HOME INSPECTORS NIGERIA

2024 National Standards of Practice Manual

The National Standards of Practice are a set of guidelines for home and property inspectors to follow in the performance of their inspections. They address all the home's major systems and components. The National Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics are recognized by many related professionals as the definitive Standards for professional performance in the industry.

These National Standards of Practice are being published to inform the public on the nature and scope of visual building inspections performed by home and property inspectors who work or operate within Nigeria.

The purpose of the National Standards of Practice is to provide guidelines for home and property inspectors regarding both the inspection itself and the drafting of the inspection report and to define certain terms relating to the performance of home inspections to ensure consistent interpretation.

To ensure better public protection, home and property inspectors should strive to meet these Standards and abide by the appropriate national Code of Ethics.

These Standards take into account that a visual inspection of a building does not constitute an evaluation or a verification of compliance with building codes, Standards or regulations governing the construction industry or the health and safety industry, or Standards and regulations governing insurability.

Any terms not defined in these Standards shall have the meaning commonly assigned to it by the various trades and professions, according to context.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Welcome to the Home Inspection Standard of Practice Manual, an essential guide outlining the industry's guidelines and procedures. This comprehensive manual serves as a vital resource for home inspectors, detailing the scope and limitations of inspections, and ensuring professionalism, consistency, and integrity in our practice. Covering structural components, electrical, plumbing, HVAC systems, and more, it sets forth the standards for evaluating residential properties. With clear protocols for conducting inspections, reporting findings, and adhering to ethical standards, this manual upholds the highest levels of quality and reliability in the home inspection profession, benefiting both inspectors and clients alike.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 The purpose of these National Standards of Practice is to establish professional and uniform Standards for private, fee-paid home inspectors. Home Inspections performed to these National Standards of Practice are intended to provide information regarding the condition of the systems and components of the building as inspected at the time of the Home Inspection. This does NOT include building code inspections. These National Standards of Practice enable the building being inspected to be compared with a building that was constructed in accordance with the generally accepted practices at the time of construction, and which has been adequately maintained such that there is no significant loss of *f*unctionality. It follows that the building may not be in compliance with current building codes, standards, and regulations that are applicable at the time of inspection.

2.2 The Inspector shall:

A. Inspects:

1. Readily accessible, visually observable installed systems, and components of buildings listed in these National Standards of Practice.

B. report:

1. On those systems and components installed on the building inspected which, in the professional opinion or judgment of the inspector, have a significant deficiency or are unsafe or are near the end of their service lives.

2. A reason why, if not self-evident, the system or component has a significant deficiency, is unsafe, or is 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 National Standards of Practice that were present at the time of the Home Inspection but were not inspected and a reason they were not inspected.

2.3 These National Standards of Practice are not intended to limit inspectors from:
A. including other inspection services in addition to those required by these National Standards of Practice provided the inspector is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
B. Excluding systems and components from the inspection if requested by the client or as dictated by circumstances at the time of the inspection.

3. GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

3.1 General limitations:

A. Inspections performed in accordance with these National Standards of Practice
1. Are not technically exhaustive.
2. Will not identify concealed conditions or latent defects.

3.2 General exclusions:

A. The inspector is not required to perform any action or make any determination unless specifically stated in these National Standards of Practice, except as may be required by lawful authority.

B. Inspectors are NOT required to determine:
1. Condition of systems or components which are not readily accessible.
2. Remaining life of any system or component.
3. Strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any system or component.
4. Causes of any condition or deficiency.
5. Methods, materials, or costs of corrections.
6. Future conditions include but are not limited to, failure of systems and components.
7. Suitability of the property for any use.
8. Compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.).
9. Market value of the property or its marketability.
10. Advisability of the purchase of the property.
11. Presence of potentially hazardous plants, animals, or insects including, but not limited to wood destroying organisms, diseases, or organisms harmful to humans.
12. Presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water, and air.
13. Effectiveness of any system installed or methods utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.
14. Operating costs of systems or components.
15. Acoustical properties of any system or component.

16. Design adequacy with regards to location of the home, or the elements to which it is exposed.

C. Inspectors are NOT required to offer or perform:
1. Any act or service contrary to law, statute, or regulation.
2. Engineering, architectural, and technical services.
3. Work in any trade or any professional service that can constitute a conflict of interest to the home inspection profession.
4. Warranties or guarantees of any kind.

D. Inspectors are NOT required to operate:
1. Any system or component which is shut down or otherwise inoperable.
2. Any system or component which does not respond to normal operating controls.
3. Shut off valves.

