

Code of Ethics

Article 1 - General standards

1. Licensees shall perform duties as a home inspector without bias to any of the parties to a real estate transaction, and shall perform their duties as a home inspector with integrity to the public and to their clients.
2. Licensee opinions about a property shall be based only on their education, experience, and honest convictions.
3. Licensees shall not communicate inspection results in a home inspection report with intent to defraud or in a careless, misleading or negligent manner.
4. Licensees shall disclose all known material facts to the licensee concerning a property.
5. Licensees must not accept or perform home inspections that includes the reporting of predetermined opinions or conclusions.
6. For the protection of all parties, licensees shall enter into a written contract with clients prior to the rendering of any home inspection services expressing the agreement of the parties. Copies of all written agreements shall be provided by the licensee to client within (3) three business days from the date of the execution of the agreement by the client.
7. Licensees must provide assistance wherever possible to the members of the Ohio Home Inspectors Board or to staff with the Division of Real Estate & Professional Licensing regarding the enforcement of Chapter 4764 of the Ohio Revised Code and its corresponding rules.

Article 2 - Compensation

1. Licensees shall not inspect for compensation any property in which the licensee has any current or prospective interest in the property.
2. Licensees shall not inspect for compensation any property in which the licensee has any current or prospective interest with any of the parties to the real estate transaction.
3. Licensees shall not inspect any property under contingent arrangements whereby any compensation or future referrals are dependent on reported findings or on the sale of a property.
4. Licensees shall not directly or indirectly compensate real estate licensees 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.

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5. Licenses shall not receive compensation for an inspection from more than one party unless prior written consent is provided by the client(s).
6. Licenses 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.
7. Licenses shall not repair, replace, or upgrade, for compensation, systems or components covered by the Standards of Practice for one year from the date of the inspection included in the licensee's inspection report.

Article 3 - Confidentiality

1. Licenses shall not disclose inspection findings or client information without prior written client approval.
2. Licenses may disclose inspection results or findings to the property's occupants or others present at the property only if the licensee's results or findings indicate imminent bodily harm or a significant danger to the property is present. Licenses may disclose inspection results or findings if compelled by a court order.
3. Licenses must take reasonable steps to safeguard or protect confidential information from unauthorized individuals.

Article 4 - Reports

1. Every home inspection report prepared by a licensee shall include:
 - A. Ohio home inspector license number;
 - B. The expiration date of the license;
 - C. The date the home inspection occurred;
 - D. Address of the property;
 - E. The fee received for the home inspection assignment;
 - F. The date the home inspection report was signed by the licensee; and
 - G. The signature of the licensee.
2. A licensee must exercise due care to prevent the unauthorized use of the licensee's signature to a home inspection report.
3. Licenses must not misrepresent or inaccurately report to the client or include in their corresponding reports the status of the licensee's Ohio home inspector license.
4. A home inspection report by a licensee shall include a statement that addresses the scope of work performed by the licensee, such as any services or hazards excluded from the licensee's inspection.

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Article 5 - Advertising

1. Licensees must advertise or solicit home inspection assignments only in a manner that is true and accurate.
2. Licensees shall only include a property in an advertisement for the licensee's home inspection services with the express, written consent of the property's current owner of record as recorded in the County Recorder's records.
3. Licensees shall only solicit a party or a party's agent that the licensee knows is not engaged by another Ohio home inspector licensee.
4. A licensee's failure to comply with any of the provisions for this rule shall constitute prima facie evidence of a violation of division (I) of section 4764.14 of the Revised Code.

