

# STANDARD OF PRACTICE



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF CERTIFIED  
HOME INSPECTORS  
OF QUEBEC



# STANDARD OF PRACTICE

## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED HOME INSPECTORS OF QUEBEC

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# STANDARD OF PRACTICE

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### PREAMBLE

In accordance with section 81 of the Regulation respecting brokerage requirements, professional conduct of brokers and advertising of the Real Estate Brokerage Act issued by the Quebec government, a broker or agency executive officer must recommend to the person proposing to acquire an immovable that the person have a full inspection performed by a professional or a building inspector who:

1. has professional liability insurance covering fault, error and omission;
2. uses a recognized inspection service agreement;
3. performs inspections according to recognized building inspection standards;
4. submits a written report to the party that requested the inspection services.

The broker or agency executive officer may furnish a list of more than one professional or building inspector meeting the requirements of the first paragraph.

**InterNachi-Quebec** requires that its members to respect these conditions through the framework and the on-going training provided to its members.

The Standard of Practice establishes the requirements of a residential inspection and the drafting of a report.

### 1. AREAS OF APPLICATION

The present Standard of Practice applies to inspections of part or all of a building of maximum three (3) floors and an area of no more than 600 square metres (excluding the basement) and which is used as follows:

- 1.1 single family dwelling, stand alone, attached or in a row;
- 1.2 a multi-housing unit building;
- 1.3 a residential building held in either divided copropriety or undivided copropriety;
- 1.4 a housing building mainly residential and partially commercial.

### 2. REQUIREMENTS OF AN INSPECTION AGREEMENT AND OF A CERTIFICATE OF EXECUTION OF AN INSPECTION

- 2.1 For each inspection, the inspector must draw up and sign with the client an inspection agreement which confirms the application and the compliance with this Standard of Practice.
- 2.2 A certificate of execution must be filled out and signed by both contractual partners.
- 2.3 Additional inspection services may be included but a written agreement must be signed to this effect.

### 3. DEFINITION OF A BUILDING INSPECTION

- 3.1 A pre-purchase inspection is attentive and visual, intended to point out to the eventual buyer faults noted at the time of the inspection. Apparent defects as well as signs that lead the inspector to suspect hidden faults will be noted. It is not intended to predict the future state of the building or hidden faults or latent faults.
- 3.2 It is not intended to determine whether the building is suitable for a particular use.
- 3.3 It is not a technically exhaustive or building code compliance inspection. It is intended to inspect systems and components that are readily accessible.

- 3.4 It does not include destructive measures permitting to see inside walls, ceilings, pipes or mechanical systems or any other space that is inaccessible, hidden or non-verifiable.
- 3.5 The inspection does not guarantee the absence of hidden faults nor does it allow the inspector to see latent conditions. Nonetheless, it is carried out in a rigorous fashion to uncover signs or indications of a possible defect.
- 3.6 The inspection does not constitute any kind of guarantee.
- 3.7 When a sufficient number of clues lead the inspector to suspect that a potential major deficiency or defect exists in one of the building systems or components, the inspector must recommend a technically exhaustive inspection by a specialist as the Standard of Practice does not cover technically exhaustive inspections.

#### **4. REQUIREMENTS AND CONTENT OF A REPORT**

Following the analysis of the results of the visual inspection of the building, the inspector must remit a written report to the client.

##### **THE INSPECTION REPORT MUST:**

- 4.1 List the client's name and the reason for the inspection;
- 4.2 Indicate the date, hour, climatic conditions as well as the names of all people present at the inspection;
- 4.3 Include a table of contents and page numbers;
- 4.4 Indicate the systems and components governed by this Standard of Practice;
- 4.5 Describe the systems and components in place which have, in fact, been inspected;
- 4.6 Indicate the methods used to inspect, if need be (ex: ladder, observation from ground level etc.);
- 4.7 Describe the systems and components that have not been inspected and give the reasons for this;
- 4.8 Mention the systems and components which require repairs or replacement;
- 4.9 Mention the systems and components observed which are in dangerous condition;
- 4.10 Mention any signs of water infiltration, visible condensation, stains or the appearance of suspected mold;
- 4.11 Include photos confirming the inspector's observations;
- 4.12 Indicate the name of the inspector, name of the inspection company and its address;
- 4.13 Indicate the date of the written report;
- 4.14 The report must be signed by the inspector who carried out the inspection.

