

# Inspection Guidelines

## General Information

### Property Information

Property Address:  
Building Type:  
Estimated Age:  
Entrance Faces:  
Occupancy:  
Inspection Date:  
Start Time:  
End Time:  
Weather:  
Degrees Fahrenheit:  
Soil Conditions:

### Client Information

Client Name:  
Client Address:  
Phone:  
Email:  
Attendees:  
**OPTIONAL – CLIENT'S AGENT/EMAIL ADDRESS**

### Inspection Company

Company Name:  
Inspector Name:  
License Number:  
Address:  
Phone:  
Email:  
Member of WAHI - Follows the WI Standards of Practice and abides by the WAHI Code of Ethics

## Scope of the Inspection

A home inspector shall perform a reasonably competent and diligent home inspection of the readily accessible installed systems and components required to be inspected under s. SPS 131.32 to detect observable conditions of an improvement to residential real property.

A reasonably competent and diligent home inspection is not required to be technically exhaustive. Home inspectors are not required to report on the following: Life expectancy of any component or system; The causes of the need for a repair; The methods, materials, and costs of corrections; The suitability of the property for any specialized use; Compliance or non-compliance with codes, ordinances, statutes, regulatory requirements or restrictions; The market value of the property or its marketability; The advisability or inadvisability of purchase of the property; Any component or system that was not observed; The presence or absence of pests such as wood damaging organisms, rodents, or insects; or Cosmetic items, underground items, or items not permanently installed.

Home inspectors are not required to: Offer warranties or guarantees of any kind; Calculate the strength, adequacy, or efficiency of any system or component; Enter any area or perform any procedure that may damage the property or its components or be dangerous to the home inspector or other persons; Operate any system or component that is shut down or otherwise inoperable; Operate any system or component that does not respond to normal operating controls; Disturb insulation, move personal items, panels, furniture, equipment, plant life, soil, snow, ice, or debris that obstructs access or visibility; Determine the presence or absence of any suspected adverse environmental condition or hazardous substance, including but not limited to mold, toxins, carcinogens, noise, contaminants in the building or in soil, water, and air.

## Definitions

The inspection only includes items listed in the report, as defined by the Standards of Practice of the State of Wisconsin. SPS 131.31

Note: All definitions listed below refer to the property or items listed as inspected on this report at the time of the inspection.

- **Functional** - Performing its function and its condition is appropriate for its age and/or use.
- **Defect** - A condition of any component of an improvement that a home inspector determines, on the basis of the home inspector's judgment on the day of an inspection, would significantly impair the health or safety of occupants of a property or that, if not repaired, removed, or replaced, would significantly shorten or adversely affect the expected normal life of the component of the improvement.
- **Further Evaluation** - Item is not functioning as intended, needs further evaluation by a qualified contractor.
- **Needs Repair** - The condition of the item warrants repair but does not pose a health or safety concern nor rise to the level of Defect.
- **Monitor** - Currently functioning, but condition and/or age indicates that limited remaining life is expected. Client is advised to budget for replacement or upgrade.
- **Maintenance** - Maintenance of the item is recommended to prevent premature failure or to maintain its functionality.
- **Not Inspected** - Item was unable to be inspected for safety reasons, lack of power, inaccessible, not visible, disconnected at time of inspection or was not within the scope of this inspection.
- **Not Present** - Item not present or not found at time of inspection.

## Exteriors

**EXTERIORS (a) A home inspector shall observe and describe the condition of all of the following:** 1. Wall claddings, including type. 2. Flashings and trim. 3. Entryway doors and at least one window per side of a dwelling unit. 4. Garage door operators, including whether any garage door operator automatically reverses or stops when meeting reasonable resistance during closing. 5. Decks, balconies, stoops, steps and porches including railings. 6. Eaves, soffits and fascias. 7. Grading, drainage, driveways, patios, walkways, and retaining walls that abut the dwelling unit.

**(b) A home inspector shall operate all entryway doors, garage doors, and at least one window per side of a dwelling unit.**

**(c) A home inspector is not required to observe the following:** 1. Storm windows, storm doors, screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories. 2. Locks, latches or other security devices or systems. 3. Intercom systems. 4. Fences or privacy walls. 5. Insulation or vapor barriers in exterior walls. 6. Safety glazing. 7. Garage door operator remote control transmitters. 8. Geological or soil conditions. 9. Recreational facilities. 10. Out-buildings other than garages and carports. 11. Trees, shrubs and other vegetation.

