



standards



Professional Standards of Practice for the Visual Inspection of Chiefly Residential Buildings

**QUEBEC ASSOCIATION
OF BUILDING INSPECTORS**

Published by the Quebec Association of Building Inspectors
in collaboration with the Association des courtiers et agents immobiliers
du Québec

table of contents

| | | |
|------------------|--|----|
| Acknowledgements | 1 | |
| Introduction | 2 | |
| Chapter I | Professional Standards of Practice | 3 |
| Section I | Field of application | 3 |
| Section II | Obligation to draft an inspection agreement | 3 |
| Section III | Interpretation | 3 |
| Chapter II | Characteristics of a building inspection | 4 |
| Section I | Purpose of a visual building inspection | 4 |
| Section II | Performance of a visual building inspection | 4 |
| Section III | Technically exhaustive inspection | 4 |
| Chapter III | General limitations and exclusions | 5 |
| Section I | Limitations of the inspection | 5 |
| Section II | Exclusions from the inspection | 5 |
| Chapter IV | The building inspection report | 7 |
| Section I | Obligation to draft a report | 7 |
| Section II | Minimum content of the written report | 7 |
| Section III | Additional information in the written report | 7 |
| Section IV | Declarations by the seller | 7 |
| Chapter V | Inspection of building systems | 8 |
| Section I | Structural components | 8 |
| Section II | Exterior | 9 |
| Section III | Roofing | 10 |
| Section IV | Plumbing | 10 |
| Section V | Electricity | 12 |
| Section VI | Heating | 14 |
| Section VII | Central Air conditioning and heat pump | 15 |
| Section VIII | Interior | 16 |
| Section IX | Insulation | 17 |
| Section X | Natural and mechanical ventilation | 17 |
| Section X1 | Personal safety | 18 |
| Appendix I | Addendum to Standards of Practice | 19 |
| Appendix II | Standards of Practice Glossary | 22 |

Effective date, January 2010

acknowledgements

This guide is the result of a sharing of expertise by several building inspection experts. We thank the following contributors for generously sharing their vast expertise:

Albert Arduini, T.P., Certified Building Inspector,
National Certificate Holder for Building Inspections,
President, Quebec Association of Building Inspectors

Denys Aubert, E.A., Certified Building Inspector,

Yvon Boulais, Certified Building Inspector,
National Certificate Holder for Building Inspections

Brian Crewe, Certified Building Inspector,
National Certificate Holder for Building Inspections

Rhéal Galarneau, Certified Building Inspector,
National Certificate Holder for Building Inspections

Angelo Laforte, Certified Building Inspector,
National Certificate Holder for Building Inspections

Normand René, Certified Building Inspector,
National Certificate Holder for Building Inspections

Daniel Saindon, Certified Building Inspector,
National Certificate Holder for Building Inspections,
Vice President, Quebec Association of Building Inspectors

Jean-Jacques Verreault, E.A., Certified Building Inspector,
National Certificate Holder for Building Inspections,

We would also like to thank the following contributors for sharing their real estate expertise:

Me Robert Nadeau, lawyer
President and Chief Executive Officer
Association des courtiers et agents immobiliers du Québec

Me Claude Barsalou, lawyer
Executive Vice President and Secretary
Association des courtiers et agents immobiliers du Québec

Me Jean-François Savoie, lawyer
Vice President, Legal Affairs
Association des courtiers et agents immobiliers du Québec

Me Martin Janson, lawyer
Janson, Larente, Roy, avocats

This publication was made possible through a collaboration between the Quebec Association of Building Inspectors (QABI) and the Association des courtiers et agents immobiliers du Québec (ACAIQ).

introduction

These Standards of Practice and Appendices are being published to inform the public on the nature and scope of visual building inspections performed by members of the QABI.

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

These Standards represent minimum requirements for the performance of an inspection of any chiefly residential building by a member of the Quebec Association of Building Inspectors (hereinafter called the QABI).

Building industry organizations recognize the QABI Standards of Practice as the reference in the building inspection trade.

The Quebec Association of Building Inspectors (QABI), founded in 1990, is a volunteer membership, not-for-profit organization representing the largest number of building inspectors in Quebec.

The Association aims to provide its members with:

- close supervision;
- Standards of Practice governing the profession of building inspector;
- a Code of Ethics;
- Regulations governing the professional act.