#### **5. LIMITS AND GENERAL EXCLUSIONS OF AN INSPECTION**

##### **5.1 LIMITATIONS**

- 5.1.1 An inspection is not technically exhaustive;
- 5.1.2 An inspection is visual and will not identify hidden defects;
- 5.1.3 An inspection does not take into account aesthetic or superficial defects or personal taste;
- 5.1.4 An inspection is not intended to determine if a property is suitable for a precise use;
- 5.1.5 An inspection is not intended to determine the market value of a property;
- 5.1.6 An inspection is not intended to determine the insurability of a property;

- 5.1.7 The purpose/goal of an inspection is not to give an opinion on the buying opportunity of the property inspected;
  - 5.1.8 An inspection is not intended to determine the life expectancy of the building or its systems or any components and offers no guarantee of any kind;
  - 5.1.9 All components which are not permanently installed are excluded from the inspection;
  - 5.1.10 The inspection and the report do not take into account supplementary heating units or solid combustion heaters.
- 5.2. EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO DETERMINE:
- 5.2.1 The demarcation lines or the encroachment on the property;
  - 5.2.2 The state of components and systems not easily accessible;
  - 5.2.3 The remaining lifespan of any systems or components;
  - 5.2.4 The evaluation of a system or component's effectiveness, their pertinence or the cost of running same;
  - 5.2.5 Evaluate the methods, materials and costs related to correcting the systems and components, nor the cause of the necessary corrections;
  - 5.2.6 The reason why the system or components must be repaired or replaced;
  - 5.2.7 The future state of a component or a system;
  - 5.2.8 Whether the construction codes, building norms or regulations have been respected;
  - 5.2.9 The presence or absence of any organisms, rodents, insects or other destructive animals which could damage the building components;
  - 5.2.10 The presence of mold or fungus;
  - 5.2.11 The presence of dangerous substances, in particular mold, fungus, micro-organisms or other carcinogenic or toxic substances, environmentally dangerous substances or contaminants propelled by air (including radon), soil, sound or water;
  - 5.2.12 Air quality;
  - 5.2.13 The presence of environmental dangers such as lead paint, asbestos and toxic substances in the dry wall;
  - 5.2.14 The presence of electromagnetic fields;
  - 5.2.15 Any condition related to the presence of hazardous waste;
  - 5.2.16 Manufacturer's recalls, following the manufacturer's installation instructions or notices issued by the manufacturers;
  - 5.2.17 The acoustic properties of the building.
- 5.3 THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO OPERATE:
- 5.3.1 Any system that is out of order ;
  - 5.3.2 Any systems that do not work properly;
  - 5.3.3 Or evaluate any low voltage electrical system including:
    - 5.3.3.1 Telephone lines;
    - 5.3.3.2 Television cables;
    - 5.3.3.3 Satellite antennae;
    - 5.3.3.4 Hertzian antennae;

5.3.3.5 Low voltage light fixtures;

5.3.3.6 Remote controls.

5.3.4 Any system which does not light up with normal controls;

5.3.5 Any shut off valve;

5.3.6 Any electrical junction box or surge protection device;

5.3.7 All security systems;

5.3.8 All hygrometer, gas detector or similar equipment.

**5.4 THE INSPECTOR WILL NOT:**

5.4.1 Move personal objects or any obstacles such as carpets, rugs, wall coverings, furniture, ceiling tiles, drapes, plants, debris, snow, ice, water, domestic animals or any other object that restricts the inspection;

5.4.2 Take apart, open or uncover any system or component;

5.4.3 Enter an area of the building or act in any way that could damage the building or a component or could risk the safety of the inspector or other people, including walking on the roof, going into the crawl space or the attic;

5.4.4 Inspect all buried elements such as the septic tank, septic drain field, water tanks, field disposal systems, tanks, wells, pipes, and foundation drains;

5.4.5 Inspect decorative elements;

5.4.6 Inspect the common areas of a co-ownership property without the written permission of the board of the syndicate of co-ownership;

5.4.7 Offer architectural or engineering services;

5.4.8 Offer a guarantee;

5.4.9 Undertake historical research of the property or suggest additions, improvements or renovation, or offer an opinion whether the building is appropriate for a specific use related to the client's occupation;

5.4.10 Point out the difference between the original building, additions, improvements, or renovations;

5.4.11 Inspect swimming pools, whirlpools, saunas or other similar equipment;

5.4.12 Inspect the garages, carports or other dependencies.

**HOW THE INSPECTION UNFOLDS**

**6. ROOF**

In the report, the inspector must mention the method used to examine the roof.

