

**Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics for Arkansas Registered Home Inspectors
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Section 400 The Practice of Home Inspection in Arkansas Page

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401 Standards of Practice

401.1 Introduction: These Standards of Practice shall be followed and complied with by registered home inspectors in Arkansas. Any Arkansas law which conflicts with the Standards of Practice, shall take precedence. Underlined terms are defined within Section 401.14 – Standards of Practice Glossary.

401.2 Purpose and Scope

1 The purpose of these Standards of Practice is to establish a minimum and uniform standard for home inspectors who subscribe to these Standards of Practice. Home Inspections performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client with objective information regarding the condition of the systems and components of the home as inspected at the time of the home inspection. Redundancy in the description of the requirements, limitations, and exclusions regarding the scope of the home inspection is provided for emphasis only.

2 Inspectors shall:

A. adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Arkansas Home Inspector Registration Board as set forth in Section 402 of these Rules and Procedures.

B. inspect readily accessible, visually observable, installed systems and components listed in these Standards of Practice. The inspector must strive to inspect these components and not arbitrarily determine them to be inaccessible.

- C. report:
1. those systems and components inspected that, in the professional judgment of the inspector, are not functioning properly, are significantly deficient, are unsafe, or are near the end of their service lives. The inspector is not to consider 'near the end of service life' as a reason not to inspect systems and components.
 2. recommendations to correct, or monitor for future correction, the deficiencies reported in 401.2.2.C.1, or items needing further evaluation. (Per Exclusion 401.13.2.A.5 inspectors are NOT required to determine methods, materials, or costs of corrections.)
 3. reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies reported in 401.2.2.C.1, that are not self-evident.
 4. systems and components designated for inspection in these Standards of Practice that were present at the time of the home inspection but were not inspected and the reason(s) they were not inspected.
3. These Standards of Practice are not intended to limit inspectors from:
- A. including other inspection services or systems and components in addition to those required In Section 401.2.2.B.
 - B. designing or specifying repairs, provided the inspector is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
 - C. excluding systems and components from the inspection if requested by the client.

401.3 Structural Components

1. The inspector shall
 - A. inspect
 1. the structural components including the foundation and framing.
 2. by probing a representative number 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 or presumed to exist.
 3. the readily accessible attic space regardless of whether or not it is floored unless adverse conditions exist.
 - B. describe
 1. the methods used to inspect under-floor crawl space and attics.
 2. the foundation.
 3. the floor structure.
 4. the wall structure.
 5. the ceiling structure.
 6. the roof structure.
2. The inspector is NOT required to
 - A. provide any engineering or architectural service or analysis.
 - B. offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any structural system or component

- C. enter under-floor crawl space areas that have less than 24 inches of vertical clearance between *components* and the ground or that have an access opening smaller than 16 inches by 24 inches.

401.4 Exterior

- 1 The inspector shall:
 - A. inspect:
 - 1. siding, flashing and trim.
 - 2. all exterior doors.
 - 3. attached or adjacent decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings.
 - 4. eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.
 - 5. vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the building.
 - 6. adjacent or entryway walkways, patios, and driveways.
 - B. describe :
 - 1. siding.
- 2 The inspector is NOT required to inspect:
 - A. screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories.
 - B. fences.
 - C. geological and/or soil conditions.
 - D. recreational facilities.
 - E. outbuildings other than garages and carports.
 - F. seawalls, break-walls, and docks.
 - G. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

401.5 Roofing

- 1 The inspector shall:
 - A. inspect:
 - 1. roofing materials.
 - 2. flashing.
 - 3. skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.
 - B. describe:
 - 1. roofing materials.
 - 2. methods used to inspect the roofing.
- 2 The inspector is NOT required to inspect:
 - A. antennae.
 - B. interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible.
 - C. other installed accessories.
- 3 Roofs that are of a pitch less than 6 to 12 must be inspected by walking on them unless adverse conditions exist. Roofs that are of a pitch equal to or greater than 6 to 12 may be inspected by viewing them at least from eave level if eaves are safely accessible with a 12' ladder used according to manufacturer's instructions.

401.6 Plumbing

- 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 hot water supply *system*.
 4. vent *systems* , flues, and chimneys.
 5. fuel storage and fuel distribution *systems*.
 6. drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping.
 - B. *describe* :
 1. water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping materials.
 2. water heating equipment including energy source(s).
 3. location of main water and main fuel shut-off valves.
- 2 The inspector is NOT required to:
- A. inspect:
 1. clothes washing machine connections.
 2. interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible.
 3. wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment.
 4. water conditioning systems.
 5. solar water heating systems.
 6. fire and lawn sprinkler systems.
 7. private waste disposal systems.
 - B. determine:
 1. whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private.
 2. water supply quantity or quality.
 - C. operate automatic safety controls or manual stop valves

401.7 Electrical

- 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. conductors.
 7. overcurrent protection devices.
 8. a representative number of installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
 9. ground fault circuit interrupters.
 - B. describe:
 1. amperage and voltage rating of the service.
 2. the location of main disconnect(s) and sub panels.
 3. presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring.
 4. presence or absence of smoke detectors.
 5. wiring methods.
- 2 The inspector is NOT required to:
 - A. inspect :
 1. remote control devices.
 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.

