

FLORIDA HOME INSPECTION STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

(For a Complete Copy of the Florida Administrative Code Sections that apply to Florida Home Inspectors and for Periodic Updates, refer to <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=61-30>)

61-30.101 Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following terms have the following meanings:

- (1) Additional Evaluation: Examination and analysis by a qualified professional engineer, contractor, tradesman or service technician beyond that provided by the home inspection.
- (2) Alarm Systems: Warning devices, installed or free standing, including but not limited to: carbon monoxide detectors, flue gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment, ejector pumps and smoke alarms.
- (3) Architectural Service: Any practice involving the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or groupings of structures and the use of space within and surrounding the structures or the design for construction, including but not specifically limited to, schematic design, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and administration of the construction contract.
- (4) Automatic Safety Controls: Devices designed and installed to protect systems and components from unsafe conditions.
- (5) Component: A part of a system.
- (6) Continuing Education Course: A course related to the practice of home inspection. Sales presentations of home inspection products shall not qualify as continuing education courses.
- (7) Continuing Education Provider: An entity and any of its agents approved by the department to engage in providing continuing education courses as required by Chapter 61-30, F.A.C.
- (8) Course Instructor: Any person approved by the department to conduct training for a department approved course. The instructor's curriculum vitae must demonstrate particular education, knowledge, experience or skill which sets the applicant apart from those he or she will instruct.
- (9) Decorative: Ornamental; not required for the operation of the essential systems and components of a home.
- (10) Describe: To distinguish a system or component by its type or other observed significant characteristics; to distinguish it from other systems or components.
- (11) Dismantle: To take apart or remove any component, device or piece of equipment that would not be taken apart or removed by a homeowner in the course of normal and routine homeowner maintenance.
- (12) Directly Supervise: To direct and exercise control over the activities of a person by being physically present at the job site.
- (13) Engineering Services: Any professional service or creative work requiring engineering education, training and experience and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, material and engineering services to such professional service or creative work as consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design and supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with the specifications and design, in conjunction with structures, buildings, machines, equipment, works or processes.
- (14) Household Appliances: Ranges, cook-tops, built-in dishwashers, food waste disposers, garage door openers, built-in ovens, built-in microwave ovens, refrigerators, freezers, clothes washers, clothes dryers, built-in trash compactors, ceiling fans or whole-house fans, if present and if not excluded in the scope of services disclosure.
- (15) Inspect: To examine readily accessible systems and components of a home in accordance with the Standards of Practice adopted by the Department in Rules 61-30.801 through 61-30.811, F.A.C., using normal operating controls and opening readily openable access panels.
- (16) Installed: Attached such that removal requires tools.
- (17) Normal operating controls: Devices such as thermostats, switches or valves intended to be operated by the homeowner.
- (18) Prelicensure Education Course: An initial course of study approved by the department which provides the educational experience required to certify an individual for licensure as a home inspector pursuant to Rule 61-30.102, F.A.C. and Section 468.8313, F.S. Each course of study must be offered as a single course by a single course provider.
- (19) Prelicensure Education Provider: An entity and any of its agents approved by the department to engage in providing prelicensure education courses as required by this chapter.

(20) Readily Accessible: Available for visual inspection without requiring dismantling or destructive means to gain access, moving of items, including but not limited to, furniture, personal property, stored items, clothing, wall or floor covering, or debris, dismantling, or any action which will likely involve risk to persons or property. For the purposes of this definition, readily accessible includes opening electrical covers or removing electrical panel covers if safe to do so and if it can be done easily without damaging property.

(21) Readily Operable Access Panel: A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is within normal reach, can be removed by one person and is not sealed in place.

(22) Recreational Facilities: Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, exercise, entertainment, athletic, playground or other similar equipment and associated accessories.

(23) Report: To communicate in writing.

(24) Representative Number: One component per room for multiple similar interior components such as window and electric outlets; one component on each side of the home for multiple similar exterior components.

(25) Roof Drainage Systems: Components used to carry water off a roof and away from a home.

(26) Service Life: Service life is the expected lifetime, or the acceptable period of use in service of a particular system or component. It is the time that any manufactured item can be expected to be “serviceable,” providing proper maintenance has taken place over the period concerned. Service life may vary from region to region, and inspection to inspection based on the home being inspected and the professional opinion and findings of the inspector.

(27) Shut Down: A state in which a system or component cannot be operated by normal operating controls.

