



## HOME INSPECTORS ASSOCIATION BC

### SCOPE OF INSPECTION 2016

The purpose of this Scope of Inspection is to establish a minimum, uniform standard for Home Inspectors Association BC home and property inspector members.

This Scope of Practice of home inspection identifies the range of services and activities that the licensed members of this profession are educated and legally required to provide. The document describes the professional activities and areas of professional practice. The Scope of Practice defines the minimum standard of practice for all HIA home inspections in British Columbia. The scope of work of an individual home inspector must meet the requirements outlined in this document but may include additional inspection services where the home inspector is qualified and / or has special knowledge. The scope of the home inspector's review of a home is a contractual matter, therefore, any additional services provided to the client beyond the Scope of Practice, must be communicated through a contractual agreement with the client.

The working premise of this document is that licensed home inspectors will demonstrate minimum, entry level competencies and will conduct their work competently in a variety of home inspection environments. The practice requirements represent the expectations of a "typical" not an "expert" home inspector. A specialist may be hired to provide additional analysis and opinion of adverse conditions or defects identified, beyond this Scope of Practice.

A home inspection is a limited, non-invasive, visual examination of the current condition of a residential building. A home inspection is designed to report observed deficiencies within specific systems and components of a home. A home inspection provides a description of the condition of the home based on observation of the visible and apparent condition of the structure and components at the time of the home inspection. A home inspection does not guarantee future condition, efficiency, or life expectancy of systems or components. It is not an inspection to verify compliance with any applicable building codes, municipal bylaws or other regulations. A home inspection will not reveal every problem that exists or could ever exist and is not a technically exhaustive inspection.

## HOME INSPECTORS ASSOCIATION BC

### CODE OF ETHICS

Honesty, justice, and courtesy form a moral philosophy which, associated with mutual interest among people, constitutes the foundation of ethics. The members should recognize such a standard, not in passive observance, but as a set of dynamic principles guiding their conduct. It is their duty to practice the profession according to this code of ethics.

As the keystone of professional conduct is integrity, the Members will discharge their duties with fidelity to the public, their clients, and with fairness and impartiality to all. They should uphold the honor and dignity of their profession and avoid association with any enterprise of questionable character, or apparent conflict of interest.

1. The member will express an opinion only when it is based on practical experience and honest conviction.
2. The member will always act in good faith toward each client.
3. The member will not disclose any information concerning the results of the inspection without the approval of the clients or their representatives.
4. The member will not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one interested party for the same service without the consent of all interested parties.
5. The member will not accept nor offer commissions or allowances, directly or indirectly, from other parties dealing with their client in connection with work for which the member is responsible.
6. The member will promptly disclose to his or her client any interest in a business which may affect the client. The member will not allow an interest in any business to affect the quality of the results of their inspection work which they may be called upon to perform. The inspection work may not be used as a vehicle by the inspector to deliberately obtain work in another field.
7. An inspector shall make every effort to uphold, maintain, and improve the professional integrity, reputation, and practice of the home inspection profession. He or she will report all such relevant information, including violations of this Code by other members, to the Association for possible remedial action.
8. No member shall be actively engaged as a broker or agent in the sale, purchase or listing of Real Estate.
9. The Inspectors shall not repair any condition found during an inspection or give cost estimates.

Use of this HIA Scope of Inspection does not guarantee that the Inspector is a member of Home Inspectors Association BC.

To confirm membership, visit [www.hiabc.ca](http://www.hiabc.ca)

**Introduction**

The Home Inspectors Association BC is a not-for-profit professional society established in 1991. Membership in the Home Inspectors Association is voluntary and its members include private, fee-paid home inspectors. The Home Inspectors Association objectives include promotion of excellence within the profession and continual improvement of its members' inspection services to the public.

A **home inspector** shall **inspect readily accessible, visually Observable, installed systems and components** of a residential building using **typical fixed operational controls** and **report** identifiable **deficiencies** of specific **systems and components** therein including:

1. Exterior Systems
2. Roofing, Flashings, Penetrations and Chimneys
3. Structural Systems
4. Plumbing Systems
5. Electrical Systems
6. Interior components
7. Heating, Ventilation and Cooling (HVAC) Systems
8. Fireplaces And Solid Fuel Burning Appliances
9. Insulation and Ventilation of Attics, Crawlspace and Unfinished Basements

**Home Inspection Report**

Inspections shall be accompanied by a documented report that:

1. Describes readily accessible systems and components of a residential building and their condition.
2. Makes recommendations on significant deficiencies identified for each system or component that is included in the inspection
3. Provides information regarding potential impact if the issues are not addressed
4. And includes anything else that is made part of the inspection in accordance with this Scope of Practice and a home inspection contract

