



# THE COMMERCIAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

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# CALIFORNIA REAL ESTATE INSPECTION ASSOCIATION CREIA<sup>SM</sup> Standards of Practice COMMERCIAL

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## Table of Contents

\*Note: *Italicized* words in this document are defined in the Glossary of Terms

### Definitions and Scope

### Standards of Practice

#### MANDATORY SECTIONS:

1. Foundations, Basements, and Under-floor Areas
2. Exteriors
3. Roof System
4. Plumbing System
5. Electrical System
6. Heating and Cooling System
7. Fireplaces and Chimneys
8. Building Interior

#### OPTIONAL SECTIONS:

9. Other Built-in Appliances and Systems
10. Pools and Spas

### Limitations, Exceptions and Exclusions

### Glossary of Terms

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## Definitions and Scope

- A. The inspection to be performed consists of non-intrusive visual observations to survey the readily *accessible*, easily visible material components, systems and equipment of the building. The inspection is designed to identify material physical deficiencies in the building's components, systems and equipment, as they exist at the time of the inspection. Unless otherwise agreed between the Inspector and client, the specific systems, structures and components of a building to be examined are listed in these Commercial Standards of Practice.
- B. The term material physical deficiencies means the presence of conspicuous patent defects or material deferred maintenance of the building's material systems, components, or building equipment as observed during the *inspection*. This definition specifically excludes deficiencies that may be remedied with routine maintenance, miscellaneous minor repairs, and normal operating maintenance, and excludes incidental conditions that generally do not present material physical deficiencies of the building.
- C. These Standards provide *inspection* guidelines, make public the services provided by private fee-paid *inspectors*, and define certain terms relating to these *inspections*.
- D. Unless otherwise agreed between the *inspector* and client, these Standards shall apply to the *primary building(s)* and its associated *primary parking structure(s) or surfaces*. The *inspection* shall be limited to those specific *systems, structures and components* that are present and visually *accessible*. *Components* and *systems* shall be *operated* with *normal user controls* only and as *conditions* permit. *Inspections* performed in accordance with these Standards are not intended to be *technically exhaustive*.
- E. *Inspection reports* shall describe and identify in written format the inspected *systems, structures, and components* of the *building* and shall identify those material physical deficiencies discovered during the inspection. The inspection report will contain a representative indication of the property condition at the time of the inspection and will be dependent on the information available to the inspector at that time.
- F. The inspector and the client may expressly agree, orally or in writing, to limit or increase the scope of the inspection, including, but not limited to, having an oral consultation in lieu of providing a written inspection report. Such an agreement, however, shall not be deemed a waiver or an increase of any legal or contractual duty or obligation of the Inspector, nor shall Inspector's actions be deemed to waive, cancel, or modify these Standards.
- G. *Inspection reports* may contain recommendations regarding *conditions* reported or recommendations for *further evaluation* by *appropriate persons*.

# THE COMMERCIAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

## SECTION 1 - Foundations, Basements, and Under-floor Areas

- A. Items to be identified and reported:
  1. Foundation and other support *components*.
  2. Under-floor ventilation.
  3. Location of under-floor access opening(s).
  4. Wood separation from soil.
  5. Presence of drainage *systems* or sump pumps within foundation footprint.
  6. Presence or absence of seismic anchoring and bracing *components*.
  
- B. The *inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Enter* under-floor areas that are not *accessible* or where entry could cause damage or pose a hazard to the *inspector*.
  2. Move stored items, vegetation or debris, or perform any excavations or other *intrusive* testing to gain *access*.
  3. *Operate* or *evaluate* adequacy of sump pumps or drainage *systems*.
  4. Identify size, spacing, location or adequacy of foundation bolting and bracing *components* or reinforcement *systems*.
  5. Perform any *intrusive* examination or testing, or use any *special equipment* such as, but not limited to, levels, probes or meters.

