (3) Ignite or extinguish solid fuel fires; or
- (4) Ignite a pilot light; or
- (5) Inspect:
 - (A) The interior of flues;
 - (B) Fireplace insert flue connections;
 - (C) Heat exchanger;
 - (D) Humidifiers;
 - (E) Electronic air filters;
 - (F) The uniformity or adequacy of heat supply to the various rooms; or
 - (G) Solar space heating equipment.

AIR CONDITIONING

The home inspector shall inspect:

- (1) Central air conditioning and through-the-wall installed cooling systems including:
 - (A) Cooling and air handling equipment; and
 - (B) Normal operating controls.
- (2) Distribution systems including:
 - (A) Fans, pumps, ducts and piping, with associated supports, dampers, insulation, air filters, registers, fan-coil units; and
 - (B) The presence or absence of an installed cooling source for each habitable space.

The home inspector shall describe:

- (1) Energy sources; and
- (2) Cooling equipment type.
- (3) The home inspector shall operate the systems using normal operating controls.
- (4) The home inspector shall open readily operable access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance

The home inspector is not required to:

- (1) Operate cooling systems when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage;
- (2) Inspect window air conditioners; or
- (3) Inspect the uniformity or adequacy of cool-air supply to the various rooms.

INTERIORS

The home inspector shall inspect:

- (1) Walls, ceiling, and floors;
- (2) Steps, stairways, balconies, and railings;
- (3) Counters and a representative number of built-in cabinets; and
- (4) A representative number of doors and windows.

The home inspector shall:

- (1) Operate a representative number of windows and interior doors; and
- (2) Report signs of water penetration into the building or signs of abnormal or harmful condensation on building components.

The home inspector is not required to inspect:

- (1) Paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments on the interior walls, ceilings, and floors;
- (2) Carpeting; or
- (3) Draperies, blinds, or other window treatments.

INSULATION AND VENTILATION

The home inspector shall inspect:

- (1) Insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces;
- (2) Ventilation of attics and foundation areas;
- (3) Kitchen, bathroom, and laundry venting systems; and
- (4) The operation of any readily accessible attic ventilation fan, and, when temperature permits, the operation of any readily accessible thermostatic control.

The home inspector shall describe:

- (1) Insulation in unfinished spaces; and
- (2) The absence of insulation in unfinished space at conditioned surfaces.
The home inspector is not required to report on:
 - (1) Concealed insulation and vapor retarders; or
 - (2) Venting equipment that is integral with household appliances.

The home inspector shall:

- (1) Move insulation where readily visible evidence indicates the possibility of a problem; and
- (2) Move floor insulation where plumbing drain/waste pipes penetrate floors, adjacent to earth-filled stoops or porches, and at exterior doors.

BUILT-IN KITCHEN APPLIANCES

The home inspector shall inspect and operate the basic functions of the following kitchen appliances:

- (1) Permanently installed dishwasher(s), through a normal cycle;
- (2) Range(s), cook top(s), and permanently installed oven(s);
- (3) Trash compactor(s);
- (4) Garbage disposal(s);
- (5) Ventilation equipment or range hood(s); and
- (6) Permanently installed microwave oven(s).

The home inspector is not required to inspect:

- (1) Clocks, timers, self-cleaning oven functions, or thermostats for calibration or automatic operation;
- (2) Non built-in appliances; or

(3) Refrigeration units.

The home inspector is not required to operate:

- (1) Appliances in use; or
- (2) Any appliance that is shut down or otherwise inoperable.

CODE OF ETHICS

Licensees shall discharge their duties with fidelity to the public, their clients, and with fairness and impartiality to all.

Opinions expressed by licensees shall only be based on their education, experience, and honest convictions.

A licensee shall not disclose any information about the results of an inspection without the approval of the client for whom the inspection was performed, or the client's designated representative.

No licensee shall accept compensation or any other consideration from more than one interested party for the same service without the consent of all interested parties.

No licensee shall accept or offer commissions or allowances, directly or indirectly, from other parties dealing with the client in connection with work for which the licensee is responsible.

No licensee shall express, within the context of an inspection, an appraisal or opinion of the market value of the inspected property.

Before the execution of a contract to perform a home inspection, a licensee shall disclose to the client any interest in a business that may affect the client. No licensee shall allow his or her interest in any business to affect the quality or results of the inspection work that the licensee may be called upon to perform.

A licensee shall not solicit for repairs of systems or components found defective in the course of a home inspection performed by the licensee or that licensee's company.

Licensees shall not engage in false or misleading advertising or otherwise misrepresent any matters to the public.

Licensees shall not inspect properties under contingent arrangements whereby any compensation or future referrals are dependent on reported findings or on the sale of a property.