California Real Estate Inspection Association

Residential Standards of Practice

Four or Fewer Units

https://www.CREIA.org
(916) 634-4219

Copyright 2025 California Real Estate Inspection Association ©
All Rights Reserved

California Real Estate Inspection Association
Residential Standards of Practice - Four or Fewer Units

Part I. Definitions and Scope
These Standards of Practice provide guidelines for a home *inspection* and define certain terms relating to these *inspections*. Italicized words in these Standards are defined in Part IV, Glossary of Terms.

A home *inspection* is a noninvasive, visual survey and basic *operation* of the accessible *systems* and *components* of a home, which can be reached, entered, or viewed without difficulty, moving obstructions, or requiring any action which will result in damage to the property or personal injury to the *Inspector*. The purpose of the *inspection* is to provide the Client with information regarding the general *condition* of the *building(s)* to assist client in determining what corrections or *further evaluations* the Client should have corrected, *evaluated*, or obtain estimates for repair prior to the release of contingencies.

A home *inspection* report provides written documentation of material defects discovered in the *inspected building's systems* and *components* which, in the opinion of the *Inspector*, are *safety hazards*, are not *functioning* properly, or appear to be at the ends of their service lives. The report will include the *Inspector's* recommendations for correction or *further* evaluation. Client should consider all available information when negotiating regarding the Property. *Inspections* performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice are not *technically exhaustive* and shall apply to the *primary building* and its associated *primary parking structure*. Cosmetic and aesthetic *conditions* shall not be considered as stated in CA Business and Professions Code 7195(b).

Part II. Standards of Practice

A home *inspection* includes the *readily accessible systems* and *components* or a *representative number* of multiple similar *components* listed in Sections 1 through 10 subject to the limitations, exceptions, and exclusions in each section and in Part III.

SECTION 1 - Foundation, Basement, and Under-floor Areas

A. Items to be *inspected*
1. Foundation
2. Floor framing *system*
3. Under-floor ventilation
4. Foundation anchoring
5. Cripple wall bracing
6. Wood separation from soil
7. Insulation

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. *Determine* size, spacing, location, or adequacy of foundation bolting/bracing *components* or reinforcing *systems*
2. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

SECTION 2 - Exterior

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported:
1. Surface grade directly adjacent to the *building*
2. Doors and windows
3. Attached decks, porch, balconies
4. Stairways that are attached to the *building*, attached decks, or porch
5. Wall cladding and trim
6. Portions of patios, walkways, and driveways that are adjacent to the *building*

B. The *Inspector* is not required to
1. *Inspect* door or window screens, shutters, awnings, or security bars
2. *Inspect* fences or gates, or *operate* automated door or gate openers or their safety *devices*
3. Use a ladder to *inspect systems* or *components*

SECTION 3 - Roof Covering

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported:
1. Covering
2. Drainage
3. Flashings
4. Penetrations
5. Skylights

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. Walk on the roof surface if in the opinion of the *Inspector* there is risk of damage or a hazard to the *Inspector*
2. Warrant or certify that roof *systems*, coverings, or *components* are free from leakage

SECTION 4 - Attic Areas and Roof Framing

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported:
1. Framing
2. Ventilation
3. Insulation

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. *Inspect* mechanical attic ventilation *systems* or *components*
2. *Determine* the composition or energy rating of insulation materials

SECTION 5 - Plumbing

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported:
1. Water supply piping
2. Drain, waste, and vent piping
3. Faucets, toilets, sinks, tubs, and showers
4. Fuel gas piping
5. Water heaters

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. Fill any *fixture* with water, *inspect* overflow drains or drain-stops, or *evaluate* backflow *devices*, waste ejectors, sump pumps, or drain line cleanouts
2. *Inspect* or *evaluate* water temperature, balancing *devices*, temperature fluctuation, time to obtain hot water, water circulation, or solar heating *systems* or *components*
3. *Inspect* whirlpool baths, steam showers, or sauna *systems* or *components*
4. *Inspect* fuel tanks or *determine* if the fuel gas *system* is free of leaks
5. *Inspect* wells or water treatment *systems*