## SECTION 2 - Exteriors

- A. Items to be identified and reported:
  1. Surface grade, hardscaping and drainage within six feet of the inspected *building* or associated *primary parking structure(s)* or *surfaces*.
  2. Wall cladding, veneers, flashing, trim, eaves, soffits and fascias.
  3. Exterior portions of a *representative sampling* of doors and windows.
  4. Attached decks, porches, balconies, stairs, columns, walkways, guard-rails and handrails.
  
- B. The *inspector* is not required to:
  1. *Operate* or *evaluate* any mechanical, electro-mechanical, or underground drainage *systems*.

2. *Operate* or *evaluate* storm windows, storm doors, screening, shutters or awnings.
3. *Operate* or *evaluate* remote-control devices, door operators, or gate operators.
4. *Examine* detached buildings and structures (other than the *primary parking structure*), patio enclosures, fences, and retaining walls.
5. *Examine* items not visible from a readily *accessible* walking surface.
6. Perform a water test, warrant or certify against leakage of all exterior surfaces and components.

## SECTION 3 - Roof System

- A. Items to be identified and reported:
  1. Roof coverings.
  2. Flashing, vents, skylights and other penetrations.
  3. Roof drainage *systems*.
  4. Framing and sheathing.
  5. *Accessibility and access* opening(s).
  6. Insulation material(s).
  7. Ventilation.
  
- B. The *inspector* is not required to:
  1. Walk on the roof surface if, in the opinion of the *inspector*, there is a possibility of damage to the surface or a hazard to the *inspector*.
  2. Perform a water test, warrant or certify against roof leakage or predict life expectancy.
  3. *Enter* attic areas that, in the opinion of the *inspector*, are not *accessible* or where entry could cause damage.
  4. Move insulation materials or identify composition or "R" value of insulation material.
  5. Activate thermostatically operated fans.

## SECTION 4 - Plumbing System

- A. Items to be identified and reported:
  1. Supply, waste, and vent piping.
  2. Fixtures, faucets and drains.
  3. Water heating equipment, including combustion air, venting, connections, energy sources, seismic bracing, and temperature-pressure relief valves.
  4. *Functional flow* of water supply and *functional drainage* at fixtures.
  5. Gas piping and connectors.
  6. *Cross-connections*.

B. The inspector is not required to:

1. Operate any valve other than fixture faucets and hose faucets attached to the building.
2. Operate any system, fixture or component that is shut down or disconnected.
3. Examine or verify operation of water supply or pressure assistance systems, including, but not limited to: wells, pumps, tanks, and related equipment.
4. Verify functional flow or pressure at any fixture or faucet where the flow end is capped or connected to an appliance, or measure pressure, volume or temperature.
5. Examine or operate any sewage disposal system or component including, but not limited to: septic tanks and/or any underground system or portion thereof, or ejector pumps for rain or waste.
6. Examine the overflow device of any fixture.
7. Evaluate the potability of water, compliance with local or state conservation or energy standards, or proper design or sizing of any water, waste, and venting components, fixtures, or piping.
8. Identify whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private.
9. Evaluate time to obtain hot water at fixtures, or perform testing of any kind to water heater elements.
10. Examine ancillary systems or components such as, but not limited to: those relating to solar heating, hot water circulation, irrigation, water conditioning, water filtration, swimming pools or spas and related equipment, and fire suppression systems.
11. Test shower pans for leakage or fill any fixture with water during examination.
12. Evaluate the gas supply system for leaks or pressure.
13. Determine effectiveness of anti-siphon, back-flow prevention, temperature-pressure relief valves, or drain-stop devices.
14. Determine whether there are sufficient clean-outs for effective clearing of drains.
15. Evaluate gas, liquid propane, oil, or other storage tanks.

SECTION 5 - Electrical System

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Service conductors, equipment, and capacity.
2. Panels and overcurrent protection devices.
3. Service and equipment grounding.
4. Wiring types and methods.
5. A representative sampling of switches, receptacles, and light fixtures.
6. Ground-fault circuit-interrupters.