(28) Significantly Deficient: Not operating in the manner in which the system or component was designed to operate or creates a significant risk of personal injury during normal, day-to-day use.

(29) Solid Fuel Burning Appliances: A hearth and fire chamber or similar prepared place in which a fire may be built and which is built in conjunction with a chimney; or a listed assembly of a fire chamber, its chimney and related factory-made parts designed for unit assembly without requiring field construction.

(30) Structural Component: A component that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads).

(31) System: A combination of interacting or interdependent components, assembled to carry out one or more functions.

(32) Technically Exhaustive: An investigation that involves dismantling; the extensive use of advanced techniques, measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, or other means.

(33) Training Day: The equivalent of 8 hours (an hour being no less than 50 minutes of instruction) including breaks and lunch.

(34) Under-floor Crawl Space: The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the floor.

(35) Unsafe: A condition in a readily accessible, installed system or component which is judged to be a significant risk of personal injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation or a change in accepted residential construction standards.

(36) Wiring Methods: Identification of electrical conductors or wires by their general type, such as “non-metallic sheathed cable” (“Romex”), “armored cable” (“bx”) or “knob and tube”, etc.

Rulemaking Authority 455.2035, 455.2178(5), 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 455.2178, 455.2179, 468.8311, 468.8313(3), 468.8321 FS. History—New 10-22-13, Amended 7-31-14.

61-30.801 Standards of Practice, General.

(1) Home inspections performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client with information regarding the overall condition of installed systems and components of the home based on observation of the visible and apparent condition of the structure and components at the time of the home inspection and to report on those systems and components inspected that, in the professional opinion of the inspector, are significantly deficient or at the end of their service lives. A home inspection does not include the prediction of future conditions.

(2) These standards shall not be construed as limiting the scope of the inspection process in those areas where the inspector is qualified and/or has special knowledge.

(3) The inspector shall inspect readily accessible, installed systems and components of homes listed in these Standards of Practice by using normal operating controls and opening readily operable access panels. Where multiple instances of the same component exist, a representative number shall be inspected.

(4) The inspector shall inspect and report as required by Section 468.8323, F.S., when required by these standards, systems or components by their type and/or significant characteristics.

(5) If not self-evident to the client at the time of inspection, the inspector shall give a reason why, in his or her opinion, the system or component was reported as significantly deficient or near the end of its service life.

(6) The inspector shall make recommendations for correction and/or monitoring, or further evaluation of the deficiencies that the inspector observed.

(7) These Standards of Practice do not limit inspectors from:

(a) Including other inspection services, in addition to those required by these Standards of Practice;

(b) Specifying repairs, provided the inspector is appropriately qualified;

(c) Excluding systems and components from the inspection if agreed upon in writing by the inspector and client.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.802 Standards of Practice, Structure.

(1) Structural system and components include the following:

(a) Foundation;

(b) Floor structure;

(c) Wall structure;

(d) Ceiling structure;

(e) Roof structure;

(f) Posts;

(g) Beams;

(h) Columns;

(j) Joists;

(k) Rafters;

(l) Trusses;

(m) Other framing; and

(n) Ventilation of foundation areas.

(2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible structural systems and components by probing structural components where deterioration is visible or suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is not required when, in the opinion of the inspector, probing would only further damage any area already identified as defective or where no deterioration is visible or presumed to exist.

(3) The inspector is not required to enter or traverse any under-floor crawl space or attic, if in the opinion of the inspector:

(a) An unsafe or unsanitary condition exists;

(b) Enter areas in which inadequate clearance exists to allow the inspector safe entry or traversing;

(c) The potential exists to cause damage to insulation, ductwork, other components or stored items.

(4) The inspector is not required to provide any engineering or architectural services or offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any structural system or component.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.803 Standards of Practice, Electrical Systems.

(1) Electrical systems and components include the following:

(a) Service entrance conductors, drip loop, cables, and raceways;

(b) Main service equipment and main disconnects;

(c) Service grounding;

(d) Interior components of main service panels and sub panels;

(e) Conductors;

- (f) Over current protection devices;
- (g) Readily accessible installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles;
- (h) Ground fault circuit interrupters;
- (i) Amperage and voltage rating of electrical service;
- (j) Main disconnect(s);
- (k) Methods or types of wiring;
- (l) Smoke detectors;
- (m) Carbon monoxide detectors;
- (n) Arc fault circuit interrupters.
- (2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible electrical systems and components.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) Remote control devices;
 - (b) Security alarm systems and components;
 - (c) Low voltage wiring, systems and components, ancillary wiring and systems and components not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system;
 - (d) Generators, photovoltaic solar collectors or battery or electrical storage devices and associated equipment.
- (4) The inspector is not required to:
 - (a) Measure amperage, voltage or impedance;
 - (b) Perform a load calculation;
 - (c) Insert any tool, probe, or device into any electrical component;
 - (d) Determine the accuracy of circuit labeling.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.804 Standards of Practice, HVAC Systems.