### Exterior

Type:	(5)(a) 1.
Trim:	(5)(a) 2.
Fascia and Soffits:	(5)(a) 6.
Doors:	(5)(a) 3.
Windows:	(5)(a) 3.
Basement Windows:	(5)(a) 3.
Electric Service Type	(7)(a) 4.
Lighting:	(7)(a) 6.
Electrical:	(7)(a) 6.,7.,8.
Hose Bibs:	(6)(b)
<b>OPTIONAL – DOOR BELL:</b>	

### Lots and Grounds

Driveway:	(5)(a) 7.
Walkways:	(5)(a) 7.
Steps/Stoops:	(5)(a) 5.
Porch:	(5)(a) 5.
Patio:	(5)(a) 5.

Deck:	(5)(a) 5.
Landscaping/Grading:	(5)(a) 7.
Window Wells:	(5)(a) 7.
Sump Discharge:	(6)(a) 5.
Balcony:	(5)(a) 5.
Retaining Walls:	(5)(a) 7.
<b>OPTIONAL - TREES:</b>	

## Garage

Structure:	
Attached/Detached:	
Exterior Type:	(5)(a) 1.
Trim:	(5)(a) 2.
Fascia and Soffits:	(5)(a) 6.
Doors:	(5)(a) 3., (8)(a) 5.
Windows:	(5)(a) 3.
Roof:	(See Roofs)
Garage Doors:	(5)(a) 3.
Door Operation:	(5)(a) 4.
Door Opener:	(5)(a) 4.
Ceiling and Walls:	(8)(a) 5.
Floor/Foundation:	(3)
Heating:	(9)(a) 6.
Hose Bibs and Utility Sink:	(6)(a) 1,2
Electrical:	(7)(a) 6.,7.,8.
Fire Wall/Door:	(8)(a) 5.
<b>OPTIONAL – GUTTERS/DOWNSPOUTS/EXTENSIONS</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL – CAR SPACES:</b>	

## Roofs

**ROOFS. (a) A home inspector shall observe and describe the condition of all of the following:** 1. Roof coverings, including type. 2. Roof drainage systems. 3. Flashings. 4. Skylights, chimneys and roof penetrations. 5. Signs of leaks or abnormal condensation on building components.

**(b) A home inspector shall describe the methods used to observe the roof.**

**(c) A home inspector is not required to do any of the following:** 1. Walk on the roofing. 2. Observe attached accessories, including, but not limited to, solar systems, antennae and lightning arrestors. 3. Observe internal gutter and downspout systems and related underground drainage piping.

## Roof Surface

Inspected From:	(4)(b)
Visibility and Limitations:	(4)(a) 1.
Roof Type:	(4)(a) 1.
Approx Layers:	(4)(a) 1.
Material:	(4)(a) 1.
Flashing:	(4)(a) 3.
Valleys:	(4)(a) 2.
Plumbing Vents:	(4)(a) 4.
Skylights:	(4)(a) 4.
Electric Mast:	(4)(a) 4.
Gutters/Downspouts/Extensions	(4)(a) 2.

## Chimney

Inspected From:	(4)(b)
Visibility and Limitations:	
Chimney:	(4)(a) 4., (9)(a) 4.
Flue:	(4)(a) 4..
Chimney Cap:	(4)(a) 4.
Chimney Flashing:	(4)(a) 4.

## Living Space

INTERIORS. (a) A home inspector shall observe and describe the condition of all of the following: 1. Walls, ceilings and floors. 2. Steps, stairways, balconies and railings. 3. Counters and all sink base cabinets. 4. A random sample of doors and windows. 5. Separation walls, ceilings, and doors between a dwelling unit and an attached garage or another dwelling unit. 6. Signs of water penetration into the building or signs of abnormal or harmful condensation on building components.