B. The inspector is not required to:

1. Operate electrical systems or components that are disconnected or shut down.
2. Disconnect any energized system or appliance.
3. Remove deadfront covers, panels, or plates.
4. Operate overcurrent protection devices, or evaluate compatibility of overcurrent protection devices with the panelboard manufacturer.
5. Examine or test smoke detectors.
6. Operate circuit-interrupter devices.
7. Examine de-icing equipment, or private or emergency electrical supply sources, including but not limited to: generators, windmills, photovoltaic solar collectors, or battery or electrical storage facilities.

SECTION 6 - Heating and Cooling System

A. Items to be identified and reported:

1. Heating and cooling equipment.
2. Venting and combustion systems.
3. Energy source and connections.
4. Heating and cooling distribution system(s) including a representative sampling of ducting, duct insulation, outlets, radiators, piping systems and valves.
5. Condensate drains.

B. The inspector is not required to:

1. Examine or evaluate condition of heat exchangers.
2. Determine uniformity, temperature, airflow or air balance to any room or building or determine leakage in any distribution component.
3. Examine any distribution component, when access would require steps or a ladder.
4. Examine electric heater elements or heat pump fluid/gas materials, or examine below ground/slab systems, ducts, fuel tanks and related components.
5. Determine or examine thermostat calibration, temperature anticipation, automatic setbacks or clocks, or any sensors.

6. *Examine* radiant or geothermal heat pump systems.
7. *Examine* any solar-energy heating systems or components.
8. *Examine* air-filtering systems.
9. *Operate* heat pump systems when the ambient air temperature may damage the equipment, or *operate* any heat pump system in "emergency" heat mode.
10. *Examine* humidity control systems and components.
11. *Operate* any heating or cooling equipment.
12. *Evaluate* the building or equipment for proper percentage of outside or makeup air or *evaluate* other related devices or controls.
13. *Shut down* and open any boiler or other related equipment.
14. *Examine* electrical current, flow, or voltage at any component.
15. *Examine* fluids or gases, or leakage.
16. *Examine* any non-central cooling unit(s), evaporative coolers, gas-fired, solar or geothermal cooling system or food, wine or similar storage cooling system.
17. Enter or climb on cooling towers or evaluate water treatment of cooling tower.
18. *Examine* temperatures, pressures, or any equipment printouts or displays.

#### SECTION 7 – Fireplaces and Chimneys

- A. Items to be identified and reported:
1. Chimneys, flues, dampers and associated components.
  2. Fireboxes, hearth extensions and permanently installed accessory components.
  3. Manufactured solid-fuel or gas-burning appliances.
- B. The inspector is not required to:
1. *Determine* adequacy of draft, perform a smoke test, or *dismantle* or remove any component.
  2. *Examine* the structural integrity of fireplaces and chimneys.
  3. *Examine* or *operate* ancillary or non-permanently installed components.

#### SECTION 8 - Building Interior

- A. Items to be identified and reported:
1. Walls, ceilings and floors.
  2. Security bars, ventilation components, and a representative sampling of doors and windows.
  3. Stairs, handrails, and guardrails.

4. Permanently installed cabinet surfaces and countertop surfaces.
5. Safety glazing in locations subject to human impact.

B The inspector is not required to:

1. *Operate* or *evaluate* security bar release and opening mechanisms, whether interior or exterior, including compliance with local, state, or federal standards.
2. *Determine* whether a building or any area of the property is secure from forcible or unauthorized entry.
3. *Evaluate* the condition of floor, wall or ceiling finishes or coverings, or other surfaces for other than evidence of moisture damage.
4. *Examine* window or door coverings or treatments.
5. *Evaluate* fastening of countertops, furniture or cabinets supported by floors, ceilings and/or walls.
6. *Evaluate* separation of firewalls, ceilings, and floors, including, but not limited to, fire-resistivity or acoustical characteristics.
7. *Examine* the floor surface when concealed by any floor coverings.
8. *Examine* or *evaluate* ancillary systems or components such as, but not limited to: those relating to ingress and egress.