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- A. These Standards of Practice apply to licensed Ohio home inspectors who are providing home inspections services pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4764.
- B. Ohio licensed home inspectors shall comply with all applicable Ohio laws and regulations.
- C. Licensees who perform home inspections are not required to identify or disclose a property's concealed conditions, latent defects or cosmetic deficiencies that do not significantly affect a property's system or part of a system's performance for the system's intended purpose.
- D. A licensee is not required to determine or offer an opinion about any of the following items in a home inspection report for a property inspected:
1. the condition of a system or part of system installed in a property that is not readily accessible;
 2. the estimated life expectancy of a system or part of a system;
 3. the adequacy or efficiency of a system or part of a system;
 4. the source or causes of conditions or deficiencies in the property;
 5. the estimated costs to correct deficiencies in the property;
 6. forecasting future conditions about the property, including but not limited to, forecasting the failure of systems or parts of system in a property;
 7. the appropriateness or suitability of a property for any use other than for residential purposes;
 8. the compliance of a system or parts of a system in a property with past, present or future requirements which include but are not limited to codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, builder specifications, installation and maintenance instructions, care or use guides;
 9. the marketability or market value of the property;
 10. the presence at the property of any animals, environmental hazards or substances that may be hazardous or harmful to any living being;

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11. the effectiveness or efficiency of any system installed at the property to control or remove any animals, environmental hazards or substances from the property;

12. the estimated operating cost of a system or parts of a system;

13. the sound quality or acoustical properties of a system or parts of a system;

14. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties;

15. determine or report on materials, conditions, systems or parts of systems subject to recall, litigation, or other adverse claims or conditions;

16. the legality of any contract or contract term pertaining to the property.

E. A licensee shall not determine or offer an opinion of any of the items found in paragraph (D) if prohibited by law or regulation.

F. A licensee shall clearly and conspicuously disclose in the inspection report those systems or parts of a system that were and were not operated or inspected.

G. A licensee is not required to offer as part of a licensee's home inspection services any of the following:

1. performance of any acts or services contrary to law or government regulations;

2. performance of any other trade or professional services other than a home inspection;

3. evaluation of any other trade or professional services performed on the property by others;

4. offer any warranties or guarantees regarding the property inspected.

H. During the performance of a home inspection, a licensee is not required to operate any of the following:

1. any systems or parts of a system that cannot be operated by normal operating controls or are otherwise inoperable;

2. any shut-off valves and manual stop valves;

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3. any devices designed to protect systems or parts of a system from unsafe condition including but not limited to automatic safety controls.

I. A licensee is not required to enter during a home inspection any of the following:

1. an area of the property that in the licensee's judgment is likely to be dangerous to the licensee or to other persons or is likely to cause damage to the property, its systems or parts of its systems;

2. any property crawl space or attic that is not readily accessible.

J. Any licensee who elects to enter or inspect those areas found in paragraph (I) does so at the licensee's risk. A licensee shall clearly and conspicuously disclose in the inspection report those systems or parts of a system that were and were not operated or inspected.

K. A licensee is not required to inspect during a home inspection any of the following:

1. any items found underground on the property, including but not limited to, storage tanks and wells, whether abandoned or active;

2. any items that are not installed in the property.;

3. any decorative items installed in the property;

4. any detached structures on the property other than garages or carports;

5. any common area property found in common areas for condominium or cooperative housing;

6. every occurrence of multiple similar parts of a system;

7. any outdoor cooking appliances.

L. A licensee is not required to do any of the following:

1. perform any procedures, operations or inspection at the property that will, in the licensee's judgment, is likely to be dangerous to the licensee or to other persons or is likely to cause damage to the property, its systems or parts of its systems;

2. move any items including but not limited to any personal property, plants, soil, snow, or other debris;

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3. take a-part or dismantle any property systems or parts of a system, except as required in this rule;

4. to adjust any devices, systems or parts of a property system, except as required by this rule;

5. to ignite or extinguish any fires, pilot lights, burners or other open flames that require manual ignition;

6. probing any surfaces that could, in the licensee's professional opinion, be damaged or where no deterioration is visible or presumed to exist.

