

# MSHI Standards of Practice

ADOPTED AUGUST 2, 1999

THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY OF HOUSING INSPECTORS (MSHI) IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY ESTABLISHED IN 1979. MEMBERSHIP IN MSHI IS VOLUNTARY AND CONSISTS OF PRIVATE, LICENSED, FEE PAID HOME INSPECTORS. MSHI'S OBJECTIVES INCLUDE A HIGHER STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE WITHIN THE PROFESSION, EDUCATION, AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT OF ITS MEMBERSHIP AND THEIR SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC.

## Purpose and Scope

The purpose of these standards of practice is to make known the scope and expected services to be provided by MSHI members for private, fee paid home inspections. Home inspections performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client objective information regarding the current condition of the home inspected.

### THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:

Inspect readily accessible, installed systems and components listed in these Standards of Practice. Describe in written form, the following dwelling systems and components:

- Structural components
- Exterior/interior surfaces
- Roofing
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Heating/Cooling
- Interiors
- Insulation and ventilation
- Fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances

### INFORM IN WRITING REGARDING:

Any systems and/or components designed for inspections that were present. If they were not inspected, list the reason they were not inspected. Any system or component, if in the opinion of the inspector, there is an immediate life threatening condition to any occupant it will be immediately made known

# Dwelling Systems and Components

- **THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

Enter under floor crawl spaces and attic spaces where feasible. When access is not physically possible a reasonable explanation will be given.

**OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND INFORM REGARDING:**

**Structural components including foundation and framing.**

Probe with a pointed metal object a representative number of structural components where deterioration is expected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is not required when probing would damage any finished surface.

**The means used to inspect the entire structure including under floor crawl spaces and attics.**

1. The foundation
2. The floor structure
3. The roof structure

## **EXTERIOR:**

- **THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND INFORM REGARDING:**

1. Siding, flashing and trim
2. All exterior doors, windows, storms and screens, shutters and awnings
3. Decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches and railings
4. Eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level
5. Vegetation, grading, drainage, and retaining walls with respect to their effects on the condition of the building
6. Driveways, patios and sidewalks

## **ROOFING:**

- **THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**OBSERVE, DESCRIBE, INFORM, AND DESCRIBE THE METHOD OF OBSERVATION:**

1. Roof coverings and structure
2. Roof drain systems
3. Flashing
4. Skylights, chimneys, and roof penetration

**PLUMBING:**

• **THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**OBSERVE, DESCRIBE, INFORM, AND DESCRIBE THE METHOD OF OBSERVATION:**

1. Interior water supply and distribution systems including faucets and fixtures
2. Potable hot water heater systems, vents, flues, fuel distribution, and chimneys
3. Drain, waste and vent systems, including septic lift systems
4. Drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping
5. Advise the client regarding the existence of waste disposal systems, public or private

**The inspector will inform the client that independent testing for private waste and water supply systems may be considered apart from the inspection currently being completed.**

**ELECTRICAL:**

• **THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND INFORM, AND DESCRIBE THE METHOD OF OBSERVATION:**

1. Service entrance/drop, conductors, cables and raceways
2. Service equipment and main disconnects, including panel(s)
3. Service grounding
4. Interior components of service and sub-panel(s) if viewed with the service cover removed
5. Test protection devices, including GFCI outlets using an approved GFCI tester whenever possible
6. Test all switched light fixtures and a majority of the accessible convenience outlets

**DESCRIBE:**

7. Amperage and voltage rating of the electrical service
8. Location of main disconnect and sub-panel(s)
9. Presence of aluminum branch circuit wiring
10. Wiring types

**6. Heating and Cooling**

**THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**OBSERVE, DESCRIBE, INFORM, AND DESCRIBE THE METHOD OF OBSERVATION:**

1. Open readily accessible panels

**INSPECT INSTALLED HEATING SYSTEMS INCLUDING:**

2. Automatic safety controls

3. Vent systems, flues and chimneys

**DESCRIBE:**

4. Energy sources and determine draft characteristics

**THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**INSPECT: WHEN OUTDOOR TEMPERATURE IS OVER 65 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT WHENEVER POSSIBLE:**

5. Cooling and air handling equipment
6. Distribution system

**DESCRIBE:**

7. Energy sources
8. Cooling systems

**INTERIOR:**

- **THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND INFORM REGARDING:**

**INSPECT:**

1. Walls, ceilings and floors of primary dwelling unit and garage
2. Windows: Operate a majority of the windows present in the dwelling
3. Steps, stairways and railings
4. Garage doors and door operators

- **ATTICS THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**OBSERVE, DESCRIBE AND INFORM REGARDING:**

**INSPECT:**

1. Ventilation of attics
2. Mechanical ventilation systems

**FIREPLACES & SOLID FUEL BURNING APPLIANCES**

- **THE MSHI INSPECTOR WILL:**

**INSPECT:**

1. Interior and exterior system components
2. Chimneys and flue connectors where visible

**DESCRIBE:**

3. Type and materials of fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances

4. Type and materials of chimney
5. General limitation and exclusions

**GENERAL LIMITATIONS:**

6. The inspector is not required to perform any action or make any determination not specifically stated in the Standards of Practice.
7. Inspections performed in accordance with the Standards of Practice are not technically exhaustive.

**GENERAL EXCLUSIONS:**

Design problems, adequacy of design, or operational capacity. Concealed wiring, plumbing, heating ducts, heating pipes, or water leaks.

8. Sprinkler systems, alarm systems, low voltage lighting or wiring.
9. Foundation walls below grade or behind finished walls.
10. Conditions of systems or components, which are not visually accessible.
11. Pools, spas, their adjoining pumps, heaters and piping.
12. Life expectancy of any system or component.
13. Causes of any condition or deficiency.
14. Methods, materials or costs of corrections.
15. Future conditions, including but not limited to failure of systems and components.
16. The suitability of the property for any specialized use.
17. Market value of the property or its marketability.
18. Compliance with regulatory requirements.
19. The advisability of purchase of the property.
20. The presence of pests such as wood damaging organisms, rodents or insects.
21. The presence of any suspected hazardous substances including, but not limited to, toxins, carcinogens, noise and contaminants in soil, water, or air.
22. The effectiveness of any system installed or method utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.
23. Operating costs of systems and or components.
24. Acoustical properties of any system or component.
25. The effectiveness of energy related systems or components.

**THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO OPERATE:**

26. Any system or component which has been shut down or otherwise inoperable.
27. Any system or component, which does not respond to normal operating, controls.

**THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO ENTER:**

28. Any area or perform a procedure which will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely damage the property, its systems components or any current occupant.
29. Any area which will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be dangerous to the inspector or other persons.

**THE INSPECTOR IS NOT REQUIRED TO:**

30. Inspect cosmetic items, underground items, or items which are not installed.
31. Describe a component or system, which was not inspected.
32. Disturb insulation, vapor barriers, move personal items, furniture, equipment, plants, oil, snow, ice, or debris.