#### SECTION 9 (OPTIONAL) - Other Built-In Appliances and Systems

The inspector may examine any of the following at his/her discretion, as agreed with client:

Attic power vents, central vacuum, cook-tops and exhaust fans, ranges, dishwashers, food waste disposers, garage door openers, hydrotherapy tubs, ovens, microwave ovens, refrigerators, freezers, trash compactors, or built-in fans.

- A. Items to be identified and reported:
1. Optional systems, components and appliances specifically examined during the inspection.
  2. Basic condition of optional systems, components and appliances specifically included in the inspection.

- B. The inspector is not required to:
1. Activate any system or appliance.
  2. *Determine* thermostat(s) calibration, adequacy of heating elements, operate or evaluate self-cleaning oven cycles, signal lights, or automatic setbacks or clocks.
  3. *Determine* leakage from microwave ovens.
  4. *Determine* the presence or operation of backdraft damper devices in exhaust systems.
  5. *Examine* any ancillary or non-built-in appliances.

**SECTION 10 (OPTIONAL) - Pools and Spas**

The *inspector* may examine the following at his/her discretion, as agreed with client:

- A. Items to be identified and reported:
  1. Location and type of pool or spa examined.
  2. *Conditions* limiting or otherwise inhibiting inspection.
  3. Enclosure and related gates.
  4. Hardscaping and drainage related to the inspected pool or spa.
  5. *Condition* of visible portions of systems, structures, or components.
  6. Normally necessary and present equipment such as: lights, GFCI devices, pumps, heaters, filters, and related mechanical and electrical connections.

- B. The *inspector* is not required to:
  1. Examine any above-ground, movable, freestanding or otherwise non-permanently installed pool or spa, or self-contained equipment.
  2. Come into contact with pool or spa water to examine the system, structure, or components.
  3. Determine adequacy of spa jet water force or bubble effect.
  4. Determine structural integrity or leakage of any kind.
  5. Evaluate thermostat(s) or their calibration, heating elements, chemical dispensers, water chemistry or conditioning devices, low voltage or computer controls, adequacy of bonding or grounding systems, timers, sweeps or cleaners, pool or spa covers and related components.
  6. Operate or evaluate filter backwash systems.
  7. Examine accessories, such as, but not limited to: aerators or air-blowers, diving or jump boards, ladders, skimmers, slides or steps.

**LIMITATIONS, EXCEPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS**

- A. The *inspector* may exclude from the inspection any system, structure, or component of the building which is inaccessible, concealed from view, or cannot be inspected due to circumstances beyond the control of the *inspector*, or which the client has agreed is not to be inspected. If an *inspector* excludes any specific system, structure, or component of the building from the inspection, the *inspector* shall confirm in the report, or during an oral consultation, such specific system, structure, or component of the building not inspected and the reason(s) for such exclusion(s).
- B. The *inspector* may limit the inspection to individual specific systems, structures, or components of the building. In such event, the *inspector* shall confirm in the report, or during an oral consultation, that the inspection has been limited to such individual

specific systems, structures, and components of the building.