To ensure better public protection, member inspectors must uphold these Standards and abide by the Code of Ethics, in addition to holding and maintaining insurance coverage for professional liability (errors and omissions).

These Standards take into account the fact that the visual inspection of a building does not constitute an evaluation or a verification of compliance with building codes and standards or regulations governing the construction industry or the health and safety industry, neither or with standards and regulations governing insurability for the purpose of insuring risk.

professional standards of practice

Section I – Field of application

Art. 1 These Standards of Practice apply to inspections of part or all of a building of a maximum of three (3) stories and a building area of a maximum of 600 square meters (excluding the basement), and used for the following purposes:

- 1.1 single-family dwelling, detached, semi-detached or rowhouse
- 1.2 multi-unit residential building;
- 1.3 residential building held in divided or undivided co-ownership;
- 1.4 residential building occupied in part for a 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.

Section II – Obligation to draft an inspection service agreement

Art. 2 An inspection performed in accordance with these Standards must be subject to a standard inspection service agreement published by the Quebec Association of Building Inspectors.

Section III – Interpretation

Art. 3 Any term not defined in these Standards shall have the meaning commonly assigned to it by the various trades and professions, according to context.

Art. 4 The definitions included in these Standards' Glossary form an integral part of the Standards.

Art. 5 Unless otherwise dictated by the context, any word used in the masculine form also includes the feminine form and vice versa, and any word used in the singular form also includes the plural form and vice versa.

characteristics of a visual building inspection

Section I – Purpose of a visual building inspection

Art. 6 The purpose a visual building inspection performed in accordance with these Standards is to provide a client with the information needed to gain a better understanding of the condition of the building described in the inspection service agreement, as observed at the time of inspection.

Section II – Performance of a visual building inspection

Art. 7 The building inspection performed in accordance with these Standards is an attentive visual examination that is not meant to be technically exhaustive.

Art. 8 The building inspection consists in visually observing and reporting on the physical condition of readily accessible installed systems and components listed in these Standards.

Art. 9 The building inspection may include the provision of additional inspection services, subject to a written agreement to this effect.

Section III – Technically exhaustive inspection

Art. 10 Because these Standards of Practice do not cover technically exhaustive inspections, the inspector must recommend a technically exhaustive inspection by a specialist when a sufficient number of clues leads him to suspect that a potentially major deficiency or defect exists in one of the building's systems or components.



general limitations and exclusions

Section I – Limitations of the inspection

Art. 11 Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice are subject to certain limitations. Namely, the inspector is not required to:

- 11.1 enter any area or perform any procedure which may damage the property or its components or which may present a risk for the inspector or other persons;
- 11.2 operate any system or component which is shut down or which does not respond to normal operating controls ;
- 11.3 move personal items, furniture, equipment, plant life, soil, snow, ice, or debris which obstruct access or visibility;
- 11.4 analyze or emit an opinion on the presence or absence of hazardous substances, including carcinogens or toxins, environmental hazards or contaminants in air, soil, water and sound;
- 11.5 determine the presence or absence of wood-damaging organisms, rodents, insects or other pests.

Section II – Exclusions from the inspection

Art. 12 The visual inspection and written report does not cover the following elements:

- 12.1 the remaining life expectancy of any component or system, the calculation or assessment of the effectiveness and/or relevance thereof, nor a projection of its operating cost;
- 12.2 an evaluation of the methods, materials and costs related to any corrective action required to systems and components, nor the causes of the origin of the corrective action required;
- 12.3 an evaluation of the market value of the property;
- 12.4 a recommendation on whether or not to purchase the property;
- 12.5 supplemental heating devices and any type of solid fuel burning heating device;



general limitations and exclusions

- 12.6 garages, carports and other dependencies that are not attached to the main building;
- 12.7 pools, spas, saunas, whirlpool baths and other such equipment;
- 12.8 inspection and testing or operating of any installed fire alarm system, burglar alarm system, automatic sprinkler system or other fire protection equipment, electronic or automated installations and any lifting equipment, elevator, freight elevator, wheelchair lift, climbing chair, escalator or others;
- 12.9 compliance with building codes and standards or regulations governing the construction industry or the health and safety industry, or with standards and regulations governing insurability of the building for all insurance risks.

the visual building inspection report

Section I – Obligation to draft a report

Art. 13 After analyzing the visual observations in accordance with these Standards, the inspector shall submit a written report to the client.