(b) A home inspector is not required to observe any of the following: 1. Paint, wallpaper, and other cosmetic finish treatments on the interior walls, ceilings and floors. 2. Carpeting. 3. Draperies, blinds or other window treatments. 4. Household appliances. 5. Recreational facilities or another dwelling unit.

## Kitchen

Ceiling and Walls:	(8)(a) 1.
Floor:	(8)(a) 1.
Doors:	(8)(a) 4.
Windows:	(8)(a) 1
Electrical:	(7)(a) 6,7,8.
HVAC Source:	(9)(a) 6.
Plumbing:	(6)(a) 1,2, (6)(b)
Counter Tops:	(8)(a) 3.
Cabinets:	(8)(a) 3.
Vent:	(11)(a) 3.
Dishwasher/Cross Connection:	(6)(a) 1
<b>OPTIONAL - STOVE AND OVEN:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL - DISPOSAL:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL - REFRIGERATOR:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL - MICROWAVE:</b>	

## Bathroom

Ceiling and Walls:	(8)(a) 1.
Floor:	(8)(a) 1.
Doors:	(8)(a) 4.
Windows:	(8)(a) 1
Electrical:	(7)(a) 6,7,8.
HVAC Source:	(9)(a) 6.
Counter:	(8)(a) 3.
Cabinets:	(8)(a) 3.
Plumbing:	(6)(a) 1,2, (6)(b)
Toilets:	(6)(a) 1, (6)(b)
Tub/Shower/Surround:	(6)(a) 1, (6)(b)
Whirlpool:	(6)(a) 1, (6)(b)
Ventilation:	(11)(a) 3.

## Laundry

Ceiling and Walls:	(8)(a) 1.
Floor:	(8)(a) 1.
Doors:	(8)(a) 4.
Windows:	(8)(a) 1
Electrical:	(7)(a) 6,7,8.
HVAC Source:	(9)(a) 6.
Laundry Plumbing:	(6)(a) 1,2, (6)(b)
Dryer Vent:	(11)(a) 3.
<b>OPTIONAL - DRYER UTILITY:</b>	

## Living Space

Ceiling and Walls:	(8)(a) 1.
Floor:	(8)(a) 1.
Doors:	(8)(a) 4.
Windows:	(8)(a) 1
Electrical:	(7)(a) 6.,7.,8.
HVAC Source:	(9)(a) 6.

## Fireplace/Wood Stove

### Fireplace/Wood Stove

Type	(9)(a) 1, 2.
Fireplace Construction:	(9)(a) 5
Damper:	(9)(a) 3.
Hearth:	

## Attic

INSULATION AND VENTILATION. (a) A home inspector shall observe and describe the condition of all of the following: 1. The presence or absence of insulation in unfinished spaces. 2. Ventilation of attics and foundation areas. 3. Kitchen, bathroom, and laundry venting systems.

(b) A home inspector is not required to observe any of the following: 1. Concealed insulation. 2. Venting equipment which is integrated with household appliances.

## Attic

Inspected From:	
Visibility and Limitations:	
Insulation:	(11)(a) 1.
Roof Framing:	
Sheathing:	
Ventilation:	(11)(a) 2.
Attic Fan:	(11)(a) 2.
Wiring/Lighting:	(7)(a) 1-9
Bathroom, Kitchen Fan Venting:	(11)(a) 3.
Moisture Penetration:	(8)(a) 6, (4)(a) 5.
Separation Walls:	(8)(a) 5.
<b>OPTIONAL – ACCESS LOCATION:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL – TYPE OF ACCESS:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL – INSULATION DEPTH:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL – VAPOR BARRIER:</b>	

## Foundation

FOUNDATIONS. A home inspector shall observe and describe the type and condition of the foundation.

COLUMNS. A home inspector shall observe and describe the type and condition of columns.

FLOORING SYSTEMS. A home inspector shall observe and describe the type and condition of flooring systems.

## Basement/Crawl Space

Visibility and Limitations:	
Foundation:	(1)
Joists/Trusses:	
Beams:	(2)
Columns:	(2)
Sub Floor:	(3)
Basement Floor:	(3)
Floor Drain:	(6)(a) 2
Moisture:	(8)(a) 6.
Sump Pump:	(6)(a) 5.
Insulation:	(11)(a) 1.
Utility Sink:	(6)(a) 1.,2., (6)(b)
Electrical:	(7)(a) 6.,7.,8.
Ventilation:	(11)(a) 2.