- C. The following are excluded from the scope of an inspection unless otherwise specifically agreed between the *inspector* and client:
  1. Systems, structures, or components not specifically identified in these Standards.
  2. Certain factors relating to any systems, structures, or components of the building, including, but not limited to: adequacy, efficiency, durability or remaining useful life, costs to repair, replace or operate, fair market value, marketability, quality, or advisability of purchase.
  3. Building code or zoning ordinance violations.
  4. Geological stability or soils conditions or structural stability or engineering analysis.
  5. All wood-destroying organism.
  6. Interior partition walls; tenant improvements and non-building equipment.
  7. Americans With Disabilities Act inspections.
  8. Water testing for roof, wall or window leaks. Concealed roofing membrane integrity.
  9. Concealed floor cracks and all underground components.
  10. Product recalls or other such notices.
  11. Specific components noted in the inspection report as being beyond the scope of the inspection.
  12. Thermostatic, motion and time clock controls.
  13. Permits or public records research.
  14. Fire and life safety systems.
  15. Elevators or lifts.
  16. Building security and security systems.
  17. Installation guidelines and manufacturer's specifications.
  18. Examination of conditions related to animals, rodents, insects, wood-destroying insects, organisms, mold, and mildew or the damage caused thereby.
  19. Personal property.
  20. Removing equipment or component covers, panels or plates.
  21. Common areas, or systems, structures, or components thereof, including, but not limited to, those of a common interest development as defined in California Civil Code Section 1351 et seq.
- D. The *inspector* is not required to perform any of the following as part of an inspection:
  1. Move any items or other obstruction(s) such as, but not limited to: equipment, furniture, floor or wall coverings, window coverings, snow, ice, water, debris, and foliage that may obstruct visibility or access.
  2. Determine causes for the need of repair or replacement, or specify repair or replacement procedures or materials.

- 3. *Determine* existence of latent deficiencies or defects.
- 4. *Dismantle* any *system, structure, or component*, or perform any *intrusive or destructive examination*, test or analysis.
- 5. Obtain or review information from any third-parties including, but not limited to: government agencies (such as permits), *component* or *system* manufacturers (including product defects, recalls or similar notices), contractors, managers, sellers, occupants, neighbors, consultants, homeowner or similar associations, attorneys, agents or brokers.
- 6. *Activate or operate* any *system or component* that is *shut down* or does not respond to *normal user controls*, nor *access* any area or *operate* any *component* or *system* which may jeopardize the safety of the *inspector*, or any other person or thing.
- 7. Research the history of a property, *report* on its potential for alteration, modification, extendibility, or its suitability for a specific or proposed use or occupancy.
- 8. Offer any form of guarantee or warranty.
- 9. *Examine or evaluate* the acoustical or other nuisance characteristics of any *system, structure, or component* of a *building*, complex, adjoining properties, or neighborhood.
- 10. *Operate or evaluate* any recreational *system, structure or component*.
- 11. *Operate or evaluate* low voltage electrical (less than single-phase line voltage, typically 120-volts), antennas, security *systems*, cable or satellite television, telephone, remote controls, radio controls, timers, intercoms, computers, photo-electric, motion sensing, or other such similar non-primary electrical power devices, *components*, or *systems*.
- 12. Use any *special equipment* to *examine* any *system, structure, or component* of a *building*.
- 13. Probe or exert pressure on any *component, system or structure*.
- 14. *Examine or evaluate* fire-resistive qualities of any *system, structure or component* of the *building*.
- 15. *Examine* every individual *component* of a *system or structure*, where such *components* are typically replicated, including, but not limited to: doors, windows, switches and receptacles. A *representative sampling* may be performed in order to *examine* such *systems, structures, or components* of a *building*.
- 15. *Determine* the age of construction or installation of any *system, structure, or component* of a *building*, or differentiate between original construction or subsequent additions, improvements, renovations or replacements thereto.

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

\*Note: All definitions apply to derivatives of these terms when italicized in the text.