- (1) HVAC systems and components include heating and air conditioning systems and components and HVAC distribution systems and components.
- (2) Heating and air conditioning systems and components.
 - (a) The heating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and components include the following:
 1. Installed heating equipment;
 2. Fuel storage and fuel distribution systems;
 3. Vent systems, flues, and chimneys;
 4. Ductwork and air distribution components;
 5. Mechanical ventilation systems;
 6. Heating system energy source(s);
 7. Heating system capacity in BTUs or kilowatts.
 - (b) The inspector shall inspect all readily accessible heating and air conditioning systems and components.
 - (c) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 1. Interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible;
 2. Heat exchangers;
 3. Humidifiers or dehumidifiers;
 4. Electronic air filters, sanitizers, or UV lights;
 5. Solar space heating systems;
 6. Internal components such as coils and pans.
- (3) HVAC distribution systems and components.
 - (a) The heating and air conditioning (HVAC) distribution systems and components include the following:
 1. Energy source;
 2. Cooling method by its distinguishing characteristics;
 3. The presence of condensate over flow warning/shutoff devices.
 - (b) The inspector shall inspect readily accessible HVAC distribution systems.

- (c) With regards to HVAC distribution systems, the inspector is not required to inspect:
1. Electronic air filters, sanitizers, or UV lights;
 2. Humidistats;
 3. Automatic HVAC zoned systems, dampers, controls, that are not readily accessible;
 4. Removable window air conditioning systems.
- (3) The inspector is not required to:
- (a) Determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance;
 - (b) Operate heat pump systems when ambient temperatures pose the potential for damage to the air conditioning system;
 - (c) Determine cooling supply adequacy, distribution balance or indoor air quality;
 - (d) Operate the air conditioning system when ambient temperatures pose the potential for damage to the air conditioning system.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.805 Standards of Practice, Roof Covering.

- (1) Roof covering systems and components include the following:
- (a) Roofing materials;
 - (b) Flashings;
 - (c) Skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations;
 - (d) Roof drainage systems;
 - (e) Ventilation of attics; and
 - (f) Insulation of attics.
- (2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible roof covering systems and components.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
- (a) Components or systems that are not readily accessible;
 - (b) Antenna or other installed accessories;
 - (c) Interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible.
- (4) The inspector is not required to walk on the roof surface when, in the opinion of the inspector, the following conditions exist:
- (a) Roof slope is excessive to safely walk on;
 - (b) There is no safe access to the roof;
 - (c) Climatic conditions render the roof unsafe to walk on;
 - (d) Condition of the roofing material or roof decking renders the roof unsafe to walk on;
 - (e) Walking on the roof may cause damage to the roof covering materials; and
 - (f) Walking will place any liability or danger to the homeowner or other representatives involved in the home inspection process.
- (5) The inspector is not required to disturb insulation.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.806 Standards of Practice, Plumbing System.

- (1) Plumbing systems and components include the following:
- (a) Interior water supply piping and distribution systems including all fixtures, faucets, and components;
 - (b) Drain, waste and vent systems, including all plumbing fixtures;
 - (c) Plumbing related vent systems, flues, and chimneys;
 - (d) Drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping;
 - (e) Materials used for water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping;
 - (f) Water heating equipment including the energy source;
 - (g) Main water and main fuel shut-off valves.
- (2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible plumbing systems and components.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
- (a) Wells or water storage related equipment;

- (b) Water conditioning systems;
- (c) Solar water heating systems;
- (d) Fire sprinkler systems;
- (e) Private waste disposal systems;
- (f) Irrigation system(s).
- (4) The inspector is not required to:
 - (a) Test shower pans, tub and shower surround for leakage;
 - (b) Operate safety valves or shut-off valves;
 - (c) Determine whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private;
 - (d) Determine the quantity or quality of the water supply, or if the function flow at the time of the inspection or thereafter will meet the client's needs.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.

61-30.807 Standards of Practice, Interior Components.