- B. measure amperage, voltage or impedance.

401.8 Heating

- 1 The inspector shall:
 - A. open readily openable access panels.
 - B. inspect:
 - 1. installed heating equipment.
 - 2. vent systems, flues, and chimneys.
 - C. describe:
 - 1. energy source(s).
 - 2. heating systems.
- 2 The inspector is NOT required to:
 - A. inspect:
 - 1. interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible.
 - 2. heat exchangers.
 - 3. humidifiers or dehumidifiers.
 - 4. electronic air filters.
 - 5. solar space heating systems.
 - B. determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance

401.9 Air Conditioning

- 1 The inspector shall:
 - A. open readily openable access panels.
 - B. inspect:
 - 1. central and through-wall equipment.
 - 2. distribution systems.
 - C. describe:
 - 1. energy source(s).
 - 2. cooling systems.
- 2 The inspector is NOT required to:
 - A. inspect electronic air filters.
 - B. determine cooling supply adequacy or distribution balance.
 - C. inspect window air conditioning units

401.10 Interiors

- 1 The inspector shall inspect :
 - A. walls, ceilings, and floors.
 - B. steps, stairways, and railings.
 - C. countertops and a representative number of installed cabinets.
 - D. a representative number of doors and windows.
 - E. garage doors and garage door operators.
- 2 The inspector is NOT required to inspect:
 - A. paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments.
 - B. carpeting.
 - C. window treatments.
 - D. central vacuum systems.
 - E. household appliances.
 - F. recreational facilities.

401.11 Insulation and Ventilation

- 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*.
 - B. *describe*:
 1. insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces.
 2. absence of insulation in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces.
- 2 The *inspector* is NOT required to disturb insulation.

401.12 Fireplaces and Solid Fuel Burning Appliances

- 1 The *inspector* shall:
 - A. *inspect*:
 1. *system components*.
 2. chimney and vents.
 - B. *describe*:
 1. fireplaces and *solid fuel burning appliances*.
 2. chimneys.
- 2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:
 - A. *inspect*:
 1. interiors of flues or chimneys.
 2. firescreens and doors.
 3. seals and gaskets.
 4. automatic fuel feed devices.
 5. mantles and fireplace surrounds.
 6. combustion make-up air devices.
 7. heat distribution assists (gravity fed and fan assisted).
 - B. ignite or extinguish fires.
 - C. determine draft characteristics.
 - D. move fireplace inserts and stoves or firebox contents

401.13 General Limitations & Exclusions

- 1 General limitations:
 - A. The *inspector* is NOT required to perform any action or make any determination not specifically stated in these Standards of Practice
 - B. Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice
 1. are not *technically exhaustive*.
 2. are not required to identify concealed conditions, latent defects, or consequential damage(s)
 - C. These Standards of Practice are applicable to buildings with four or fewer dwelling units and their garages or carports.
- 2 General exclusions:
 - A. Inspectors are NOT required to determine:
 1. conditions of systems or components which are not readily accessible
 2. remaining life expectancy of any system or component
 3. strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any system or component
 4. the causes of any condition or deficiency

5. methods, materials, or costs of corrections
 6. future conditions including, but not limited to, failure of systems and components
 7. the suitability of the property for any specialized use
 8. compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.)
 9. market value of the property or its marketability
 10. the advisability of purchase of the property
 11. the presence of potentially hazardous plants or animals including, but not limited to, wood destroying organisms or diseases harmful to humans including molds or mold like substances
 12. the presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to, toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water, and air.
 13. the effectiveness of any system installed or method utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances
 14. operating costs of systems or components
 15. acoustical properties of any system or component
 16. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties
- B. Inspectors are NOT required to offer:
1. or perform any act or service contrary to law
 2. or perform engineering services
 3. or perform any trade or any professional service other than home
 4. warranties or guarantees of any kind
- C. Inspectors are NOT required to operate:
1. any system or component which is shut down or otherwise inoperable
 2. any system or component which does not respond to normal operating controls
 3. shut-off valves or manual stop valves
- D. Inspectors are NOT required to enter:
1. any area which will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be dangerous to the inspector or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components
 2. under-floor crawl spaces or attics which are not readily accessible
- E. Inspectors are NOT required to inspect:
1. underground items including, but not limited to underground storage tanks or other underground indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active
 2. items which are not installed
 3. installed decorative items
 4. items in areas which are not entered in accordance with 401.13.2.D
 5. detached structures other than garages and carports
 6. common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing
- F. Inspectors are NOT required to:
1. perform any procedure or operation which will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be dangerous to the

- inspector or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components
2. describe or report on any system or component which is not included in these standards and was not inspected.
 3. move personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.
 4. dismantle any system or component, except as explicitly required by these Standards of Practice.