- Accessible:** Can be approached or entered by the *inspector* safely without difficulty or damage to the *system, structure, or component*.
- Appliance:** See "*Component*."
- Appropriate persons:** An individual other than *inspector* herein, qualified by virtue of special knowledge, training or resources to further *examine* a *system, structure, or component*, as in the manner of a specialist.
- Building:** The *primary building* subject of the *inspection*, designed and erected for the purpose of human occupancy or use.
- Built-in:** See "*Permanently installed*"
- Component:** A *permanently installed appliance, fixture, element, or part* of a *system*.
- Condition:** The plainly visible and conspicuous state of being of a material object or thing.
- Cross-connection:** A connection between two otherwise separate systems, one of which is potable water and the other waste, sewage or other source of contamination.
- Destructive:** To demolish, damage, or probe any *system, structure, or component*, or to *dismantle* any *system or component* that would not be taken apart by an ordinary person in the course of normal maintenance.
- Determine:** To arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to *examination*.
- Disconnected:** See "*Shut down*."
- Dismantle:** See "*Destructive*."
- Enter:** See "*Accessible*."
- Evaluate:** To assess the *systems, structures, or components* of a *building*.
- Evidence:** Plainly visible and conspicuous material objects or other things presented to the senses that would tend to produce conviction in the mind of an ordinary person as to the existence or non-existence of a fact.

**Examine:** To visually look for and identify *material physical deficiencies* in *systems, structures, or components* of a *building* through a non-intrusive physical *inspection*.

**Fixture:** See "*Component*."

**Function:** Performing its normal, proper and characteristic action.

**Functional Drainage:** The emptying of a plumbing fixture in a reasonable amount of time, without overflow, when another fixture is drained simultaneously.

**Functional flow:** A reasonable flow of water supply at the highest and farthest fixture from the *building* main when another fixture is operated simultaneously.

**Further evaluation:** A degree of *examination* beyond that of a typical and customary non-intrusive physical *examination*.

**Inspection:** The act of performing an *inspection*. (Refer to Section I, "Definitions and Scope" Paragraph A).

**Inspector:** One who performs an *inspection*.

**Intrusive:** See "*Destructive*."

**Material Physical Deficiency:** (Refer to Section I, "Definitions and Scope" Paragraph B).

**Normal user controls:** Devices that would be *operated* by the ordinary occupants of a *building*, requiring no specialized skill or knowledge.

**Operate:** To cause *systems* or equipment to *function* with *normal user controls*.

**Operational:** *Systems* or *components* capable of being safely operated.

**Oral Consultation:** A limited visual *inspection* of specific *systems, structures* or *components* of a *building* where no written *report* is prepared by the *inspector* and the *inspector's* findings, opinions, conclusions and recommendations are orally communicated by the *inspector* to the Client.

**Permanently Installed:** Fixed in place (e.g. screwed, bolted, or nailed), as distinct from *components, systems, or appliances* considered portable or freestanding.

**Primary building:** A *building* that an *inspector* has agreed to *inspect*, excluding all accessory buildings with the exception of the *primary parking structure*.

**Primary parking structure and surfaces:** A *building* and appurtenant surfaces for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the *primary building*.

**Report:** The *inspection report* is a written document prepared for a fee and issued after an *inspection* identifying and describing the *inspected systems, structures, and components* of the *building* and identifying *material physical deficiencies* discovered therein.

**Representative sampling:** A small quantity of *components* of any *system* or *structure* enough like others in its class or kind to serve as an example of its class or kind.

**Shut down:** Turned off, inactive, not in-service, non-*operational*

**Special equipment:** Any tools or devices other than those normally used by an *inspector* to perform a typical and customary non-invasive physical *examination* of the *systems, structures, and components* of a *building*, including, but not limited to: levels, probes, meters, video or audio devices and measuring devices.

**Structure:** An assemblage of various *systems* and *components* to *function* as a whole.

**System:** An assemblage of various *components* to *function* as a whole.

**Technically Exhaustive:** A comprehensive and detailed *examination* beyond the scope of an *inspection* which would include, but would not be limited to: specialized knowledge or training, *special equipment*, measurements, calculations, testing, research, or analysis. Also, where the cost of obtaining information or the time required to conduct a technically exhaustive inspection and prepare the *inspection report* could outweigh the usefulness of the information and could be detrimental to the orderly and timely completion of Client's transaction.



*"The Symbol of Real Estate Inspection Professionalism in the State of California."*