Section II – Minimum content of the written report

Art.14 The inspection report must:

- 14.1 identify the person who requested the inspection and the object of the inspection;
- 14.2 indicate the date, time, weather conditions and the names of the people present at the time of the inspection;
- 14.3 include a brief description of the building;
- 14.4 include a table of contents and page numbers;
- 14.5 describe the systems and components in accordance with these Standards and describe the condition thereof;
- 14.6 indicate the systems and components that:
 - 14.6.1 were actually inspected and, where required, describe the method used for the inspection;
 - 14.6.2 were not inspected and the reasons why;
 - 14.6.3 require immediate or major repairs, including visible elements that present a safety condition;
- 14.7 note all signs of water penetration or condensation in the systems and components of the main building;
- 14.8 include photos in support of the inspector's main observations;
- 14.9 be signed and authenticated by the inspector who performed the inspection.

Section III – Additional information in the written report

Art. 15 The report may include information, observations or descriptions in addition to those required under Article 14.

Section IV – Declarations by the seller

Art. 16 The inspector must apprise himself of all declarations made by the seller or ask the seller to complete the appropriate form to this effect. If the seller refuses or if this form cannot be obtained for any reason, the inspector shall mention it in his report and indicate the reason.

inspection of building systems

Section I – Structural components

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 17 The inspector shall observe and describe the following structural components in the report:

- 17.1 foundations;
- 17.2 floors;
- 17.3 walls;
- 17.4 columns;
- 17.5 beams;
- 17.6 ceilings;
- 17.7 roofs.

Art. 18 The inspector shall probe structural components where deterioration is suspected. However, probing is not required when it would result in damaging the building or putting the inspector or other persons at risk.

Art. 19 The inspector shall enter crawl spaces and attic spaces that are accessible through a passage that is safe, secure and of adequate size and that does not require the use of tools, except where access is obstructed, where entry could damage the property or where dangerous or adverse conditions are suspected.

Art. 20 The inspector shall report the methods used to observe crawl spaces and attics.

Art. 21 The inspector shall report signs of water penetration into the building or signs of abnormal condensation on main building structural components.

Specific exclusions

Art. 22 The inspector is not required to:

- 22.1 offer any engineering, architectural or any other specialized analysis;
- 22.2 offer any opinion as to the capacity or projected performance of the structural system.

inspection of building systems

Section II – Exterior

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 23 The inspector shall observe and describe in the report:

- 23.1 exterior wall cladding, siding and trim;
- 23.2 permanent windows and doors, flashings and mouldings;
- 23.3 electric garage door openers and safety devices;
- 23.4 decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches and railings;
- 23.5 eaves, including fascia and soffits;
- 23.6 vegetation, grading, drainage, driveways, walkways and retaining walls with respect to their effect on the condition of the main building.

Art. 24 The inspector shall:

- 24.1 operate all permanent exterior doors, including garage doors that are operated manually or using a permanently installed electric door opener;
- 24.2 report whether or not any electric garage door opener automatically reverses or stops when meeting reasonable resistance during closing.

Specific exclusions

Art. 25 The inspector is not required to observe the following non-permanent components:

- 25.1 storm windows, storm doors, screening, shutters, awnings and similar seasonal accessories;
- 25.2 fences;
- 25.3 glazing or barred window protection;
- 25.4 garage door remote control openers;
- 25.5 soil geology, composition and/or other conditions of the soil including any underground component;
- 25.6 dykes, retaining walls and docks bordering a body water;
- 25.7 recreational facilities.

inspection of building systems

Section III – Roofing

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 26 The inspector shall observe and describe in the report:

- 26.1 roof coverings;
- 26.2 roof drainage systems;
- 26.3 flashings;
- 26.4 skylights, chimney exterior and roof penetrations.

Art. 27 The inspector shall report the methods used to observe the roofing.

Specific exclusions

Art. 28 The inspector is not required to:

- 28.1 walk on the roof;
- 28.2 observe attached accessories including but not limited to solar systems, antennae, and lightning rods and other such accessories;
- 28.3 observe the inside of chimneys.

Section IV – Plumbing

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 29 The inspector shall operate all toilet flush valves, fixture faucets and hose faucets.

Art. 30 The inspector shall observe and describe the interior water distribution system, including:

- 30.1 materials of supply and distribution piping;
- 30.2 the main water entry shutoff valve and its location;
- 30.3 fixtures and faucets (interior and exterior);
- 30.4 functional flow;
- 30.5 faulty connections (problem or cross connections);
- 30.6 leaks.

inspection of building systems

Art. 31 The inspector shall observe and describe the interior drainage system, including:

- 31.1 traps, drain and vent piping materials, piping supports;
- 31.2 leaks, proper drainage;
- 31.3 interior and exterior floor drains;
- 31.4 back flow valves;
- 31.5 cleanouts;
- 31.6 sumps and drainage pits.

Art. 32 The inspector shall observe and describe the water heater equipment for the production of domestic hot water, including:

- 32.1 heating equipment and capacity;
- 32.2 year of manufacture;
- 32.3 energy source;
- 32.4 shut-off valve;
- 32.5 automatic safety devices and drainage installation;
- 32.6 fuel reservoir, including:
 - 32.6.1 location;
 - 32.6.2 year of manufacture;
 - 32.6.3 leaks;
 - 32.6.4 supports;
 - 32.6.5 supply pipe;
 - 32.6.6 fill and ventilation piping;
- 32.7 the exterior of chimneys, exhaust systems, flues and vents;
- 32.8 vacuum breakers (anti-siphon).

inspection of building systems

Art. 33 The inspector shall observe and describe the systems and components for sumps and drainage wells installed inside the building, including:

- 33.1 solid waste pump;
- 33.2 laundry pump;
- 33.3 sump pump.

Specific exclusions

Art. 34 The inspector is not required to determine whether a water supply system or waste disposal system is public or private.

Art. 35 The inspector is not required to operate:

- 35.1 safety devices and shutoff valves;
- 35.2 valves other than toilet flush valves, fixture faucets and hose faucets.

Art. 36 The inspector is not required to observe and/or operate:

- 36.1 water conditioning systems;
- 36.2 automatic fire sprinkler systems;
- 36.3 lawn sprinkler systems;
- 36.4 water supply quality and quantity;
- 36.5 garbage disposal and compacting systems;
- 36.6 any underground component, including septic tanks, weeping fields, underground tanks, wells, underground piping and foundation drains.

Section V – Electricity

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 37 The inspector shall observe and describe in the report:

- 37.1 service type (overhead or underground);
- 37.2 grounding equipment;
- 37.3 amperage and voltage ratings according to main fuses or circuit breaker on main service box;

inspection of building systems

- 37.4 main service box (condition, protective device, posted capacity, location);
- 37.5 main and secondary distribution panels (condition, protective device, posted capacity, location);
- 37.6 branch circuit wiring, their over current devices, and the compatibility of their ampacities and voltages;
- 37.7 the operation of a representative number of installed lighting fixtures and switches located inside or outside the building;
- 37.8 polarity and grounding of a representative number of outlets;
- 37.9 operation of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI);

Art. 38 The inspector shall open main service boxes and distribution panels when it is safe to do so. If he cannot open these, he shall indicate the reasons in his inspection report.

Specific exclusions

Art. 39 The inspector is not required to:

- 39.1 insert any tool, probe or testing device inside the panels;
- 39.2 test or operate any over current device except ground fault circuit interrupters;
- 39.3 dismantle any electrical device or control.

Art. 40 The inspector is not required to observe and/or operate:

- 40.1 low voltage systems;
- 40.2 telephone, security, cable TV or other ancillary wiring that is not a part of the primary electrical distribution system.

inspection of building systems

Section VI – Heating

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 41 The inspector shall observe and describe permanently installed heating systems, whether primary, secondary or other, including:

- 41.1 energy source;
- 41.2 type of heating equipment;
- 41.3 normal operating controls;
- 41.4 automatic safety controls;
- 41.5 exterior of chimneys, flues and vents;
- 41.6 heat distribution systems, including:
 - 41.6.1 fans;
 - 41.6.2 circulation pumps;
 - 41.6.3 ducts;
 - 41.6.4 piping;
 - 41.6.5 radiators;
 - 41.6.6 convectors;
 - 41.6.7 registers and air filters.
- 41.7 number of permanently installed heat sources and the presence of one in each habitable room;
- 41.8 fuel tank, including:
 - 41.8.1 location;
 - 41.8.2 year of manufacture;
 - 41.8.3 leaks;
 - 41.8.4 supports;
 - 41.8.5 supply piping;
 - 41.8.6 fill and vent piping.

Art. 42 The inspector shall operate systems using normal operating controls.

Art. 43 The inspector shall open access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance, where this operation does not require any tools.

Specific exclusions

Art. 44 The inspector is not required to observe:

- 44.1 solid fuel burning heating devices;
- 44.2 the interior of chimneys, flues, dampers and heating devices;
- 44.3 humidifiers;
- 44.4 electronic air filters;
- 44.5 the uniformity or adequacy of heat supply to each habitable room.

Section VII – Air conditioning and heat pump

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 45 The inspector shall operate the systems using normal operating controls

Art. 46 The inspector shall observe and describe the central cooling system, including:

- 46.1 energy source;
- 46.2 cooling equipment type and location;
- 46.3 drainage installation.

Art. 47 The inspector shall observe and describe in his report distribution systems, including:

- 47.1 air ducts, registers and air filters;
- 47.2 number of cooling sources installed and the presence of one in each habitable room.

Specific exclusions

Art. 48 The inspector is not required to observe movable and/or portable air conditioning systems.

Art. 49 The inspector is not required to verify:

- 49.1 the uniformity, adequacy or appropriateness of cool-air supply to the rooms.

inspection of building systems

Section VIII – Interior

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 50 The inspector shall observe and describe in the report:

- 50.1 walls, floors and ceilings;
- 50.2 steps, stairways, balconies and railings;
- 50.3 cabinets and counters;
- 50.4 windows and doors, including hardware;
- 50.5 walls, doors and ceilings separating the habitable spaces and a garage.

Art. 51 The inspector shall operate a representative number of permanent windows and interior doors.

Art. 52 The inspector shall report any indications or signs of water penetration or condensation visible inside the building or signs of abnormal or harmful condensation on building components. If applicable, the inspector shall use a moisture detector to confirm or refute the presence of moisture in suspected areas and nowhere else.

Specific exclusions

Art. 53 The inspector is not required to observe:

- 53.1 paint, wallpaper and other finishes on the interior walls and ceilings;
- 53.2 carpeting;
- 53.3 draperies, blinds and other window treatments;
- 53.4 household appliances;
- 53.5 recreational facilities.

Art. 54 The inspector is not required to evaluate the acoustical characteristics of any system or component.

inspection of building systems

Section IX – Insulation

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 55 The inspector shall observe and describe in the report:

- 55.1 insulation materials and vapour barriers seen in unfinished spaces (attics, walls, ceilings and floors);
- 55.2 the clearance of insulating materials and other combustible materials around chimneys that are visible and accessible.

Specific exclusion

Art. 56 The inspector is not required to report on the building's compliance with standards, or on the uniformity, adequacy or need for insulation in the building.

Section X – Natural and mechanical ventilation

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 57 The inspector shall observe and describe in the report:

- 57.1 ventilation of attics, basement areas and crawl spaces;
- 57.2 static ventilation systems or air exchanger;
- 57.3 kitchen, bathrooms and laundry rooms venting systems
- 57.4 dryer venting system.

Specific exclusion

Art. 58 The inspector is not required to report on the building's compliance with standards, or on the uniformity, adequacy or need for building ventilation and for the interior air quality.

Section XI – Personal safety

Performance of the inspection and inclusion in the report

Art. 59 The inspector shall observe and describe in the report all visible unsafe installations relating to:

- 59.1 banisters, railings and handrails;
- 59.2 electrified components located at a dangerous distance from a water source;
- 59.3 means and points of egress;
- 59.4 access to pools, whirlpool baths, spas or other types of water basins;
- 59.5 landings
- 59.6 operable windows whose sill is at an unsafe distance on the inside of a room;
- 59.7 stairways;
- 59.8 fire separation walls in the attic space.

Art. 60 The inspector shall observe and describe in the report the presence or absence of safety components, including:

- 60.1 smoke detectors;
- 60.2 carbon monoxide detectors.

addendum to standards of practice

Introduction

This Appendix is an integral part of the Professional Standards of Practice for the Visual Inspection of Chiefly Residential Buildings and must be used as a supplement or addendum to the preceding sections of these Standards.

A1 Multi-unit residential building

A1.1 Unless the context dictates otherwise, all residential units and other visible and accessible areas of the building must be inspected.

A1.2 Representative observations

If not all units in the building are inspected, the number of units inspected should be sufficient to allow the inspector to form a reasonable opinion concerning the apparent conditions of the systems and components inspected. To ensure representative observations of the building, the inspection shall include, as a minimum, a sampling of areas located in the basement, the ground floor, the top floor and the other floors.

A2 Residential building held in undivided co-ownership

A2.1 Performance of inspection

The inspection of a residential building held in undivided co-ownership consists in inspecting the systems and components installed inside and outside the building which is identified in the inspection service agreement.

A3 Residential building held in divided co-ownership

A3.1 Obligation to draft an inspection service agreement

A3.1.1 The inspection of a residential building held in divided co-ownership must include a schedule pre-established for this purpose, which must be included with the standard inspection service agreement as specified in Art. 2 of these Standards.

A3.2 Performance of inspection

A3.2.1 The inspection of a residential building held in divided co-ownership consists exclusively in inspecting the systems and components installed inside the unit, as outlined in Appendix C of the inspection service agreement.

addendum to standards of practice

A3.2.2 The inspection of a residential building held in divided co-ownership may include an inspection of systems and components in the common portions of the building under the care, custody and control of the Syndicate of Co-owners.

If applicable, a written authorization must be provided by the Syndicate of Co-owners.

A4 Residential building with partial commercial use

A4.1 Unless otherwise dictated by the context, all areas must be inspected.

A4.2 Representative observations

If not all areas of the building are inspected, the number of units inspected should be sufficient to allow the inspector to form a reasonable opinion concerning the apparent conditions of the systems and components inspected. To ensure representative observations of the building, the inspection shall include, as a minimum, a sampling of areas located in the basement, the ground floor, the top floor and the other floors.

A5 Fire protection and life safety

A5.1 When any of the safety installations below are present in a building identified in articles A1 to A4, the inspector shall mention it in the report. The inspector shall also mention the presence or absence of a maintenance service performed by a specialized firm for these safety installations:

A5.1.1 automatic sprinklers;

A5.1.2 fire alarm system;

A5.1.3 emergency electric power (generator or other);

A5.1.4 portable fire extinguishers;

A5.1.5 lifting equipment, including:

A5.1.5.1 elevators;

A5.1.5.2 escalators;

A5.1.5.3 moving walks;

A5.1.5.4 wheelchair lifts and climbing chairs;

A5.1.5.5 freight elevators;

A5.1.5.6 mechanical winches;

A5.1.6 emergency lighting;

A5.1.7 electrical rooms.

Specific exclusions

A5.2 In the area of fire protection and life safety in buildings, the inspector is not required to:

A5.2.1 examine plans, specifications or activation and maintenance reports;

A5.2.2 examine the building's fire safety plan;

A5.2.3 inspect the site and visually inspect labels, thicknesses, distances, devices and condition of components;

A5.2.4 verify the operation of mechanical and electrical devices for all:

A5.2.4.1 passive fire protection and life safety components;

A5.2.4.2 active fire protection and life safety components;

A5.2.4.3 organizational fire protection and life safety components.

standards of practice glossary

Active fire protection and life safety components

Include automatic water sprinklers, standpipes, pull stations, smoke and heat detectors, telephone communication, special elevators and the installation of smoke control and smoke exhaust systems.

Attic space

The space between the ceiling of the highest floor and the roof or a knee wall.

Automatic safety controls

Any device designed and installed to protect systems and components from excessively high or low pressures and temperatures, excessive electrical current, loss of water, loss of ignition, fuel leaks, fire, freezing, or other unsafe conditions.

Basement

One or more floor of a building located under the first floor.

Central air conditioning:

A system which uses ducts to distribute cooled and/or dehumidified air to more than one room at once and which is not simply plugged into an electrical outlet.

Client

Person or organization for whom the report is being drafted, as per the agreement.

Component

A readily accessible and observable part of a system, such as a floor or wall. (The term does not apply to individual pieces such as boards or nails where many similar pieces make up the component.)

Crawl space

An empty space of low height between the floor of the lowest story and the ground, designed for the installation of technical components.

Dangerous or adverse conditions

Situations which pose a threat of injury to the inspector or which require the use of special protective clothing or safety equipment.

Decorative or non-permanent component

Individual component or accessory that is not part of or essential to a system or component of the building or the operation thereof, in particular alarm systems, motion detector or decorative lighting systems, antennae, lightning rods, flags or other.

Describe

Report on a system or component in writing by briefly indicating its type, its material or other observed characteristics with sufficient detail to distinguish it from other systems or components used for the same purpose. Example: "hot air furnace oil fed"; "kitchen cabinets of wood".

Dismantle

To take apart or remove any component, device or piece of equipment that is bolted, screwed or fastened by other means and that would not be dismantled by a homeowner in the course of normal household maintenance.

Dwelling room

Furnished room used for living.

standards of practice glossary

Dyke

Long structure used to contain, retain or stop water or water movement.

Engineering

Analysis or design work requiring extensive preparation and experience in the use of mathematics, chemistry, physics, and the engineering sciences.

Enter

To go into an area to observe all visible components

Faulty connection (problem or cross connection)

Any physical connection or arrangement between potable water and any source of contamination.

First floor

Highest floor whose floor is at a maximum of 2 m above average ground level.

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.

Geology

The scientific study and description of the different materials that the earth is composed of.

Household appliance

Any kitchen or laundry appliance, portable air conditioner or similar appliance.

Immediate repair

Repair which, if not done immediately, could result in a deterioration of the component, another component or system, or endanger the safety of the building's occupants or other persons who have access.

Inspector

Any person who examines the components of a building, by visual means and through normal user controls, without the use of mathematical sciences.

Installed

Attached or connected to the building or to the building's plumbing, mechanical or electrical systems in such a way that the installed item requires tools for removal.

Look at

To make a visual examination.

Major repair

A repair that is important by its nature, cost or consequences if not made.

Normal operating controls

Any homeowner operated device such as a thermostat, wall switch or safety switch.

standards of practice glossary

Observe

To examine carefully, to observe, to note.

Operate

Take the necessary steps so that a system or equipment will function.

Organizational fire protection and life safety components

The prior organizing of emergency measures, evacuation procedures, maintenance schedules and regular verification of mechanical and electrical installations, and normal precautions for the storage of hazardous materials.

Passive fire protection and life safety components

Including the division of space, building's fire resistance, firewalls, closures, interior finishes and means of evacuation.

Permanent windows and doors

Windows and/or exterior doors, which are designed to remain in place year round

Readily operable access panel

A panel provided for homeowner inspection and maintenance, which has removable or operable fasteners or latch devices in order to be lifted off, swung open, or otherwise removed by one person, whose edges and fasteners are not painted in place. Limited to those panels within normal reach or from a 4-foot stepladder, and which are not blocked by stored items, furniture or building components.

Recreational facilities

Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, or other facilities for physical activity or entertainment facilities.

Representative number

One component per room if there are multiple identical components such as windows or electrical outlets. One component on each side of the building if there are multiple identical exterior components.

Roof drainage system

Gutters, downspouts, splash blocks and similar components used to carry water off a roof and away from a building.

Safety glazing

Tempered glass, laminated glass, or plastic material.

Service box

An assembly consisting of a metal box or cabinet constructed so that it may be effectively locked or sealed, containing either fuses and a switch for a circuit or a circuit breaker, and of such design that either the switch or circuit breaker may be manually operated when the box is closed.

Shut down

A piece of equipment or a system is shut down when it cannot be operated in a manner that a home owner would normally use. If the safety switch, circuit breaker or fuse is in the tripped position, the inspector is not required to operate the equipment or system.

standards of practice glossary

Solid fuel burning heating device

Any wood, coal, or other similar organic fuel burning device, including but not limited to a fireplace (masonry or factory-built), fireplace insert, stove, central heat generator, etc.

Story

Portion of a building contained between the top surface of a floor and that of the floor immediately above it, or in its absence, by the ceiling above.

Structural component

A component of the building which provides support for interior or exterior cladding materials or supports other components of the building.

Supplemental heating device

Any devices or accessories added to supplement the main heating system, either to provide additional heat or to heat in case of failure of the system. Supplemental heating devices include, but are not limited to, all stoves and fireplaces, regardless of type of fuel or energy source used.

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.

Underground component

System or component buried in the ground inside or outside of the building, including sewer, foundation drain or underground oil tank, and that is not accessible without excavation or the use of a specialized tool.

Water supply quality

Quality of water supplied to the site. It depends on the bacterial, chemical, mineral salt, and solid material content of the water.

Water supply quantity

Quantity of water supplied to the site. It is based on rate of flow.



QUEBEC ASSOCIATION OF BUILDING INSPECTORS

Published by the Quebec Association of Building Inspectors
in collaboration with the Association des courtiers et agents immobiliers
du Québec