401.14 Standards of Practice Glossary

Alarm Systems

Warning devices installed or free-standing including, but not limited to smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, flue gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment.

Automatic Safety Controls

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

Component

A part of a system.

Decorative

Ornamental; not required for the proper operation of the essential systems and components of a home.

Describe

To identify (in writing) a system or component by its type or other distinguishing characteristics.

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 maintenance.

Engineering

The application of scientific knowledge for the design, control or use of building of structures, equipment or apparatus.

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 home and which describes those systems and components in accordance with these Standards of Practice.

Household Appliances

Kitchen, laundry, and similar appliances, whether installed or free-standing.

Inspect

To examine any system or component of a building in accordance with these Standards of Practice, using normal operating controls and opening readily openable access panels.

Inspector

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

Installed

Attached such that removal requires tools.

Normal Operating Controls

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

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 readily accessible, 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

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.

Shut Down

A state in which a system or component cannot be operated by normal operating controls.

Siding

Exterior wall covering and cladding; such as: Aluminum, Asphalt, Brick, Cement/Asbestos, EIFS, Stone, Stucco, Veneer, Vinyl, Wood, etc.

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 which 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 investigation that involves dismantling, the extensive use of advanced techniques, measurements, instruments, testing, calculations, or other means.

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

Wiring Methods

Identification of electrical conductors or wires by their general type, such as "non-metallic sheathed cable" ("Romex"), "armored cable" ("bx") or "knob and tube," etc.

402 Code of Ethics: This Code of Ethics shall be followed and complied with by registered home inspectors in Arkansas. Any Arkansas law which conflicts with this Code of Ethics, shall take precedence.

1. Inspectors shall avoid conflicts of interest or activities that compromise, or appear to compromise, professional independence, objectivity, or inspection integrity.
 - A. Inspectors shall not inspect properties for compensation in which they have, or expect to have, a financial interest.
 - B. Inspectors shall not inspect properties under contingent arrangements whereby any compensation or future referrals are dependent on reported findings or on the sale of a property.
 - C. Inspectors shall not directly or indirectly compensate realty agents, or other parties having a financial interest in closing or settlement of real estate transactions, for the referral of inspections or for inclusion on a list of recommended inspectors, preferred providers, or similar arrangements.
 - D. Inspectors shall not receive compensation for an inspection from more than one party unless agreed to by the client(s).
 - E. Inspectors shall not accept compensation, directly or indirectly, for recommending contractors, services, or products to inspection clients or other parties having an interest in inspected properties.
 - F. Inspectors shall not repair, replace, or upgrade, for compensation, systems or components covered by the Standards of Practice, for one year after the inspection.

2. Inspectors shall act in good faith toward each client and other interested parties.
 - A. Inspectors shall perform services and express opinions based on genuine conviction and only within their areas of education, training, or experience.
 - B. Inspectors shall be objective in their reporting and not knowingly understate or overstate the significance of reported conditions.

- C. Inspectors shall not disclose inspection results or client information without client approval. Inspectors, at their discretion, may disclose observed immediate safety hazards to occupants exposed to such hazards, when feasible.
- 3. Inspectors shall avoid activities that may harm the public, discredit themselves, or reduce public confidence in the profession.
 - A. Advertising, marketing, and promotion of inspectors' services or qualifications shall not be fraudulent, false, deceptive, or misleading.
 - B. Inspectors shall report substantive and willful violations of this Code to the Board.
- 4. A.C.A. §17-52-321 states:
 - (a) It is an unfair business practice for a home inspector, a company that employs the inspector, or a company that has a financial interest in a company employing a home inspector to do any of the following:
 - (1) Perform or offer to perform for an additional fee any repairs to the property on which the inspector or the inspector's company has prepared a home inspection report in the past twelve (12) months;
 - (2) Inspect for a fee any property in which the inspector or the inspector's company has any financial interest or any interest in the transfer of the property;
 - (3) Offer or deliver any compensation, inducement, or reward to the owner of the inspected property, the broker, or the agent for the referral of any business to the inspector or the inspection company; or
 - (4) Accept an engagement to make an inspection or to prepare a report in which the employment itself or the fee payable for the inspection is contingent upon the conclusions in the report, pre-established findings, or the close of escrow.
 - (b)
 - (1) A home inspection report shall not be used in any manner other than that agreed to in writing by the inspector and his or her client.
 - (2) Transfer of an inspection report or portion of a report to any third party absolves the inspector and his or her client of any responsibility for liability for claims or adverse actions arising from the use.