M. A licensee shall inspect during an exterior home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. wall coverings, flashing, and trim;

2. exterior doors;

3. attached and adjacent decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and associated railings;

4. eaves, soffits, and fascia where accessible from the ground level;

5. vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the building;

6. any adjacent or entryway walkways, patios, and driveways.

N. A licensee is not required to inspect during an exterior home inspection or describe in a home inspection report any of the following:

1. screening, shutters, awnings, or other similar seasonal accessories;

2. fences, boundary walls, or similar structures;

3. geological and soil conditions on the property;

4. any recreational facilities including but not limited to spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools or exercise, entertainment, playground or other similar equipment;

5. outbuildings, other than garages and carports;

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6. seawalls, break-walls or docks;

7. erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

O. A licensee shall inspect during a home inspection of the structural components of a property, when readily accessible and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. crawl spaces or attics;

2. foundation;

3. floor structure;

4. wall structure;

5. ceiling structure;

6. roof structure.

P. A licensee is not required to inspect during a home inspection of the structural components of a property or describe in a home inspection report any of the following:

1. engineering or architectural analysis;

2. offer an opinion about the adequacy of structural systems or parts of the system;

3. enter crawl space areas that have less than 24 inches of vertical clearance between a property system and the ground or have a crawl space access with an opening smaller than 16 inches by 24 inches;

4. navigate load-bearing systems or beams in the attic space of a property that are concealed by insulation or by other materials.

Q. A licensee shall inspect a property's roof during a home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. roofing materials;

2. roof drainage system;

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3. flashing;

4. skylights, chimneys or any roof penetrations;

5. and the method the licensee used to inspect the roof.

R. A licensee is not required to inspect during a home inspection or describe in a home inspection report any of the following as it relates to a property's roof:

1. antennae;

2. interior vent systems, flues, or chimneys that are not readily accessible;

3. any other installed accessories.

S. A licensee shall inspect a property's plumbing during a home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. interior water supply and distribution systems, including any fixtures or faucets;

2. interior drain, waste, or venting system, including fixtures;

3. any water heating equipment and hot water supply systems;

4. vent systems, flues or chimneys;

5. fuel storage or fuel distribution systems;

6. sewage ejectors, sump pumps, or other related piping;

7. describe in the home inspection report only the energy source(s) utilized and the location of main water and fuel shut-off valves.

T. A licensee is not required to inspect during a home inspection or describe in a home inspection report any of the following as it relates to a property's plumbing:

1. clothes washing machine connections;

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2. interiors of vent systems, flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible;

3. wells, well pumps or other water storage related equipment;

4. water conditioning systems;

5. any solar, geothermal, and other renewable energy water heating systems;

6. manual or automatic fire extinguishing and sprinkler systems;

7. landscaping irrigation systems;

8. septic or other sewage disposal system;

9. sewage disposal and water supply: whether the system is public or private, the quality of the water, including supply flow, pressure or quantity or the adequacy of combustion air components.

10. Licensees are also not required to fill shower pans or fixtures for the purpose of testing for water leaks.

U. A licensee shall inspect a property's electrical system during a home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. service drop;

2. service entrance conductors, cables and raceways;

3. service equipment and main disconnects;

4. service grounding;

5. interior parts or components of a service panels and subpanels;

6. conductors;

7. overcurrent protection devices;

8. a representative sample of installed light fixtures, switches and receptacles;

9. ground fault circuit interrupters and arc fault circuit interrupters.

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10. Licensees shall describe in the home inspection report the property's amperage rating service, the location of main disconnects and subpanels, the presence or absence of any smoke or carbon monoxide alarms and the predominant branch of circuit wiring method.

V. A licensee is not required to inspect during a home inspection or describe in a home inspection report any of the following as it relates to a property's electrical system:

1. remote control devices;

2. test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, security systems and other signaling and warning devices;

3. low voltage wiring systems, components or parts of a system;

4. ancillary wiring systems, components or parts of a system that not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system;

5. solar, geothermal, wind, and other renewable energy systems;

6. Licensees are not required to measure the amperage, voltage or impedance or determine the age or type of smoke or carbon monoxide alarms.