SECTION 6 - Electrical

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported:
1. Service *equipment*
2. Electrical panels
3. Circuit wiring
4. Switches, receptacles, outlets, and lighting *fixtures*

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. *Operate* circuit breakers or circuit interrupters
2. Remove cover plates
3. *Inspect* de-icing *systems* or *components*
4. *Inspect* onsite, photovoltaic, or emergency electrical generation or electrical storage *systems* or *components*

SECTION 7 - Heating and Cooling

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported:
1. Heating *equipment*
2. Gas venting
3. Central cooling *equipment*
4. Energy source and connections
5. Combustion air and exhaust vent *systems*
6. Condensate drainage
7. Conditioned air distribution *systems*

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. *Inspect* heat exchangers or electric heating elements
2. *Inspect* non-central air conditioning units or evaporative coolers
3. *Inspect* radiant, solar, hydronic, or geothermal *systems* or *components*
4. *Determine* volume, uniformity, temperature, airflow, balance, or leakage of any air distribution *system*
5. *Inspect* electronic air filtering or humidity control *systems* or *components*

SECTION 8 - Building Interior

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported:
1. Walls, ceilings, and floors
2. Doors and windows
3. Stairways, handrails, and guardrails
4. *Permanently installed* cabinets
5. *Permanently installed* cook-tops, mechanical range vents, ovens, dishwashers, and food waste disposers
6. Absence of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
7. Vehicle doors and openers

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. *Inspect* window, door, or floor coverings
2. *Determine* whether a *building* is secure from unauthorized entry
3. *Operate*, test or *determine* the type of smoke or carbon monoxide alarms
4. Test vehicle door safety *devices*
5. Use a ladder to *inspect systems* or *components*

SECTION 9 - Fireplaces and Chimneys

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported:
1. Chimney exterior
2. Spark arrestor
3. Firebox
4. Damper
5. Hearth extension

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. *Inspect* chimney interiors
2. *Inspect* fireplace inserts, seals, or gaskets
3. *Operate* any fireplace or *determine* if a fireplace can be safely used

SECTION 10 – Pool, Spa, & Hot Tub Safety Features

A. Items to be *inspected*/reported when required by Business and Professions Code §§ 7195-7199
1. *Enclosure*
2. *Mesh fence*
3. *Pool*, spa, or hot tub cover
4. Exit alarms
5. Self-closing, self-latching door *devices*
6. *Pool*, spa, or hot tub alarms
7. Other means of protection

B. The *Inspector* is not required to:
1. Verify compliance with any standard or labeling
2. *Inspect* any other *component* of the *pool*, spa, hot tub, or its *systems*

