CANNON BUILDING
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STATE OF DELAWARE

BOARD OF HOME INSPECTORS

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CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Rules and Regulations, Sections 17.0 and 18.0

17.0 Code of ethics.

17.1 Home inspectors shall avoid conflicts of interest or activities that compromise, or appear to compromise, professional independence, objectivity, or inspection integrity.

17.1.1 Home inspectors shall not inspect property for compensation in which they have, or expect to have, a financial interest.

17.1.2 Home inspectors shall not inspect properties under contingent arrangements whereby any compensation or future referrals are dependent on reported findings or on the sale of the property.

17.1.3 Home inspectors, or their employees or employers, shall not directly or indirectly compensate real estate agents, 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.

17.1.4 Home inspectors shall not receive compensation for an inspection from more than one party unless agreed to by the client(s).

17.1.5 Home inspectors 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.

17.1.6 Home inspectors shall not repair, replace, or upgrade, for compensation, systems or components covered by Delaware standards of practice, for one year after the inspection.

17.2 Home inspectors shall act in good faith toward each client and other interested parties.

17.2.1 Home inspectors shall perform services and express opinions based on genuine conviction and only within their areas of education, training, or experience.

17.2.2 Home inspectors shall be objective in their reporting and not knowingly understate or overstate the significance of reported conditions.

17.2.3 Home inspectors shall not disclose inspection results or client information without client approval. Home inspectors, at their discretion, may disclose immediate safety hazards to occupants exposed to such hazards, when feasible.

17.3 Home inspectors shall avoid activities that may harm the public, discredit themselves, or reduce public confidence in the profession.

17.3.1 Advertising, marketing, and promotion of home inspectors' services or qualifications shall not be fraudulent, false, deceptive, or misleading.

17.3.2 Home inspectors shall report substantive and willful violations of the Board's Code of Ethics to the Division of Professional Regulation.

18.0 Standards of practice.

18.1 Purpose and scope.

18.1.1 The purpose of the Standards of Practice is to establish minimum and uniform standards for home inspectors.

18.1.2 Inspection: Home inspectors shall inspect readily accessible, visually observable, installed systems and components listed in this section.

18.1.3 Written report: The home inspector's report shall be legible and shall include:

18.1.3.1 Identification of those systems and components inspected that, in the professional judgment of the licensee, are not functioning properly, significantly deficient, unsafe, or are near the end of their service lives.

18.1.3.2 Recommendations to correct, or monitor for future correction, the deficiencies reported in section 18.1.3.1, or items needing further evaluation, except that, as set forth in section 18.1.4.2, licensees are not required to determine methods, materials, or costs of corrections.

18.1.3.3 Reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies reported in section 18.1.3.1 that is not self-evident.

18.1.3.4 Systems and components designated for inspection as set forth in this section that were present at the time of the home inspection but were not inspected, and the reasons that they were not inspected.

18.1.4 This section does not prohibit home inspectors from:

18.1.4.1 Including other inspections services or systems and components, in addition to those required in section 18.1.2.

18.1.4.2 Designing or specifying repairs, providing the licensee is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.

18.1.4.3 Excluding systems and components from the inspection, if requested by the client.

18.2 Structural components

18.2.1 The home inspector shall inspect:

18.2.1.1 Structural components including the foundation and framing.

18.2.1.2 A representative number of structural components, by probing, where deterioration is suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is not required when probing would damage any finished surface or where no deterioration is visible or presumed to exist.

18.2.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.2.2.1 The methods used to inspect under-floor crawl spaces and attics.

18.2.2.2 The foundation.

18.2.2.3 The floor structure.

18.2.2.4 The wall structure.

18.2.2.5 The ceiling structure.

18.2.2.6 The roof structure.

18.2.3 The home inspector is not required to:

18.2.3.1 Provide any engineering or architectural services or analysis.

18.2.3.2 Offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any structural system or component.

18.3 Exterior

18.3.1 The home inspector shall inspect:

18.3.1.1 Siding, flashing, and trim.

18.3.1.2 All exterior doors.

18.3.1.3 Attached or adjacent decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings.

18.3.1.4 Eaves, soffits, and fascias where accessible from the ground level.

18.3.1.5 Vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls that are likely to adversely affect the building.

18.3.1.6 Adjacent or entryway walkways, patios, and driveways.

18.3.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.3.2.1 Siding.

18.3.3 The home inspector is not required to inspect:

18.3.3.1 Screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories.

18.3.3.2 Fences.

18.3.3.3 Geological and/or soil conditions.

18.3.3.4 Recreational facilities.

18.3.3.5 Outbuildings, other than garages and carports.

18.3.3.6 Seawalls, break-walls, and docks.

18.3.3.7 Erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

18.4 Roofing

18.4.1 The home inspector shall inspect:

18.4.1.1 Roofing materials.

18.4.1.2 Roof drainage systems.

18.4.1.3 Flashing.

18.4.1.4 Skylights, chimneys, and roof penetrations.

18.4.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.4.2.1 Roofing materials.

