

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS  
STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR  
RESIDENTIAL SWIMMING POOL AND SPA INSPECTIONS

**1. INSPECTION PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- 1.1** The purpose of these Standards of Professional Practice (Standards) is to establish a uniform standard for *inspectors* who voluntarily use these Standards when performing residential *swimming pool/spa* inspections.
- 1.2** Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards:
- A.** provide the *client* with additional objective information about the condition of inspected *components* at the time of the inspection;
  - B.** are conducted by an inspection generalist, not by a *technical specialist*;
  - C.** are general and do not include or confirm conformity with:
    - 1. building codes and other governmental laws and regulations,
    - 2. manufacturer's installation instructions,
    - 3. construction plans, drawings, and specifications;
  - D.** do not provide a warranty or guarantee regarding the condition of the inspected *swimming pools/spas*;
  - E.** do not identify and report all possible *safety* issues regarding the installation, operation, maintenance, and use of inspected *swimming pools/spas*.
- 1.3** These Standards do not limit *inspectors* from:
- A.** including other services or *components* in addition to those required in these Standards;
  - B.** excluding *components* from the inspection if requested by the *client*.
- 1.4** *Inspectors* who perform inspections in accordance with these Standards shall adhere to the ASHI® Code of Ethics For the Home Inspection Profession.
- 1.5** These Standards apply only to *swimming pools/spas* located on property containing a one or two-family residential structure. These standards do not apply to *swimming pools/spas* used for commercial or competitive uses.

## 2. INSPECTION AND REPORT

2.1 *Inspectors shall inspect readily accessible, visually observable, installed components* designated in these Standards.

2.2 *Inspectors shall issue a written report that:*

- A. identifies *components* that, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, are not functioning properly, significantly deficient, *unsafe*, or are near the end of their service lives;
- B. provides the reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies reported in 2.2.A, that are not self-evident;
- C. recommends correction, *further evaluation*, or monitoring of *components* identified in 2.2.A;
- D. identifies *components* designated for inspection in these Standards that were present during the inspection but were not inspected and the reason(s) why they were not inspected;
- E. includes the following statement in its entirety and without change near the beginning of every report issued in conformity with these Standards.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

The American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc. (ASHI) does not verify the qualifications of inspectors who use these Standards and has no authority or control over the quality of inspections undertaken or performed using these Standards. These Standards are general in nature and are not intended to in any way discourage or limit additional or more detailed inspections. ASHI disclaims all liability for any and all personal and bodily injuries and damages, including but not limited to incidental and consequential damages, which may occur as a result of inspections performed using these Standards. No warranty, expressed or implied, is intended or offered by ASHI in the use of these Standards. ASHI assumes no risk and makes and implies no representations of any kind to inspectors, consumers, or others.

## 3.0 SWIMMING POOL AND SPA INSPECTION

3.1 *Inspectors shall:*

A. *inspect:*

- 1. the visible parts of interior finish materials,
- 2. the visible parts of decks, steps inside the *swimming pool/spa* shell, and *coping*,
- 3. the visible parts of pumps, motors, blowers, skimmer, filters, drains, heaters, *automatic safety controls*, gauges, visible piping and valves, conduit,

4. *cross connections* in the water supply system,
5. external bonding of the pump motors, blowers, heaters and other *components* that are required to be bonded,
6. operation of *readily accessible* lights, ground fault circuit interrupters, electrical *components*, and timer assemblies that are related to the pool or spa,
7. the visible parts of permanently *installed* handrails and ladders,
8. for the presence of *safety barriers* and *alarms*,
9. for the presence of *entrapment prevention components*,
10. vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the swimming pool or spa;

**B.** *describe:*

1. type of *swimming pool/spa*,
2. interior finish materials,
3. type of filter,
4. types of *safety barriers*,
5. type of cleaning system (if present),
6. energy source for heater (if present);

**C.** operate the systems using *normal operating controls*;

**D.** open *readily openable access panels*.

**3.2** *Inspectors* are not required to:

- A.** test, operate, or evaluate *components* when weather conditions or other circumstances may cause equipment damage;
- B.** test, operate, or evaluate *automatic safety controls* and manual or automatic valves;
- C.** touch *swimming pool/spa* water to examine the structure, *components*, and features, including their composition and quality;
- D.** test, operate, or evaluate electric resistance heaters;
- E.** determine structural integrity;
- F.** *inspect* any equipment or *component* that is *shut down* or that is not responding to *normal operating controls*, including conditions caused by the absence of a required energy source such as electricity or gas;

- G. *inspect, test, operate, or evaluate: low voltage or electronic controls, water chemistry or clarity, out-of-level conditions, presence or absence of bacteria/algae, backwash functions, aerators, automatic cleaning systems, automatic water fill systems, water treatment systems, chemical dispensers, thermostats, heating elements, heat exchangers, solar and other alternative energy heating systems, water features, covers and related components, accessories, leaks in shell, underground components, temporary safety barriers and alarms, stray voltage, and the interior of filters including filter cartridges;*
- H. *inspect, test, operate, or evaluate diving and jump boards, slides, play equipment and similar components; and the suitability of the pool for the use of such components and for activities such as diving; and*
- I. *determine the adequacy of: system or component design, structural components, equipment and component compatibility, flow rates, high or low pressure conditions, filters, heaters, safety barriers and alarms, and entrapment prevention components.*