E. Inspectors are NOT required to enter:
1. Any area that will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be hazardous to the inspector or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components.
2. confined spaces.
3. Spaces that are not readily accessible.

F. Inspectors are NOT required to inspect:
1. Underground items including, but not limited to storage tanks or other indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active.
2. Systems or components that are not installed.
3. Decorative items.
4. Systems or components located in areas that are not readily accessible in accordance with these National Standards of Practice.
5. Detached structures beside the security house.
6. Common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing when inspecting an individual unit(s), including the roof and building envelope.
7. Test and/or operate any installed fire alarm system, burglar alarm system, automatic sprinkler system or other fire protection equipment, electronic or automated installations, telephone, intercom, cable/internet systems, and any lifting equipment, elevator, freight elevator, wheelchair lift, climbing chair, escalator or others.
8. Pools, spas, and their associated safety devices.

G. Inspectors are NOT required to:
1. Perform any procedure or operation that will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be hazardous to the inspector or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components.
2. Move suspended ceiling tiles, personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, or debris.

3. dismantle any system or component, except as explicitly required by these National Standards of Practice.

4. STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

4.1 The inspector shall:

A. Inspect:

1. Structural components including visible foundation.
2. By probing a sample 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. Foundation(s).
2. Floor structure(s).
3. Wall structure(s).
4. Ceiling structure(s).
5. Roof structure(s).

C. report:

1. On conditions limiting access to structural components.
2. Methods used to inspect the roof structure.

4.2 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.

5. EXTERIOR SYSTEMS

5.1 The inspector shall:

A. Inspect:

1. Exterior wall covering(s), flashing and trim.
2. All exterior doors.
3. Attached or adjacent, balconies, steps, porches, and their associated railings.
4. Eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
5. Vegetation, grading, and drainage on the property when any of these are likely to adversely affect the building.
6. Walkways, patios, and flooring leading to, or around the home entrances.
7. Landscaping structure attached or adjacent to the building when likely to adversely affect the building.
8. Garage and carport.
9. Security house.

B. describe

1. Exterior wall covering(s).

C. report:

1. The method(s) used to inspect the exterior wall elevations.

5.2 The inspector is NOT required to:
A. Inspect:
1. Screening, awnings, and similar accessories.
2. Geological, geotechnical, or hydrological conditions.
3. Recreational facilities.
4. Seawalls, break-walls, dykes and docks.
5. Erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

6. ROOF SYSTEMS
6.1 The inspector shall:
A. Inspect:
1. Readily accessible roof coverings.
2. Readily accessible roof drainage systems.
3. Readily accessible flashings.
4. Readily accessible skylights, and roof penetrations.

B. describe
1. Roof coverings.

C. report:
1. Method used to inspect the roof(s).

6.2 The inspector is NOT required to:
A. Inspect:
1. Antennae and satellite dishes.
2. Other installed items attached to but not related to the roof system(s).

7. PLUMBING SYSTEMS
7.1 The inspector shall:
A. Inspect:
1. Interior water supply and distribution systems including all fixtures and faucets.
2. Drain, waste, and vent systems including all fixtures.
3. Water heater(s).
4. Check the water pressure

B. Describe:
1. Water supply, distribution, drain, waste, and vent piping materials.
2. Water heating equipment including the energy source.
3. Location of main water shut-off valve.

7.2 The inspector is NOT required to:
A. Inspect:
1. Clothes washing machine connections.

2. Wells, well pumps, or water storage-related equipment.
3. Water conditioning systems.
4. Fuel/solar water heating systems.
5. Fire and lawn sprinkler systems.
6. Waste disposal systems.
7. Water tank(s) and associated structure.
8. Water pump or pressure machines.

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:
1. Safety valves or shut-off valves.

8. ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

8.1 The inspector shall:
A. Inspect:
1. Service drop.
2. Service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways.
3. Service equipment and main disconnects.
4. Service grounding.
5. Interior components of service panels and subpanels.
6. Distribution conductors.
7. Over-current protection devices.
8. A representative number of installed lighting fixtures, switches, and sockets.

B. Describe:
1. Amperage and voltage rating of the service.
2. Location of main disconnect(s) and subpanel(s).
3. Wiring methods.

C. report:
1. Presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring.
2. Absence of smoke detectors.
3. Presence of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI).

8.2 The inspector is NOT required to:
A. Inspect:
1. Remote control devices unless the device is the only control device.
2. Alarm systems and components.
3. Low voltage wiring, systems, and components.
4. Ancillary wiring, systems, and components that are not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system.

5. Telecommunication equipment.

B. measure:
1. Amperage, voltage, or impedance.

9. AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

9.1 The inspector shall:
A. inspect
1. Installed air conditioner(s).

B. Describe:
1. Type of air conditioner.

C. Report:
1. On the location of the air conditioner(s).

9.2 The inspector is NOT required to:
A. inspect
1. Air filters.
2. Ducted air conditioner(s).

B. Determine:
1. System adequacy or distribution balance.

10. INTERIOR SYSTEMS

10.1 The inspector shall:
A. Inspect:
1. Walls, ceilings, and floors.
2. Steps, stairways, and railings.
3. A representative number of countertops and installed cabinets.
4. A representative number of doors and windows.
5. Household appliances.

B. Describe:
1. Materials used for walls, ceilings, and floors.
2. Doors.
3. Windows.

C. report
1. Absence or ineffectiveness of guards and handrails or other potential physical injury hazards.

10.2 The inspector is NOT required to:
A. Inspect:

1. *Decorative* finishes.
2. Window treatments.

11. MECHANICAL AND NATURAL VENTILATION SYSTEMS

11.1 The inspector shall:

A. Inspect:

1. Ventilation systems in areas where moisture is generated such as kitchen, bathrooms, and laundry rooms.

B. Describe:

1. Ventilation systems in areas where moisture is generated such as kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms.

C. report:

1. Absence of ventilation in areas where moisture is generated such as kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms.

11.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

1. Determine indoor air quality.
2. Determine system adequacy or distribution balance.

GLOSSARY

Adjacent

Nearest in space or position; immediately adjoining without intervening space.

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.

Architectural Service

Any practice involving the art and science of building design for the construction of any structure or grouping 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, adequacy of design for the location and exposure to the elements.

Automatic Safety Controls

Devices designed and installed to protect *systems* and *components* from unsafe conditions.

Component

A part of a *system.*

Confined Spaces

An enclosed or partially enclosed area that:

1. Is occupied by people only for the purpose of completing work.
2. Has restricted entry/exit points.
3. Could be hazardous to people entering due to:

a. its design, construction, location, or atmosphere.

b. the materials or substances in it, or

c. any other conditions which prevent normal inspection procedure.

Decorative

Ornamental; not required for the operation of the essential *systems* and *components* of a building.

Describe

To *report* a *system* or *component* by its type or other observed, significant characteristics to distinguish it from other *systems* or *components.*

Determine

To find out, or come to a conclusion by investigation. 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 or routine homeowner maintenance.

Engineering Service

Any professional service or creative work requiring engineering education, training, and experience and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical, and engineering sciences 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.

Functionality

The purpose that something is designed or expected to fulfill.

Further Evaluation

Examination and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesman, or service technician beyond that provided by the *home inspection.*

Home Inspection

The process by which an *inspector* visually examines the *readily accessible systems* and *components* of a building and *describes* those *systems* and *components* in accordance with these National Standards of Practice.

Household Appliances

Kitchen, laundry, and similar appliances, whether *installed* or freestanding. Inspect To examine *readily accessible systems* and *components* of a building in accordance with these National Standards of Practice, *where applicable* using *normal operating controls* and opening *readily openable access panels*.

Inspector

A person hired to examine any *system* or *component* of a building in accordance with these National Standards of Practice.

Installed

Set up or fixed in position for current use or service.

Monitor

Examine at regular intervals to detect evidence of change.

Normal Operating Controls

Devices such as thermostats, switches, or valves that are intended to be operated by the homeowner.

Operate

To cause to function, turn on, to control the function of a machine, process, or system.

Probing

Examine by touch.

Readily Accessible

Available for visual inspection without requiring moving of personal property, *dismantling*, destructive measures, or any action that will likely involve risk to Persons or property.

Readily Openable Access Panel

A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is within normal reach, or can be removed by one person, and is not sealed in place.

Recreational Facilities

Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, exercise, entertainment, athletic, playground, or other similar equipment and associated accessories.

Report To communicate in writing.

Representative Number

One *component* per room for multiple similar interior *components* such as windows and electric outlets; one *component* on each side of the building for multiple similar exterior *components.*

Roof Drainage Systems

Components used to carry water off a roof and away from a building.

Sample

A representative portion selected for inspection.

Service Life/Lives
The period during which something continues to function fully as intended.
Significant Deficiency
A clearly definable hazard or a clearly definable potential for failure or is unsafe or not functioning.
Shut Down
A state in which a *system* or *component* cannot be operated by *normal operating controls.*
Structural Component
A component that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads).
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.
Unsafe
A condition in a *readily accessible, installed system* or *component* that is judged to be a significant risk of personal injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, missing or improper installation, or a change in accepted residential construction Standards.
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.