**General Home Inspection Inclusions (applicable to all components)**

Home inspectors are required to:

1. Inspect readily accessible, visually observable, installed systems & components of residential buildings using typical fixed operational controls
2. Describe and report systems or components with significant deficiencies or damage including, but not limited to, inadequate performance, missing components, decay, rot, water issues, or other home inspection concerns
3. Describe and report deficiencies that are evident by means of sight, touch, smell and hearing
4. Describe and report items that pose an imminent health or safety concern in the opinion of the home inspector
5. Describe and report items for which a representative sample was inspected, including a description of the sampling process
6. Describe and report the rationale for exclusion and limitation to the inspection of any system, component, procedure or method included in this Scope of Practice
7. Recommend further evaluation or investigation by a Qualified Professional where:
  - a. conditions are identified that may constitute a hazard to occupants
  - b. conditions and systems and components exceed the collective knowledge and training of the home inspector in the opinion of the home inspector
8. Include in the report, documentation of evidence, such as supporting images (such as photographs or sketches) to provide information regarding observed deficiencies, where deemed appropriate by the home inspector
9. Produce the report in writing.
10. Include in the report the significant components that appear to be at or near the end of their normally expected service life.

**General Home Inspection Exclusions (applicable to all components)**

Home inspectors are **NOT** required to:

1. Predict the probability of failure or remaining service life of any system or component or offer any warranty, guarantee or certifications for any system or component
2. Describe the compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.)
3. Estimate the cost for operation of a particular system or component and / or the cost of remediation of any identified conditions
4. Identify the cause(s) of observed conditions or deficiencies
5. Identify the methods, materials and cost(s) for correcting (repairing or replacing) observed conditions
6. Identify the condition of systems or components that are inaccessible, obstructed, hidden or contain latent defects
7. Identify the presence of any potential hazards including, but not limited to, asbestos, mould, PCB, infestations of vermin and wood destroying organisms, carcinogens, radon gas, lead paint, urea formaldehyde, toxic or flammable chemicals, noise, and contaminants in soil, water and air
8. Describe the adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any system or component
9. Inspect common areas in multi-unit housing
10. Inspect systems and components that are not installed
11. Inspect decorative items
12. Operate any system or component that is shut down or that does not turn on with the use of typical fixed operational controls
13. Inspect underground items whether abandoned or active including, but not limited to, storage tanks and / or indications of their presence
14. Offer any advice regarding the purchase of the property that,
15. Enter an area or perform an inspection procedure or method in the opinion of the home inspector, could be dangerous to the home inspector or cause damage to the property or its systems or components, such as, but not limited to walking on roof surfaces, climbing ladders, entering attic spaces, etc.
16. Move items, contents, debris, soil, snow, ice or other equipment or dismantle any system or component that obstructs access or visibility for the home inspection
17. Review third-party reports including, but not limited to, depreciation reports and engineering reports
18. Identify and report any geological, geotechnical or hydrological conditions
19. Identify every problem that exists or could ever exist and report a technically exhaustive inspection

**This Scope of Inspection is not required to limit inspectors from:**

- A. Including other inspection services in addition to those required by this Scope of Inspection provided the inspector is appropriately qualified 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.

**The Home Inspectors Association Scope of Inspection applies to inspections of part or all of a building for the following building types:**

1. single family dwelling, detached, semi-detached, or row house
2. multi unit residential building
3. residential building held in divided or undivided co- ownership
4. residential building occupied in part for residential occupancy and in part for a commercial occupancy, as long as the latter use does not exceed 40% of the building's total area, excluding the basement.

## 1. EXTERIOR SYSTEMS

### 1.1 The inspector shall:

#### A. inspect:

1. exterior wall covering(s), flashing and trim.
2. all exterior doors.
3. attached or adjacent decks, balconies, steps, porches, and their associated railings.
4. the eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
5. vegetation, grading, surface drainage on the property when any of these are likely to adversely affect the building.
6. walkways, patios, and driveways leading to dwelling entrances.
7. landscaping structure attached or adjacent to the building when likely to adversely affect the building.
8. primary garage or carport attached or detached
9. garage doors and garage door operators.

#### B. describe

1. exterior wall covering(s).

#### C. report:

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

### 1.2 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, dykes and docks.
7. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

## 2. ROOF SYSTEMS

### 2.1 The inspector shall:

#### A. inspect:

1. readily accessible roof coverings.
2. readily accessible roof drainage systems.
3. readily accessible flashings.
4. readily accessible skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.