6.1 IN HIS REPORT, THE INSPECTOR MUST OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION:

6.1.1 The type of roof;

6.1.2 Roofing material used;

6.1.3 The roof drainage, the roof drain, gutters, downspouts;

6.1.4 Vents, flashing, skylights;

6.1.5 Exterior of chimneys and other roof protrusions.

- 6.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO:
- 6.2.1 Walk on the surfaces of the roof;
  - 6.2.2 Observe the antenna, parabolic antennae, lightning conductor, defrosting equipment or solar sensor or any similar attachments;
  - 6.2.3 Confirm the proper mounting or the correct installation of roofing material.

## 7. EXTERIOR

The inspector must open and close the permanent exterior doors including the garage door whether manual or electric.

- 7.1 IN THE REPORT, THE INSPECTOR MUST OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION
- 7.1.1 The material of the exterior wall coverings, the flashing;
  - 7.1.2 The inspector must operate the doors and a representative number of windows;
  - 7.1.3 The terraces, door stoop, staircases, steps, porches, railings, sidewalks, the parking area;
  - 7.1.4 The eaves, the soffits and the exterior fascia;
  - 7.1.5 The vegetation, or the surface drainage, the slope of the land which can be harmful to the building;
  - 7.1.6 The support walls attached to the house.
- 7.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR WILL NOT OBSERVE, INSPECT OR COMMENT ON:
- 7.2.1 Screening, shutters, canopies, fences, storm doors, storm windows, outbuildings or outdoor lighting, and seasonal accessories;
  - 7.2.2 Sealing (waterproofing) and thermal insulation of double glazed windows;
  - 7.2.3 Safety screens;
  - 7.2.4 Recreational installations, whirlpool baths, saunas and other similar equipment;
  - 7.2.5 Geological, geotechnical, hydrological conditions or the state of the soil;
  - 7.2.6 Dams, retaining walls and docks beside water courses;
  - 7.2.7 Underground infrastructure;
  - 7.2.8 Wells and water quality;
  - 7.2.9 Any underground buried components, including weeping fields, underground tanks and reservoir, wells and underground piping, drainage piping, systems and foundation drains.

## 8. STRUCTURE

- 8.1 IN THE REPORT, THE INSPECTOR MUST OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION:
- 8.1.1 The foundations;
  - 8.1.2 The floors;
  - 8.1.3 Beams;
  - 8.1.4 Columns;
  - 8.1.5 Walls;
  - 8.1.6 Roofs.



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- 8.2 The inspector must probe a representative number of structural components which appear to have deteriorated except where by doing so a component could be further damaged.
- 8.3 The inspector must enter the crawl space and the attic when the open area is of a reasonable size, healthy and safe and does not require the use of tools.
- 8.4 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO:
  - 8.4.1 Offer any engineering or architectural service or any other form of specialized analysis;
  - 8.4.2 Offer an opinion on the capacity or expected performance of the structural system.

### 9. HEATING

The inspector must open the access panels installed by the manufacturer or installer to allow the owner to carry-out routine maintenance as long as the operator does not require the use of tools.

- 9.1 In the report, the inspector must observe, describe and mention
  - 9.1.1 The heating system using the usual controls;
  - 9.1.2 The energy source;
  - 9.1.3 The type of equipment used to produce heat;
  - 9.1.4 The type and placement of the thermostat;
  - 9.1.5 The exterior of the chimney;
  - 9.1.6 The heat distribution system (ducts, piping, radiators, furnace);
  - 9.1.7 The combustible storage unit (location, date of manufacture, leaks, supports);
  - 9.1.8 The supply line (condition and location);
  - 9.1.9 The refuelling pipes and ventilation.
- 9.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO:
  - 9.2.1 Observe and describe the inside of the pipes and chimneys, firebox, heat exchangers, burners, air inlets, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, electrostatic air filters, geothermic or solar systems and auxiliary heaters;
  - 9.2.2 Determine whether the heat in each room is uniform, sufficient and/or appropriate;
  - 9.2.3 Mention the presence or absence of a heat source permanently installed in each habitable room, unfinished basement and/or crawl space.

### 10. CLIMATE CONTROL

- 10.1 IN THE REPORT, THE INSPECTOR MUST OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION:
  - 10.1.1 The climate control system using the usual controls;
  - 10.1.2 The type of equipment;
  - 10.1.3 The location of the thermostat;
  - 10.1.4 The pipes of the distribution system;
  - 10.1.5 The drainage installation.