- (1) The interior components that shall be inspected include the following:
 - (a) Interior walls, ceilings, and floors;
 - (b) Steps, stairways, and railings;
 - (c) Countertops and representative number of installed cabinets;
 - (d) Garage doors;
 - (e) Interior and exterior doors and windows and their operating locks and latches or other opening mechanisms;
 - (f) Insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces;
 - (g) Fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances;
 - (h) Vent systems, flues, and chimneys;
 - (i) Household appliances.
- (2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible interior components that have not been excluded in the scope of services disclosure. When inspecting doors and windows, the inspector may inspect a representative number of doors and windows. The inspector shall inspect household appliances to determine whether the appliances are significantly deficient using normal operating controls. Inspectors will not operate systems or appliances if they have been excluded in the scope of services disclosure or if there is a risk to the property being inspected. Inspectors will first review the system to be operated and use professional judgment as to whether it is safe to operate using normal operating controls and report accordingly.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) Paint, wallpaper, window treatments, and other specialty finish treatments;
 - (b) Carpeting;
 - (c) Window treatments;
 - (d) Central vacuum systems;
 - (e) Recreational facilities;
 - (f) Fire screens and doors, if not permanently attached;
 - (g) Seals and gaskets on fireplaces;
 - (h) Automatic fuel feed devices;
 - (i) Mantles and fireplace surrounds;
 - (j) Combustion make-up air devices;
 - (k) Heat distribution assists whether gravity controlled or fan assisted in fireplaces.
- (4) The inspector is not required to:
 - (a) Open or operate any windows or doors and access covers that are permanently or temporarily secured by mechanical means, are painted shut, or are blocked by stored items or furniture;
 - (b) Ignite or extinguish fires;
 - (c) Light gas fireplaces or heaters, or other unlit pilot light devices;
 - (d) Determine draft characteristics for fireplaces and chimneys;
 - (e) Move fireplace inserts or stoves or firebox contents;

- (f) Disturb insulation;
- (g) Activate any system or appliance that is shut down, disconnected, or otherwise rendered inoperable;
- (h) Operate or evaluate any system, component or appliance that does not respond to normal user controls;
- (i) Operate any gas appliance that requires the manual lighting of a pilot light or burner device;
- (j) Operate any system, appliance or feature that requires the use of special codes, keys, combinations, or devices or where user manual reference is required;
- (k) Operate any system, component, or appliance where in the opinion of the inspector, damage may occur;
- (l) Determine thermostat(s) calibration, adequacy of heating elements, operate or evaluate self cleaning cycles, door seals, indicator lights, timers, clocks or timed features, defrost cycles or frost free features, or other specialist features as it applies to the appliance device;
- (m) Determine leakage from microwaves ovens;
- (n) Determine the presence or operation of back draft damper devices in exhaust devices;
- (o) Move any appliance;
- (p) Confirm operation of every control or feature of a system or appliance.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j), 468.8321 FS. History—New 10-22-13, Amended 7-31-14.

61-30.810 Standards of Practice, Exterior Components.

- (1) Exterior systems and components include the following:
 - (a) Exterior wall cladding/siding, flashing and trim;
 - (b) All exterior doors;
 - (c) Attached decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings;
 - (d) Eaves, soffits and fascias where accessible from the ground level;
 - (e) Walkways, patios, and driveways leading to the dwelling entrances.
- (2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible exterior systems and components.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) Window and door screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal or protective accessories and devices;
 - (b) Fences;
 - (c) Recreational facilities;
 - (d) Outbuildings;
 - (e) Swimming pools, seawalls, break-walls, boat lifts and/or docks.
- (4) The inspector is not required to move furniture, appliances, lawn and garden equipment, tools, stored items, wall decorations, floor covering, clothing or any items that block the view and access to components or structures.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13, Amended 7-31-14.

61-30.811 Standards of Practice, Site Conditions that Affect the Structure.

- (1) Site conditions that affect the structure include the following:
 - (a) Vegetation;
 - (b) Grading;
 - (c) Surface drainage; and
 - (d) Retaining walls on the property when any of these are likely to adversely affect the structure.
- (2) The inspector shall inspect all of the visible and readily accessible site conditions that affect the structure.
- (3) The inspector is not required to inspect:
 - (a) Geological, geotechnical or hydrological site conditions;
 - (b) Erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

Rulemaking Authority 468.8325 FS. Law Implemented 468.8323, 468.832(1)(j) FS. History—New 10-22-13.