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**PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICE**

*Communication &
Professional Practice*

M O D U L E

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► 1.0 OBJECTIVES

- The Practice, Not The Business* The goal of this Section is to provide you with an overview of the home inspection practice. We will describe home inspections and home inspectors. This program is not about the **business** of home inspection. We won't be dealing with marketing, operations or finance issues.
- Not Technical* It's also not a technical section. We won't be talking about how to identify and inspect specific house components. The other nine Modules in this program are dedicated to these issues.
- Who, What, How And Why* By the end of this Section, you should have a good understanding of what a home inspection is and how and why home inspections are conducted. You'll learn about the characteristics of a good inspector and about typical clients. For some of you this will be review of familiar material. We believe there is enough thought provoking material to make it worth reading even if you've been in home inspection for some time.

Communication & Professional Practice

MODULE

STUDY SESSION 1

1. This Study Session covers the general sections of the ASHI® Standards of Practice, the Code of Ethics and a general introduction.
2. At the end of this Study Session, you should be able to –
 - describe in one sentence what home inspections must provide for clients
 - describe three components of written reports
 - describe two general limitations to inspections
 - list 10 general exclusions to home inspections
 - list 13 things that inspectors are not required to do as part of an inspection
 - define the term **technically exhaustive**
 - define **home inspector**
 - summarize in one sentence each the seven elements of the Code of Ethics
3. This Study Session may take roughly one hour.
4. Quick Quiz 1 is at the end of this Session.

Key Words

- **Scope**
- **Significantly deficient**
- **Observed**
- **Installed systems and components**
- **Technically exhaustive**
- **Life expectancy**
- **Causes**
- **Methods**
- **Specialized use**

- ***Compliance***
- ***Market value***
- ***Advisability of purchase***
- ***Pests***
- ***Cosmetic items***
- ***Underground items***
- ***Warranties***
- ***Guarantees***
- ***Engineering***
- ***Strength***
- ***Adequacy***
- ***Efficiency***
- ***Shut down***
- ***Normal operating controls***
- ***Hazardous substance***
- ***Future conditions***
- ***Operating costs***
- ***Acoustical properties***
- ***Inspector***
- ***Practical experience***
- ***Honest conviction***
- ***Good faith***
- ***Disclose information***
- ***Compensation***
- ***Commissions or allowances***
- ***Conflict of interest***
- ***Professional integrity***

► 2.0 SCOPE AND INTRODUCTION

2.1 SCOPE

We'll start our discussion by looking at the scope of a home inspection as defined by the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI®). These are the most broadly accepted Standards of Practice in the profession throughout North America. There are other standards set by other organizations and while there are differences, they are substantially similar.

We'll start by looking at the general parts of the Standards. We won't deal with the specific component inspection details, since they are dealt with in each of the corresponding Modules of this program. We'll then move on to discuss the Code of Ethics.

2.1.1 THE ASHI® STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

The following are the ASHI® Standards of Practice effective January 1, 2000.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The American Society of Home Inspectors® Inc. (ASHI) is a not-for profit professional society established in 1976. Membership in ASHI is voluntary and its members include private, fee-paid *home inspectors*. ASHI's objectives include promotion of excellence within the profession and continual improvement of its members' inspection services to the public.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 The purpose of these Standards of Practice is to establish a minimum and uniform standard for private, fee-paid *home inspectors* who are members of the American Society of Home Inspectors. *Home Inspections* performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client with information regarding the condition of the *systems* and *components* of the home as inspected at the time of the *Home Inspection*.

2.2 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. *readily accessible systems* and *components* of homes listed in these Standards of Practice.
2. installed *systems* and *components* of homes listed in these Standards of Practice.

B. report:

1. on those *systems* and *components* inspected which, in the professional opinion of the *inspector*, are *significantly deficient* or are near the end of their service lives.
2. a reason why, if not self-evident, the *system* or *component* is *significantly deficient* or near the end of its service life.
3. the inspector's recommendations to correct or monitor the reported deficiency.
4. on any *systems* and *components* designated for inspection in these Standards of Practice which were present at the time of the *Home Inspection* but were not inspected and a reason they were not inspected.

2.3 These Standards of Practice are not intended to limit inspectors from:

- A. including other inspection services, *systems* or *components* in addition to those required by these Standards of Practice.
- B. specifying repairs, provided the *inspector* is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
- C. excluding *systems* and *components* from the inspection if requested by the client.

3. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM**3.1 The inspector shall:****A. inspect:**

1. the *structural components* including foundation and framing.
2. by probing a *representative number* of structural components where deterioration is suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is NOT required when probing would damage any finished surface or where no deterioration is visible.

B. describe:

1. the foundation and report the methods used to *inspect* the *under-floor crawl space*.
2. the floor structure.
3. The wall structure.
4. The ceiling structure.
5. The roof structure and *report* the methods used to *inspect* the attic.

3.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

- A. provide any *engineering service* or *architectural service*.
- B. Offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any *structural system* or *component*.

4. EXTERIOR

4.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. the exterior wall covering, flashing and trim.
2. all exterior doors.
3. attached decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings.
4. the eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
5. the vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls on the property when any of these are likely to adversely affect the building.
6. walkways, patios, and driveways leading to dwelling entrances.

B. *describe* the exterior wall covering.

4.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect*:

1. screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories.
2. fences.
3. geological, geotechnical or hydrological conditions.
4. *recreational facilities*.
5. outbuildings.
6. seawalls, break-walls, and docks.
7. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

5. ROOF SYSTEM

5.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. the roof covering.
2. the *roof drainage systems*.
3. the flashings.
4. the skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.

B. describe the roof covering and *report* the methods used to *inspect* the roof.

5.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect*:

1. antennae.
2. interiors of flues or chimneys which are not *readily accessible*.
3. other *installed* accessories.

6. PLUMBING SYSTEM

6.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. the interior water supply and distribution systems including all fixtures and faucets.
2. the drain, waste and vent *systems* including all fixtures.
3. the water heating equipment.
4. the vent systems, flues and chimneys.
5. the fuel storage and fuel distribution *systems*.
6. the drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping.

B. *describe*:

1. the water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping materials.
2. the water heating equipment including the energy source.
3. The location of main water and main fuel shut-off valves.

6.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect*:

1. the clothes washing machine connections.
2. the interiors of flues or chimneys which are not *readily accessible*.
3. wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment.
4. water conditioning *systems*.
5. solar water heating *systems*.
6. fire and lawn sprinkler *systems*.
7. private waste disposal *systems*.

B. *determine*:

1. whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private.
2. the quantity or quality of the water supply.

C. *operate* safety valves or shut-off valves.

7. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

7.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. the service drop.
2. the service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways.
3. the service equipment and main disconnects.
4. the service grounding.
5. the interior components of service panels and sub panels.
6. the conductors.
7. the overcurrent protection devices.
8. *a representative number of installed* lighting fixtures, switches and receptacles.
9. the ground fault circuit interrupters.

B. *describe*:

1. the amperage and voltage rating of the service.
2. the location of main disconnect(s) and sub panels.
3. the *wiring methods*.

C. *report*:

1. on the presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring.
2. on the absence of smoke detectors.

7.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect*:

1. the remote control devices unless the device is the only control device.
2. the *alarm systems* and *components*.
3. the low voltage wiring, *systems* and *components*.
4. the ancillary wiring, *systems* and *components* not a part of the primary electrical power distribution *system*.

B. measure amperage, voltage, or impedance.

8. HEATING SYSTEM

8.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. *inspect*:

1. the installed heating equipment.
2. the vent systems, flues, and chimneys.

B. *describe*:

1. the energy source.
2. the heating method by its distinguishing characteristics.

8.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:**A. *inspect*:**

1. the interiors or flues or chimneys which are not *readily accessible*.
2. the heat exchanger.
3. the humidifier or dehumidifier.
4. the electronic air filter.
5. the solar space heating *system*.

B. determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance.**9. AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS****9.1 The *inspector* shall:****A. *inspect* the *installed* central and through-wall cooling equipment.****B. *describe*:**

1. the energy source
2. the cooling method by its distinguishing characteristics.

9.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:**A. *inspect* electronic air filters.****B. determine cooling supply adequacy or distribution balance.****10. INTERIOR****10.1 The *inspector* shall:****A. *inspect*:**

1. the walls, ceilings, and floors.
2. the steps, stairways, and railings.
3. the countertops and a *representative number of installed cabinets*.
4. a *representative number* of doors and windows.
5. garage doors and garage door operators.

10.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:**A. *inspect*:**

1. the paint, wallpaper and other finish treatments.
2. the carpeting.
3. the window treatments.
4. the central vacuum *systems*.
5. the *household appliances*.
6. *recreational facilities*.