- 10.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO:
- 10.2.1 Make sure that the cold air supply is uniform, sufficient or appropriate for each of the rooms;
  - 10.2.2 Observe the movable or portable air conditioning units.

## 11. PLUMBING

- 11.1 In the report, the inspector must observe, describe and mention

### Water Supply

- 11.1.1 The visible indoor water distribution system;
- 11.1.2 The supply pipes;
- 11.1.3 The main supply shut off valve (type and location);
- 11.1.4 Supply piping;
- 11.1.5 The outdoor taps including the vacuum breakers;
- 11.1.6 The system and the indoor taps;
- 11.1.7 The functional flow rate;
- 11.1.8 Leakage;
- 11.1.9 The cross connections.

### Drainage

- 11.1.10 The visible indoor system of drainage of waste water;
- 11.1.11 The siphons; drainage pipes and vents;
- 11.1.12 Floor drains;
- 11.1.13 Anti-backflow systems and cleanouts (placement);
- 11.1.14 Presence of leaks;
- 11.1.15 Sump and sump pump;
- 11.1.16 The presence of yellowish or reddish water in the sumps and catch basin when present;
- 11.1.17 Solid waste pumps.

### Hot water tanks

- 11.1.18 The equipment supplying hot water;
- 11.1.19 Tank capacity;
- 11.1.20 Date of manufacture and its location as indicated on the identification plate;
- 11.1.21 Type of energy;
- 11.1.22 Presence or absence of shut off valve;
- 11.1.23 Presence or absence of pressure relief valve (TPR) and drainage tubing.

- 11.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS:
- 11.2.1 The inspector must not operate the safety valves and the stop valves.



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### THE INSPECTOR WILL NOT INSPECT:

- 11.2.2 The water treatment systems;
- 11.2.3 The water sprinkler systems;
- 11.2.4 The garden sprinkler systems;
- 11.2.5 The quality and quantity of the water source;
- 11.2.6 Water treatment systems and filters;
- 11.2.7 Elimination systems such as compactors and garbage disposal units;
- 11.2.8 Foundation drainage systems;
- 11.2.9 Spas, swimming pools, saunas, whirlpool baths, shower surrounds, or other similar apparatus;
- 11.2.10 Test the shower base, baths and walls or shower walls for waterproofing and flooding protection;
- 11.2.11 Or determine if the water supply and drainage network is public or private.

## 12. ELECTRICITY

### 12.1 IN THE REPORT, THE INSPECTOR MUST OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION:

- 12.1.1 Installation of the power service supply entrance;
- 12.1.2 Grounding;
- 12.1.3 Rated amperage and voltage of the equipment as indicated on the fuses and main circuit breaker;
- 12.1.4 Electrical distribution panels and circuit breakers and fuses;
- 12.1.5 The wiring of the branch circuit;
- 12.1.6 The working of a representative number of permanently installed lighting fixtures, switches and electrical outlets fitted inside and outside of the building;
- 12.1.7 The polarity and grounding of a representative number of electrical outlets;
- 12.1.8 The presence or absence of ground fault circuit interrupters;
- 12.1.9 The working of ground fault circuit interrupters;
- 12.1.10 The presence or absence of arch fault circuit breaker.

### 12.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO:

- 12.2.1 Insert tools, sensors or test equipment in the electrical panels or the electrical equipment;
- 12.2.2 Will not remove the panel cover unless he holds an approved training in CSA Z462-F12 and is wearing the approved protective clothing;
- 12.2.3 Operate out of order electrical systems;
- 12.2.4 Operate or alter the electrical overcurrent protective devices or the overload protective devices;
- 12.2.5 Determine the compatibility of the circuit breakers wiring with their security devices (fuses or circuit breakers);
- 12.2.6 Measure and calculate the amperage and voltage of the electrical set-up unless it is clearly indicated;
- 12.2.7 Determine the accuracy of the amperage labels;
- 12.2.8 Inspect the outdoor lighting such as coach lights and landscaping.

### **13. INSULATION**

- 13.1 IN THE REPORT, THE INSPECTOR MUST OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION:
- 13.1.1 Insulating material and vapour barriers in unfinished and easily accessible spaces.
- 13.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO:
- 13.2.1 Displace, touch or lift insulation or vapour barriers;
  - 13.2.2 Identify the composition or the thermal value of the insulation material;
  - 13.2.3 Determine the building code compliance, uniformity, adequacy or the necessity of the insulation;
  - 13.2.4 Determine the type of material used in the insulation or pipe sheathing, air inlets, insulating sheathing, boilers, and electrical setups.