#### B. describe

1. the roof covering and report the method(s) used to inspect the roof

#### C. report:

1. method(s) used to inspect the roof(s).

### 2.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

#### A. inspect:

1. antennae and satellite dishes.
2. interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible.
3. other installed accessories. items attached to but not related to the roof system(s).

## 3. STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

### 3.1 The inspector shall:

#### A. inspect:

1. structural components including visible foundation and framing.
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 under-floor crawl space
3. methods used to inspect the attic(s).

### 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. PLUMBING SYSTEMS

### 4.1 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 heating equipment and associated venting system
4. vent systems, flues & chimneys.
5. fuel storage and fuel distribution systems.
6. drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping.

#### 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 and main fuel shut-off valves.

### 4.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

#### A. inspect:

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

1. safety valves or shut-off valves.

## 5. ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

### 5.1 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 sub panels.
6. distribution conductors.
7. overcurrent protection devices.
8. a representative number of installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
9. the ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) (if appropriate).
10. arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCI) (if appropriate).

#### 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 carbon monoxide detectors (if applicable).
3. absence of smoke detectors.
4. presence of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI).
5. presence of arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCI).

### 5.2 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 not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system.
5. telecommunication equipment.

#### B. measure:

1. amperage, voltage, or impedance.

## 6. INTERIOR

### 6.1 The inspector shall:

#### A.inspect:

1. walls, ceilings, and floors.
2. steps, stairways, and railings.
3. countertops and a representative number of installed cabinets.
4. a representative number of doors and windows.
5. walls, doors and ceiling separating the habitable spaces and the garage.

### 6.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

#### A.inspect:

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

## 7. HEATING, VENTILATION & COOLING (HVAC) SYSTEMS

### 7.1 The inspector shall:

#### A. inspect:

1. readily accessible components of installed heating, central and through wall cooling equipment.
2. vent systems, flues, and chimneys.
3. fuel storage and fuel distribution systems.

#### B. describe:

1. energy source(s).
2. heating and/or cooling method(s) by distinguishing characteristics.
3. chimney(s) and/or venting material(s).
4. the combustion air sources.
5. the exhaust venting methods (naturally aspirated, induced draft, direct vent, direct vent sealed combustion).

### 7.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

#### A. inspect:

1. interiors of flues or chimneys which are not readily accessible.
2. heat exchanger.
3. humidifier or dehumidifier auxiliary equipment.
4. electronic air filters.
5. solar heating systems.

#### B. determine:

1. system adequacy or distribution balance.

## 8. FIREPLACES AND SOLID FUEL BURNING APPLIANCES

(Unless prohibited by the authority having jurisdiction)

### 8.1 The inspector shall:

#### A. inspect:

1. system components
2. vent systems and chimneys

#### B. describe:

1. fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances
2. chimneys

### 8.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

#### A. inspect:

1. interior of flues or chimneys
2. screens, doors and dampers
3. seals and gaskets
4. automatic fuel feed devices
5. heat distribution assists whether fan assisted or gravity

#### B. ignite or extinguish fires

#### C. determine draught characteristics

#### D. move fireplace inserts, stoves, or firebox contents

## 9. INSULATION and VENTILATION of ATTICS, CRAWLSPACES AND UNFINISHED BASEMENTS

### 9.1 The inspector shall:

#### A.inspect:

- 1.insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.
- 2.ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
- 3.mechanical ventilation systems.
- 4.ventilation systems in areas such as kitchens, bathrooms and laundry areas where moisture is generated.

#### B.describe:

- 1.type of insulation and vapour retarders in unfinished spaces.
- 2.ventilation of attics and foundation areas.
- 3.mechanical ventilation systems.
- 3.ventilation systems in areas such as kitchens, bathrooms and laundry areas where moisture is generated.

#### C.report:

- 1.absence of insulation in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces.
- 2.absence of ventilation in areas where moisture is generated such as kitchens, bathrooms and laundry rooms.

### 9.2 The inspector is NOT required to:

#### A.disturb insulation or vapor retarders.

#### B.determine indoor air quality.

#### C.determine system adequacy or distribution balance.

**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 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 and routine home owner 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 which describes those systems and components in accordance with this Scope of Inspection.

**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 Scope of Inspection, 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 this Scope of Inspection.

**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 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 which 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, 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.

**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.

**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.

**Under-floor Crawl Space**

The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the floor.

**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, missing or improper installation or a change in accepted residential construction standards.

**Vapour Barrier**

Material used in the building envelope to retard the passage of water vapour or moisture.

**Visually Accessible**

Able to be viewed by reaching or entering.

**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.

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