## Electrical

**ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS. (a) A home inspector shall observe and describe the condition of all of the following:** 1. Service entrance conductors. 2. Service equipment, grounding equipment, main over current device. 3. Main and distribution panels, including their location. 4. Amperage and voltage ratings of the service, including whether service type is overhead or underground. 5. Branch circuit conductors, their over current devices, and the compatibility of their ampacities and voltages, including any aluminum branch circuit wiring. 6. The operation of a representative number of installed lighting fixtures, switches and receptacles located inside the house, garage and any exterior walls. 7. The polarity and grounding of all receptacles within 6 feet of interior plumbing fixtures, in the garage or carport, and on the exterior of inspected structures. 8. The operation of ground fault circuit interrupters. 9. The functionality of the power sources for smoke detectors.

**(b) A home inspector is not required to do any of the following:** 1. Insert any tool, probe or testing device inside the panels. 2. Test or operate any over current device except ground fault circuit interrupters. 3. Dismantle any electrical device or control other than to remove the covers of the main and auxiliary distribution panels. 4. Observe low voltage systems, telephones, security systems, cable TV, intercoms, or other ancillary wiring that is not a part of the primary electrical distribution systems. 5. Measure amperage, voltage or impedance. Inspect or test a built in vacuum system.

### Electric Panel

Manufacturer:	(7)(a) 3.
Location:	(7)(a) 3.
Amperage:	(7)(a) 4.
Volts:	(7)(a) 4.
Main Wire Type:	(7)(a) 1.
Ground:	(7)(a) 2.
Over Current protection:	(7)(a) 2., (7)(a) 5.
Conductor Type:	(7)(a) 5.
Branch Wire type:	(7)(a) 5.
GFCI:	(7)(2) 2.
AFCI:	

### CO and Smoke Detectors

Smoke Detectors:	(7) (a) 9.
CO Detectors:	

## Plumbing

**PLUMBING SYSTEMS. (a) A home inspector shall observe and describe the condition of all of the following:** Interior water supply and distribution system, including piping materials, supports, fixtures, faucets, functional flow and drainage, leaks and cross connections. Interior drain, waste and vent systems, including traps, drain, waste, and vent piping, piping supports and leaks. Hot water systems, including water heating equipment, normal operating controls, automatic safety controls, and the exterior surfaces of chimneys, flues, and vents. Fuel storage and distribution systems, including interior fuel storage equipment, supply piping, venting, supports, and leaks. Sump pumps. A home inspector shall operate all plumbing fixtures, including their faucets and accessible exterior faucets attached to the dwelling unit.

**(b) A home inspector is not required to do any of the following:** State the effectiveness of anti-siphon devices. Determine whether the water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private. Operate automatic safety controls or sump pumps equipped with internal or water dependent switches. Operate any valve except water closet flush valves, fixture faucets and hose faucets. Observe water conditioning systems, fire and lawn sprinkler systems, on-site water supply quantity and quality, on-site disposal systems, foundation drainage systems, or spas. Observe the interior of flues, chimneys and vents, or solar water heating systems. Observe any exterior plumbing components such as water mains or swimming pools. Determine water temperature. Determine the proper size, design or use of plumbing materials.

### Main Plumbing Services

Service Line:	(6)(a) 1.
Main Water Shutoff:	(6)(a) 1.
Water Lines:	(6)(a) 1.
Drain and Vent Pipes:	(6)(a) 2.
Gas Service Lines:	(6)(a) 4.
<b>OPTIONAL – WATER SOFTENER:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL – SANITARY PUMP:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL – WELL AND SEPTIC:</b>	
<b>OPTIONAL – RADON MITIGATION SYSTEM:</b>	

## Water Heater

Water Heater Operation:	(6)(a) 3.
Manufacturer:	(6)(a) 3.
Age:	(6)(a) 3.
Fuel:	(6)(a) 3.
Capacity:	(6)(a) 3.
Flue Pipe:	(6)(a) 3.
Relief Valve/Extension:	(6)(a) 3.