### **14. VENTILATION**

- 14.1 IN THE REPORT, THE INSPECTOR MUST OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION:
- 14.1.1 Ventilation of the attic spaces;
  - 14.1.2 Basement and crawl space ventilation;
  - 14.1.3 Mechanical ventilation systems;
  - 14.1.4 Bathroom ventilators;
  - 14.1.5 Range hood;
  - 14.1.6 Dryer evacuation outlet system;
  - 14.1.7 Air exchanger, its filters, location and air intake.
- 14.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT HAVE TO:
- 14.2.1 The inspector is not required to report on the building's compliance standards, uniformity nor the adequacy of the ventilation.

### **15. INTERIOR**

- 15.1 IN THE REPORT, THE INSPECTOR MUST OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION:
- 15.1.1 The walls, floors and ceilings;
  - 15.1.2 The staircases, steps and hand rails;
  - 15.1.3 A representative number of windows and doors;
  - 15.1.4 The doors, walls and ceilings that separate the living spaces from the garage;
  - 15.1.5 The presence or absence of smoke detectors;
  - 15.1.6 The presence or absence of carbon monoxide detectors;
  - 15.1.7 Leakage and water stains or noticeable condensation and all signs of mold noticed inside the building. In this case, the inspector must use a hygrometer to confirm the presence of humidity only in areas that are suspect.



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- 15.2 SPECIAL EXCLUSIONS: IN THE REPORT, THE INSPECTOR WILL NOT OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND MENTION:
- 15.2.1 Painting, wallpaper or any other wall finishes;
  - 15.2.2 Window treatments;
  - 15.2.3 Carpeting or other floor covering;
  - 15.2.4 Central vacuum system;
  - 15.2.5 Recreational equipment.



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Architectural service:**

Any practice involving the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or grouping of structures, and the use of space within and surrounding the structures of the design, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and administration of the construction contract.

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**Component:**

Any part of a system such as a beam or a floor which can be easily observed. A component is not an individual part of a component such as nails, slats or screws, which once assembled form the component.

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**Decorative or non-permanent component:**

A decorative element or accessory which is not part of or an essential part of a system or a building component or their essential function.

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**Describe:**

To report in writing a system or component by its type or other observed characteristics in order to distinguish it from other components used for the same purpose.

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**Dismantle:**

To open, take apart or remove any component, device or part that would not typically be opened, taken apart or removed by an average occupant.

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**Easily accessible:**

When it is possible to safely observe without the need to eliminate obstacles (snow, ice, objects) to detach or uncouple attachments or connecting devices or to resort to other dangerous or difficult procedures in order to gain access.

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**Engineering service:**

Any professional service or creative work requiring engineering education, training and experience, and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical and engineering sciences to such professional service or creative work as consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design and supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with the specifications and design, in conjunction with structures, buildings, machines, equipment, works and/or processes.

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**Household appliances:**

Kitchen, washing appliances and other similar domestic appliances.

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**Indication:**

Indicators of potential defects.

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**Inspection report:**

A written document which describes the inspector's observations during the inspection.

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**Inspect:**

To safely observe the systems and components which are easily accessible using the normal household controls and to enter easily accessible areas.



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**Inspector:**

One who performs a building inspection.

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**Normal operating control:**

Any control, such as a thermostat, a wall switch or a safety switch which can be activated by the occupant without the use of special tools.

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**Observe:**

To carefully examine.

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**Private unit:**

Residential unit. The inspection of a private unit which is part of a co-owned building consists of inspecting the systems and components installed horizontally on the surface of the interior wall finish and vertically on the ceiling finish and floor covering.

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**Representative number:**

A number sufficient to serve as a typical or characteristic example of the item(s) inspected.

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**Solid fuel heating element:**

A solid fuel heating element using coal, wood or other similar organic material. Examples are a fireplace either in stone or prefabricated, a built-in stove, a conventional stove, a heat pump.

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**Structural component:**

A building component used to support interior and exterior sheathing materials or as a support for other building components.

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**System:**

A complex assembly of various components which function as a whole.

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**Technically exhaustive:**

A comprehensive and detailed examination beyond the scope of a real estate home inspection that would involve or include, but would not be limited to: dismantling, specialized knowledge or training, special equipment, measurements, calculations, testing, research, analysis or other means.

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**Probe:**

To inspect either manually or using a tool to determine the state of something.

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**Underground component:**

A system or component buried in the ground either outside or inside the building such as buried drain, foundation drain, oil tank which are not accessible without excavation or use of specialized tools.