## 4. GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

### 4.1 General Limitations

- A. *Inspectors are not required to perform any action or make any determination not specifically required in these Standards.*
- B. *Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards are not:*
  - 1. *numerically complete, and*
  - 2. *required to identify or to report concealed conditions, latent defects, and consequential damages, and cosmetic issues.*

### 4.2 General Exclusions

- A. *Inspectors are not required to determine:*
  - 1. *condition of components that are not installed or that are not visible and readily accessible;*
  - 2. *strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any component, including structural components;*
  - 3. *methods, materials, or costs of corrections;*
  - 4. *future conditions including, but not limited to, component failure and the life expectancy of components;*
  - 5. *the suitability of a swimming pool/spa or of a component for any specialized use;*
  - 6. *the presence or absence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to, toxins, allergens carcinogens, electromagnetic radiation, noise, radioactive substances, and contaminants in soil, water, and air;*

7. the presence or absence of potentially hazardous or damaging plants and animals including, but not limited to, wood destroying organisms and diseases harmful to humans including molds and mold-like substances;
8. operating costs of *components*;
9. acoustical properties of any *component*;
10. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties;
11. causes of or reasons for the condition of *components* identified in 2.2.A;
12. the *safety* of using the *swimming pool/spa* or any *component*;
13. the risks or benefits of adding new *components* and of modifying existing *components*;
14. whether the *swimming pool/spa* or any *component* is free from leakage of any kind;
15. whether any item, material, condition or *component* is subject to recall, controversy, litigation, products liability or other adverse claim or condition;
16. the adequacy of operation, maintenance, and use of the *swimming pool/spa* and of any *component*.

**B.** *Inspectors* are not required to:

1. perform any act or service contrary to law or regulation;
2. perform architectural, engineering, or surveying services or to confirm or evaluate such services performed by others;
3. perform any trade or any professional service other than as required in these Standards;
4. offer or provide warranties or guarantees of any kind;
5. perform any procedure or operation or enter any area that may, in the opinion of the *inspector*, be dangerous to the *inspector* or to other persons, or that may cause damage to the property or to *components*;
6. move personal property, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris;
7. *inspect installed decorative* items;
8. *inspect component* interiors that are not *readily accessible*; and
9. *dismantle* any *component*, except as explicitly required by these Standards.

## GLOSSARY OF ITALICIZED TERMS

**Alarm** See *safety barrier*

**Automatic safety controls** Devices designed and *installed* to protect *components* from *unsafe* conditions

**Client** A person who hires an *inspector* to perform an inspection in accordance with these Standards

**Component** A primary part of a functionally related group that works together as a system, not including ancillary parts, such as signage and depth markers, that do not contribute to the intended function of the system

**Coping** The decorative material around the perimeter above a *swimming pool/spa*, usually located just above the tile

**Cosmetic issues** Defects that are superficial and that do not significantly affect a *component's* ability to function properly

**Cross connection** Any connection between two otherwise separate piping systems whereby there may be a flow from one system to another

**Decorative** Ornamental; not required for the proper operation of the *swimming pool/spa components*

**Describe** To identify (in writing) a *component* by its type or by other distinguishing characteristics

**Dismantle** To take apart or remove any *component*, device, or equipment that is bolted, screwed, or fastened by other means and that a homeowner would not take apart or remove in the course of normal household maintenance

**Electronic controls** Digital, computerized or solid state equipment operation management devices

**Entrapment prevention component** A *component*, such as a suction outlet cover, *installed* within the *swimming pool/spa* water circulation system that helps prevent a person from being held underwater at a suction outlet

**Further evaluate** Examination and analysis by a qualified professional, tradesman, or service technician using techniques and/or expertise that are beyond the scope of inspections performed in accordance with these Standards

**Inspect** To visually examine *components* in accordance with these Standards, using *normal operating controls* and opening *readily openable access panels*

**Inspector** A person who is hired by a *client* to *inspect* a *swimming pool/spa* in accordance with these Standards

**Installed** A *component* that is connected or set in position and prepared for use

**Normal operating controls** Devices such as thermostats and switches intended to be operated by the homeowner

**Numerically complete** An inspection that *inspects* every individual occurrence of a *component*

**Readily accessible** A *component* that is located where access will not involve risk to persons or property, and that is visible without: (1) moving matter of any kind, and (2) using tools, and (3) using a ladder taller than twelve feet

**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

**Safety** Freedom from danger, risk, or injury

**Safety barrier** a *component*, such as a fence or a door or a window *alarm*, that helps restrict access to a *swimming pool/spa*

**Shut down** A state in which a system or *component* cannot be operated by *normal operating controls*

**Structural component** A *component* that supports non-variable forces or weights (dead loads) and variable forces or weights (live loads)

**Swimming pool/spa** A contained body of water eighteen inches or more in depth at any point and intended for swimming or immersion

**Technical specialist** A person who, by reason of training, education, and experience, has expertise in a specific trade or profession that is beyond that of an *inspector*, and who might, by reason of this expertise, or by the use of specialized tools, instruments, measurements, testing, calculations, or other means discover issues not discovered by an *inspector*

**Unsafe** A condition in a *readily accessible, installed* system or *component* that, in the professional judgment of the *inspector*, presents a significant risk of bodily injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted *swimming pool/spa* construction methods.