## Air Conditioning

**CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING. (a) A home inspector shall observe and describe the condition of all of the following:** 1. Cooling and air handling equipment, including type and energy source. 2. Normal operating controls. 3. The presence of an installed cooling source in each room.

**(b) A home inspector shall operate the systems, using normal operating controls, and open readily accessible access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance.**

**(c) A home inspector is not required to do any of the following:** 1. Operate cooling systems when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage. 2. Observe non-central air conditioners. 3.

Observe the uniformity or adequacy of cool-air supply to the various rooms. 4. Operate electronic air filters. 5. Observe the pressure of the system coolant or determine the presence of leakage. 6. Test the electrical current drawn by the unit.

## AC System

Operation:	(10)(a) 2.
Manufacture:	
Age:	
Type:	(10)(a) 1.
Fuel:	(10)(a) 1.
Electrical Disconnect:	(10)(a) 2.
Exterior Unit:	(10)(a) 2.
Condensate Removal:	(10)(a) 2., (6)(a) 2.

**OPTIONAL – TEMPERATURE DIFFERENTIAL:**

## Heating System

**HEATING SYSTEMS. (a) A home inspector shall observe and describe the condition of all of the following within a permanently installed heating system:** 1. Heating equipment and distribution systems. 2. Normal operating controls and energy source. 3. Automatic safety controls. 4. Exterior surfaces of chimneys, flues and vents. 5. Solid fuel heating devices. 6. The presence of an installed heat source in each room.

**(b) A home inspector shall operate the systems using normal operating controls and open readily accessible access panels provided by the manufacturer or installer for routine homeowner maintenance.**

**(c) A home inspector is not required to do any of the following:** 1. Operate heating systems when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage. 2. Operate automatic safety controls. 3.

Ignite or extinguish fuel fires. 4. Observe the interior of flues, fireplace insert flue connectors, humidifiers, electronic air filters, or the uniformity or adequacy of heat supply to the various rooms. 5. Observe a heat exchanger unless it is readily observable and normally accessible to an occupant of a dwelling unit.

## Heating System

Operation:	(9)(a) 2.
Manufacturer:	
Age:	
Type:	(9)(a) 1.
Fuel:	(9)(a) 2.
Flame:	(9)(a) 1.
Blower Fan:	(9)(a) 1.
Flue Pipe:	(9)(a) 4.
Distribution:	(9)(a) 1.
Circulator:	(9)(a) 1.
Devices:	(9)(a) 1.
Thermostats:	(9)(a) 1.
Fuel Tank:	(6)(a) 4.

**OPTIONAL - FILTER:**

**OPTIONAL - HEAT EXCHANGER:**

**OPTIONAL - AIR TO AIR EXCHANGER:**

**OPTIONAL – ASBESTOS-LIKE MATERIAL:**

## Required Summary Page

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The customer must read the ENTIRE report. The summary pages are provided as a convenience, not a substitute for reading the entire report and should not be relied upon as a complete list for reference. Items in the report are not all on the summary.

1. A summary page must include at least all of the following:
  - a) A list of conditions labeled as Defects, that are observed under par. (cm) to be defects, as defined in s. 440.97 (2m).
  - b) A listing of components, other than items labeled as Defects:
    - Needing repairs
    - Needing further evaluation
    - Items to monitor
    - Maintenance items
2. The summary page shall include references to the page, heading, or item number in the detailed account for further information.
3. The summary page shall include all of the following statements:
  - This summary page is provided for convenience and is not a substitute for reading the entire report and should not be relied upon as the complete list for the client's reference.
  - For the purposes of the report, "Defect," as defined in section 440.97 (2m), Wis. Stats., means: ***"A condition of any component of an improvement that a home inspector determines, on the basis of the home inspector's judgment on the day of an inspection, would significantly impair the health or safety of occupants of a property or that, if not repaired, removed, or replaced, would significantly shorten or adversely affect the expected normal life of the component of the improvement."*** The contract of sale may define "Defect" to also include a condition that would have a significant adverse effect on the value of the property, but such a condition may not be labeled a defect in the report unless it meets the definition in section 440.97 (2m), Wis. Stats.
  - A home inspector may not report on the market value or marketability of a property or whether a property should or should not be purchased.