Part III. Limitations, Exceptions, and Exclusions

A. The following are excluded from a real estate *inspection*

1. *Systems* or *components* of a *building*, or portions thereof, which are not *readily accessible*, not *permanently installed*, or not *inspected* due to circumstances beyond the control of the *Inspector* or which the *Client* has agreed are not to be *inspected*
2. Site improvements or amenities, including, but not limited; accessory *buildings*, fences, planters, landscaping, irrigation, *swimming pools*, spas, hot tubs, ponds, waterfalls, fountains, or their *components* or accessories
3. Auxiliary features of *appliance*s beyond the *appliance*'s basic *function*
4. *Systems* or *components*, or portions thereof, which are underground, underwater, or where the *Inspector* must come into contact with water
5. Common areas as defined in California Civil Code section 1351, et seq., and any dwelling unit *systems* or *components* located in common areas
6. *Determining* compliance with manufacturers' installation guidelines or specifications, *building* codes, accessibility standards, conservation or energy standards, regulations, ordinances, easements, setbacks, covenants, or other restrictions
7. *Determining* adequacy, efficiency, suitability, quality, age, marketability or advisability of purchase, or remaining life of any *building*, *system*, or *component*.
8. Structural, architectural, geological, environmental, hydrological, land surveying, or soils-related examinations
9. Acoustical or other nuisance characteristics of any *system* or *component* of a *building*, complex, adjoining property, or neighborhood
10. *Conditions* related to animals, insects, or other organisms, including fungus and mold, and any hazardous, illegal, or controlled substance, or the damage or health risks arising there from
11. Wood Destroying Organisms (WDO) including termites or any insect, as well as rot or any fungus, that damage wood.
12. *Inspect* or identification for the presence of animals or animal activity
13. Risks associated with events or *conditions* of nature including, but not limited to; geological, seismic, wildfire, and flood
14. Water testing or *determine* leakage in shower pans, *pools*, spas, hot tubs, or any body of water or vessel
15. *Determining* the integrity of hermetic seals or reflective coatings at multi-pane glazing
16. Differentiating between original construction or subsequent additions or modifications
17. Reviewing or interpreting information or reports from any third-party, including but not limited to; product defects, recalls, or similar notices
18. Specifying correction procedures or estimating cost to correct
19. Communication, computer, security, or low-voltage, timer, sensor, or similarly controlled *systems* or *components*
20. Evaluate fire extinguishing and suppression *systems* and *components* or *determine* fire resistive qualities of materials or assemblies
21. Elevators, lifts, and dumbwaiters
22. Lighting pilot lights or activating or *operate* any *system*, *component*, or *appliance* that is *shut down*, unsafe to *operate*, or does not respond to *normal user controls*
23. *Operating* shutoff valves or shutting down any *system* or *component*
24. Dismantling any *system*, structure or *component* or removing access panels other than those provided for homeowner maintenance

B. The *Inspector* may, at his or her discretion:

1. *Inspect* any *building*, *system*, *component*, *appliance*, or improvement not included or otherwise excluded by these Standards of Practice. Any such *inspection* shall comply with all other provisions of these Standards
2. Include photographs or images in the written report or take photographs for *Inspector's* reference without inclusion in the written report. Photographs may not be used in lieu of written documentation.

Part IV. Glossary of Terms

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

Appliance: An item such as an oven, dishwasher, heater, etc. which performs a specific function
Building: The subject of the inspection and its primary parking structure
Component: A part of a system, appliance, fixture, or device
Condition: Conspicuous state of being
Determine: Arrive at an opinion or conclusion
Device: A component designed to perform a particular task or function
Enclosure: A fence, wall, or other barrier that isolates a swimming pool, spa, or hot tub from the house.
Equipment: An appliance, fixture, or device
Fixture: A plumbing or electrical component with a fixed position and function
Function: The normal and characteristic purpose or action of a system, component, or device
Inspect: Refer to Part I, 'Definition and Scope', Paragraph-A
Inspector: One who performs a home inspection
Isolation Fence: A barrier around a pool area that isolates the pool area from the house
Mesh Fence: The barrier around the pool, spa, or hot tub area that isolates the pool from the house of which any portion is made of mesh
Normal User Control: Switch or other device that activates a system or component and is provided for use by an occupant of a building
Operate: Cause a system, appliance, fixture, or device to function using normal user controls
Permanently Installed: Fixed in place, e.g. screwed, bolted, nailed, or glued
Primary Building: A building that an Inspector has agreed to inspect
Primary Parking Structure: A building for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the primary building, which may be attached or detached. Only one primary parking structure may be designated as primary.
Readily Accessible: Can be reached, entered, or viewed without difficulty, moving obstructions, or requiring any action which may harm persons or property
Representative Number: Example, an average of one component per area for multiple similar components such as windows, doors, and electrical outlets
Safety Hazard: A condition that could result in significant physical injury
Shut Down: Disconnected or turned off in a way so as not to respond to normal user controls
Swimming Pool: Any structure intended for swimming or recreational bathing that contains water over 18 inches deep. “Swimming pool” includes in-ground and above-ground structures and includes, but is not limited to; hot tubs, spas, portable spas, and nonportable wading pools.
System: An assemblage of various components designed to function as a whole
Technically Exhaustive: Examination beyond the scope of a home inspection, which may require disassembly, specialized knowledge, specialized equipment, measuring, calculating, quantifying, specialized testing, exploratory probing, research, or analysis

2025 CREIA® ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. CREIA® IS A PUBLIC-BENEFIT, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION