

## Chapter 3. Standards of Practice

### §301. Title

A. This Chapter shall be known as the Standards of Practice of the Louisiana State Board of Home Inspectors.

### §303. Definitions

A. The definitions in §109 of this Part are incorporated into this Chapter by reference. The following definitions apply to this Chapter.

*Alarm System* – warning devices, whether 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.

*Automatic Safety Control* – devices designed and installed to protect systems and components from unsafe conditions.

*Cooling System* – a central system that uses ducts to distribute cooled air to more than one room or uses pipes to distribute chilled water to heat exchangers in more than one room, and that is not plugged into an electrical convenience outlet.

*Client* – the person with whom a licensed home inspector contracts to perform a home inspection, whether individually or through that person's agent.

*Component* – a readily accessible and observable aspect of a system, such as a floor or wall, but not individual pieces such as Boards or nails or where many similar pieces make up a component.

*Cross Connection* – any physical connection or arrangement between potable water and any source of contamination.

*Dangerous or Adverse Situations* – situations that pose a threat of injury to the inspector, or those situations that require the use of special protective clothing or safety equipment.

*Deficient* – a condition of a system or component that adversely and materially affects its performance.

*Describe* – to report, in writing, a system or component by its type, or other observed characteristics, to distinguish it from other systems or components.

*Dismantle* – to take apart or remove any component, device or piece of equipment that is bolted, screwed, or fastened by other means, that would not be taken apart by a homeowner in the course of normal household maintenance.

*Enter* – to go into an area to observe all visible

components.

*Functional Drainage* – a drain is functional when it empties in a reasonable amount of time and does not overflow when another fixture is drained simultaneously.

*Functional Flow* – a reasonable flow at the highest fixture in a dwelling when another fixture is operated simultaneously.

*Functioning* – performing as expected and in accordance with its intended design and purpose.

*Further Evaluation* – examination and analysis by a qualified professional or service technician whose services and qualifications exceed those provided by a home inspector.

*Heating System* – a central system that uses ducts to distribute heated air to more than one room which is not plugged into an electrical convenience outlet.

*Home Inspection* – the process by which a Home Inspector visually examines the readily accessible systems and components of a home and describes those systems and components in accordance with the Standards of Practice.

*Home Inspection Report* – a written evaluation of two or more of the following systems of a resale residential building:

- a. electrical system;
- b. exterior system;
- c. interior system;
- d. heating and cooling systems;
- e. plumbing system;
- f. roofing system;
- g. structural system;
- h. insulation and ventilation system;
- i. appliance system; or
- j. any other related residential housing system as defined in the standards of practice prescribed by the board.

*Home Inspector* – any person who, in accordance with the provisions of these rules, holds himself out to the general public and engages in the business of performing home inspections on resale residential buildings for compensation and who

- examines any component of a building, through visual means and through normal user controls, without the use of mathematical sciences.
- Inaccessible* – unable to open with the use of Standard Inspection Tools or hidden from visual inspection by furniture, stored items, wall or floor coverings or other obstructions.
- Inspect* – to examine readily accessible systems and components of a building in accordance with the Standards of Practice, using normal operating controls and opening readily openable access panels.
- Installed* – attached such that removal requires tools.
- LHI* – an acronym for Licensed Home Inspector.
- Method of Access* – a means by which the inspector gains entry, ingress and/or a visual advantage.
- Normal Operating Controls* – devices such as thermostats, switches, or valves intended to be operated by the homeowner.
- Normal Operating Cycle* – the standard period during which a system or component operates by the use of Normal Operating Controls
- Observe* – the act of making a visual examination.
- On-Site Water Supply Quality* – water quality based on the bacterial, chemical, mineral and solids contents of the water.
- On-Site Water Supply Quantity* – water quantity based on the rate of flow of water.
- Operate* – to cause systems or equipment to function.
- Recreational Facilities* – spas, saunas steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, and exercise, entertainment, athletic, playground or other equipment and associated accessories.
- Readily Accessible* – available for visual inspection without requiring the moving of personal property, the dismantling, disconnecting, unplugging or destroying of equipment, or any action which may involve a risk to persons or property.
- Readily Openable Access Panel* – a panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance that is within normal reach, can be removed by one person, is not sealed in place and is not blocked by stored items, furniture, or building components.
- Representative Number* – for multiple identical interior components such as windows and electrical outlets - one such component per room.
- Roof Drainage Components* – gutters, downspouts, leaders, splash blocks, scuppers, and similar components used to carry water off a roof and away from a building.
- Shut Down* – a state in which a system or component cannot be operated by normal user controls.
- Significantly Deficient* – a condition that, in the inspector’s professional opinion, adversely and materially affects the performance of a system or component.
- Solid Fuel Heating Device* – any wood, coal, or other similar organic fuel burning device, including but not limited to fireplaces whether masonry or factory built, fireplace inserts and stoves, wood stoves central furnaces, and combinations of these devices.
- Specialized Tools* – diagnostic devices and other equipment, including but not limited to, thermal imaging devices, gas leak detection equipment, environmental testing equipment, elevation determination devices and ladders capable of reaching surfaces over one story above the ground.
- Standard Inspection Tools* – a flashlight, outlet tester, ladder and appropriate screwdriver.
- Structural Component* – a component that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads).
- System* – a combination of interactive or interdependent components assembled to carry out one or more functions. *Technically Exhaustive* – an inspection involving the extensive use of measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, or other means used to develop scientific or engineering findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- Under Floor Crawl Space* – the area within the confines of the foundation between the ground and the underside of the lowest floor structural component.
- Unsafe* – a condition of a readily accessible, installed system or component which, in the opinion of the inspector, is judged to be a significant risk of personal injury or property damage during normal use or under the circumstances.
- Wiring Methods* – manner or general type of electrical conductors or wires installed in the structure such as non-metallic sheath cable, armored cable, knob and tube, etc.

### **§305. Intent**

The purpose is to establish a minimum and uniform standard for Louisiana state licensed home inspectors.

### **§307. General Requirements**

#### **§307. 1 Home inspectors shall:**

1. provide the client with a written pre-inspection contract, whenever possible, which shall:
  - a. state that the home inspection is to be done in accordance with the Standards of Practice of the Louisiana State Board of Home Inspectors;
  - b. describe what inspection services will be provided and their cost;
  - c. state that the inspection is limited to only those systems or components agreed upon by the client and the inspector; and
  - d. contain copies of the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics;
2. inspect readily accessible installed systems and components listed in this Chapter and/or as contractually agreed upon;
3. submit a written report to the client within five days of the inspection which shall:
  - a. describe those systems specified to be described in §§311-329, and/or as contractually agreed upon;
  - b. state which systems 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, in the professional opinion of the inspector, are significantly deficient, unsafe or non-functioning; and
  - d. state the name, license number, and contain the signature of the person conducting the inspection.

#### **§307. 2 Home inspectors are not limited from:**

1. reporting observations and conditions or rendering opinions of items in addition to those required in Subsection B of this rule;
2. excluding systems and components from the inspection, if requested by the client and so stated in the written contract;
3. inspecting systems and components in addition to those required by these Standards of Practice; or
4. specifying needed repairs, provided that the inspector is appropriately qualified to make such recommendation.

### **§309. General Limitations**

#### **§309. 1**

Home inspections done in accordance with this Chapter are visual and are not technically exhaustive.

#### **§309.2**

This Chapter applies only to residential resale buildings.

### **§311. General Exclusions**

#### **§311.1 Home inspectors not required to inspect/ report:**

1. Life expectancy of any component or system;
2. The causes of any condition or deficiency;
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, special utility, insurance or restrictions;
6. any component or system that was not inspected and so stated in the home inspection report or pre-inspection agreement;
7. the presence or absence of any suspected or actual adverse environmental condition or hazardous substance, including but not limited to asbestos, radon lead, mold, contaminated drywall, carcinogens, noise, or contaminants, whether in the building or in soil, water, or air;

8. decorative or cosmetic items, underground items, or items not permanently installed;
9. hidden, concealed or latent defects;
10. items not visible for inspection including the condition of systems or components which are not readily accessible; or
11. future conditions, including but not limited to, the likelihood of failure or the expected life of systems and components.

**§311.2 Home inspectors not required to:**

1. offer warranties or guarantees of any kind;
2. calculate or determine the strength, adequacy, or efficiency of any system or component;
3. enter the under-floor crawl spaces, attics, or any area which, in the opinion of the home inspector, is not readily accessible;
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. disturb insulation, move personal items, panels, furniture, equipment, plant life, or other items that may obstruct access or visibility;
7. determine the effectiveness of any system installed to control or remove suspected hazardous substances;
8. project operating costs of components;
9. evaluate acoustical characteristics of any system or component;
10. inspect special equipment or accessories that are not listed as components to be inspected in this Chapter;
11. operate shut-off valves;
12. inspect detached structures, other than garages and carports;
13. inspect common elements or areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing;
14. dismantle any system or component, except as specifically required by these Standards of Practice;
15. disturb soil, snow ice, plant life, debris or personal items that may obstruct access or visibility; or
16. perform air or water intrusion tests or other tests upon roofs, windows, doors or other components of the structure to determine its resistance to air or water penetration.

**§311.3 Home inspectors shall not:**

1. offer or perform any act or service contrary to law;
2. report on the market value of the property or its marketability;
3. report on the advisability or inadvisability of purchase of the property;
4. report on any component or system that was not inspected;
5. report on the presence or absence of pests such as wood damaging organisms, rodents or insects. however, the home inspector may advise the client of damages to the building and recommend further inspection by a licensed wood destroying insect inspector;
6. solicit to perform repair services on any system or component of the home which the inspector noted as deficient, deficient or unsafe in his home inspection report for a period of one year from the date of the inspection.

**§313. Scope**

**§313.1 Performance Specifications**

Home inspections shall be performed in accordance with this Standards of Practice as set forth by the Louisiana State Board of Home Inspectors. It shall identify and disclose those significant defects, deficiencies and adverse conditions that are visually observable by the unaided eye. The inspector alone shall determine what constitutes 'significant'. The inspection is not intended to be technically exhaustive. It shall be non-destructive, non-invasive and shall not disturb installed building material, personal property or debris of any sort. Crawlspace, basements, attics, roof surfaces and other indoor/outdoor areas will be inspected only to the extent that the individual inspector judges it to be safe to do so.

## §313.2 Prescriptive Specifications

### §313.2.1 The inspector is required to:

#### A. Describe

1. The methods used to inspect the roofing system and any limitation.
2. Water supply and distribution piping materials
3. Drain, waste and vent piping materials
4. Water heating equipment
5. Location of main water supply shutoff device
6. The location of main gas supply shutoff device
7. Service amperage and voltage
8. Wiring methods employed
9. The location of main and distribution panels
10. Energy sources
11. The heating and cooling methods by their distinguishing characteristics
12. Absence of insulation in unfinished space at conditioned surfaces.

#### B. Test

1. Ground fault circuit interrupters and arc fault circuit interrupters, unless, in the opinion of the inspector, such testing is likely to cause damage to any installed items or components of the home or interrupt service to an electrical device or equipment located in or around the home.

#### C. Inspect and Operate

1. Permanently installed dishwasher through its normal cycle
2. Range, cook top, and permanently installed oven
3. Trash compactor
4. Garbage disposal
5. Ventilation equipment or range hood
6. Permanently installed microwave oven
7. Any other built-in appliance.

#### D. Operate

1. All entryway doors
2. Garage doors and test the electronic safety beam reverse feature by interrupting the electronic beam (if present)
3. Operate all plumbing and 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 or winterized equipment.
4. Operate the systems using normal operating controls.
5. Operate a representative number of windows and interior doors

#### E. Report

1. The methods used to inspect or access under floor crawl spaces and attics
2. Signs of abnormal or harmful water penetration into the building or signs of abnormal or harmful condensation on building components
3. Whether or not the garage door operator is equipped with a pressure sensitive safety reverse feature and whether that feature was tested.
4. Any observed solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring for 120 volt circuits.
5. On the presence or absence of smoke detectors, and operate their test function, if accessible, except when detectors are part of a central system.

#### F. Probe

Structural components only where deterioration is visible, except where probing would damage any surface

## G. Enter

Enter readily accessible under floor crawl spaces, basements, and attic spaces and,

if applicable, report the reason why an area was not readily accessible.

## H. Open

Readily openable access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance

### §313.2.2 The Inspector is *not* required to:

#### A. Inspect:

1. Shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories
2. Fences
3. Presence of safety glazing in doors and windows
4. Garage door operator remote control transmitters
5. Geological conditions
6. Soil conditions
7. Recreational facilities
8. Detached buildings or structures other than garages and carports
9. Presence or condition of buried fuel storage tanks
10. Sea wall, break wall or docks
11. Erosion control and earth stabilization measures
12. Garage door operator pressure sensitive reverse failure devices
13. Interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible
14. Attached accessories including but not limited to solar systems, antennae, and lightning arrestors
15. Water conditioning systems
16. Fire and lawn sprinkler systems
17. On-site water supply quantity and quality
18. On-site waste disposal systems
19. Foundation irrigation systems
20. Spas
21. Swimming pools
22. Solar water heating equipment
23. Wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment
24. Low voltage systems
25. Security system devices, heat detectors, carbon monoxide detectors or smoke detectors
26. Telephone, security, cable TV, intercoms, or other ancillary wiring that is not part of the primary electrical distribution system
27. Remote controlled device unless the device is the only control device.
28. Heat exchangers
29. Humidifiers
30. Dehumidifiers
31. Electronic air filters
32. The uniformity, adequacy or balance of heat or cooling supply to habitable rooms
33. Solar space heating systems
34. Components of solid fuel heating devices, such as firescreens and doors, seals and gaskets, automatic fuel feed devices, mantles and fireplace surrounds, combustion make-up air devices, heat distribution assists, whether gravity controlled or fan assisted
35. Ignite or extinguish fires, determine draft characteristics, or move fireplace inserts, stoves or fireboxes.
36. Paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments on the interior walls, ceilings, and floors
37. Carpeting
38. Draperies, blinds, or other window treatments
39. Interior recreational facilities
40. Clocks, timers, self-cleaning oven function, or thermostats for calibration or automatic operation
41. Non built-in appliances such as clothes washers and dryers
42. Refrigeration units such as freezers, refrigerators and ice makers
43. Central vacuum system.

#### B. Operate:

1. Automatic safety controls

2. Any valve except water closet flush valves, fixture faucets, and hose faucets;
3. Heating systems when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage

4. Appliances in use, shut down or otherwise inoperable.

#### C. Report:

1. Concealed insulation and vapor retarders
2. Venting equipment that is integral with household appliances

#### D. Walk

on the roofing.

#### E. Determine:

1. The effectiveness of anti-siphon devices;
2. Whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private;
3. Whether the system is properly sized or utilizes proper materials
4. Indoor air quality

#### F. Disturb:

1. Or lift roofing materials, jacks or flashing
2. Insulation or vapor retarders

#### G. Insert

any tool, probe, or testing device inside the panels.

#### H. Test or Operate

any overcurrent device except ground fault circuit interrupters and arc fault circuit interrupters in accordance with §319.A.6.

#### I. Dismantle

any electrical device or control other than to remove the dead front covers of the main and auxiliary distribution panels.

#### J. Measure

amperage, voltage or impedance.

#### K. Inspect or Operate

air duct dampers.

### §315. Referenced Standards

The standards referenced in this SOP shall be considered part of the requirements of this SOP to the prescribed extent of each such reference.

#### §315.1 Conflicts

Where there is a conflict between a general requirement and a referenced standard, the referenced requirement shall be applicable.

#### §315. 2 List of Referenced Standards

Publication #503, Consumer Product Safety Commission