W. A licensee shall inspect all readily accessible panels for a property's heating system during a home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. all installed heating equipment;

2. vent systems, flues and chimneys;

3. distribution systems;

4. describe the energy source and heating systems.

X. A licensee is not required to inspect during a home inspection or describe in a home inspection report any of the following as it relates to a property's heating system:

1. interiors of vent systems, flues and chimneys that are not readily accessible;

2. heat exchangers;

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3. humidifiers and dehumidifiers;

4. electric air cleaning and sanitizing devices;

5. heating systems using ground-source, water-source, solar, and renewable energy technologies;

6. heat-recovery and similar whole-house mechanical ventilation systems; or

7. Licensees shall not comment or offer an opinion regarding the heat supply adequacy, distribution balance or the adequacy of combustion air components.

Y. A licensee shall inspect all readily accessible panels for a property's air conditioning system during a home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. central and permanently installed cooling equipment;

2. distribution systems;

3. describe the energy source(s) and cooling systems.

Z. A licensee is not required to inspect or determine during a home inspection or describe in a home inspection report any of the following as it relates to a property's cooling system:

1. electric air cleaning and sanitizing devices;

2. cooling units that are not permanently installed or that are installed in windows;

3. cooling systems using ground-source, water-source, solar, and renewable energy technologies.

4. Licensees shall not determine cooling supply adequacy and distribution balance.

AA. A licensee shall inspect all readily accessible interior areas of a property during a home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. walls, ceilings and floors;

2. steps, stairways and railings;

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3. countertops and a representative sample of installed cabinets;

4. a representative sample of doors and windows;

5. garage vehicle doors and garage vehicle door operations;

6. installed appliances including but not limited to ovens, ranges, surface cooking appliances, microwave ovens, dishwashing machines, and food waste grinders by using normal operating controls to activate the primary function.

BB. A licensee is not required to inspect during a home inspection or describe in a home inspection report any of the following as it relates to a property's:

1. paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments;

2. personal floor coverings;

3. uninstalled window treatments;

4. coatings on and the hermetic seals between panes of window glass;

5. central vacuum systems;

6. shared or common recreational facilities;

7. free-standing household appliances not listed in paragraph BB(6);

8. appliance thermostats including their calibration, adequacy of heating elements, self-cleaning oven cycles, indicator lights, door seals, timers, clocks, timing features and other specialized features of the appliance;

9. the operation of every control and feature of an inspected appliance.

CC. A licensee shall inspect insulation and ventilation in a property during a home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces or the absence of insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces;

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2. ventilation of attics and foundation areas;

3. exhaust systems found in the property, including but not limited to exhaust systems in the kitchen, bathroom or laundry room;

4. clothes dryer exhaust systems.

DD. The licensee is not required to disturb insulation or ventilation during a home inspection.

EE. A licensee shall inspect all readily accessible parts of a fireplace or fuel-burning appliances in a property during a home inspection and describe in the home inspection report the licensee's findings related to all of the following:

1. fuel-burning fireplaces, stoves, and fireplace inserts.

2. any fuel-burning accessories installed in fireplaces;

3. chimneys, flues and vent systems.

FF. A licensee is not required to inspect during a home inspection or describe in a home inspection report any of the following as it relates to a property's fireplace or fuel-burning appliances:

1. fire screens and doors;

2. seals and gaskets;

3. automatic fuel feed devices;

4. mantles and fireplace surrounds;

5. combustion air components in order to determine their adequacy;

6. heat distribution assistance items;

7. fuel-burning fireplaces or appliances located outside the inspected structures;

8. determining draft characteristics.

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GG. Any licensee who elects to operate, inspect or offer an opinion in a home inspection report regarding any of the items found in this rule that were excluded from the licensee's responsibility shall not do so in a careless or misleading manner.