18.4.2.2 Methods used to inspect the roofing.

18.4.3 The home inspector is not required to inspect:

18.4.3.1 Antennae.

18.4.3.2 Interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible.

18.4.3.3 Other installed accessories.

18.5 Plumbing.

18.5.1 The home inspector shall inspect:

18.5.1.1 Interior water supply and distribution systems, including all fixtures and faucets.

18.5.1.2 Drain, waste, and vent systems, including all fixtures.

18.5.1.3 Water heating equipment and hot water supply system.

18.5.1.4 Vent systems, flues, and chimneys.

18.5.1.5 Visible fuel storage and fuel distribution systems.

18.5.1.6 Drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping.

18.5.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.5.2.1 Water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping materials.

18.5.2.2 Water heating equipment, including energy source(s).

18.5.2.3 Location of main water and fuel shut-off valves.

18.5.3 The home inspector is not required to:

18.5.3.1 Inspect:

18.5.3.1.1 Clothes washing machine connections.

18.5.3.1.2 Interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible.

18.5.3.1.3 Wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment.

18.5.3.1.4 Water conditioning systems.

18.5.3.1.5 Solar water heating systems.

18.5.3.1.6 Fire and lawn sprinkler systems.

18.5.3.1.7 Private waste disposal systems.

18.5.3.1.8 Backflow prevention device.

18.5.3.2 Determine:

18.5.3.2.1 Whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private.

18.5.3.2.2 Water supply quantity or quality.

18.5.3.3 Operate automatic safety controls or manual stop valves.

18.6 Electrical

18.6.1 The home inspector shall inspect:

18.6.1.1 Service drop.

18.6.1.2 Service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways.

18.6.1.3 Service equipment and main disconnects.

18.6.1.4 Service grounding.

18.6.1.5 Interior components of service panels and sub-panels.

18.6.1.6 Visible conductors.

18.6.1.7 Overcurrent protection devices.

18.6.1.8 A representative number of installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.

18.6.1.9 Ground fault circuit interrupters.

18.6.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.6.2.1 Amperage and voltage rating of the service.

18.6.2.2 Location of main disconnect(s) and panels.

18.6.2.3 Presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring and visible knob and tube wiring.

18.6.2.4 Absence of smoke detectors.

18.6.2.5 Type of wiring.

18.6.3 The home inspector is not required to:

18.6.3.1 Inspect:

18.6.3.1.1 Remote control devices.

18.6.3.1.2 Alarm systems and components.

18.6.3.1.3 Low voltage wiring systems and components.

18.6.3.1.4 Ancillary wiring systems and components not part of the primary electrical power distribution system.

18.6.3.1.5 Solar-powered systems and their components.

18.6.3.1.6 Emergency backup power systems.

18.6.3.2 Measure amperage, voltage, or impedance.

18.7 Heating.

18.7.1 The home inspector shall:

18.7.1.1 Open readily accessible access panels.

18.7.1.2 Inspect:

18.7.1.2.1 Installed heating equipment.

18.7.1.2.2 Vent systems, flues, and chimneys.

18.7.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.7.2.1 Energy sources.

18.7.2.2 Heating systems.

18.7.3 The home inspector is not required to:

18.7.3.1 Inspect:

18.7.3.1.1 Interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible.

18.7.3.1.2 Heat exchangers.

18.7.3.1.3 Humidifiers or dehumidifiers.

18.7.3.1.4 Electronic air filters.

18.7.3.1.5 Solar heating systems.

18.7.3.2 Determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance.

18.8 Air conditioning.

18.8.1 The home inspector shall:

18.8.1.1 Open readily accessible access panels.

18.8.1.2 Inspect:

18.8.1.2.1 Central and through-wall equipment.

18.8.1.2.2 Distribution systems.

18.8.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.8.2.1 Energy source(s).

18.8.2.2 Cooling systems.

18.8.3 The home inspector is not required to:

18.8.3.1 Inspect electronic air filters.

18.8.3.2 Determine cooling supply adequacy or distribution balance.

18.8.3.3 Inspect window air conditioning units regardless of placement.

18.8.3.4 Operate air conditioning units when the outside temperature is below 60 degrees.

18.9 Interior.

18.9.1 The home inspector shall inspect:

18.9.1.1 Walls, ceilings, and floors.

18.9.1.2 Steps, stairways, and railings.

18.9.1.3 Countertops and a representative number of installed cabinets.

18.9.1.4 A representative number of doors and windows.

18.9.1.5 Garage doors and garage door openers.

18.9.2 The home inspector is not required to inspect:

18.9.2.1 Paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments.

18.9.2.2 Carpeting.

18.9.2.3 Window treatments.

18.9.2.4 Central vacuum systems.

18.9.2.5 Household appliances.

18.9.2.6 Recreational facilities.

18.10 Insulation and ventilation.

18.10.1 The home inspector shall inspect:

18.10.1.1 Insulation and vapor retarders in accessible unfinished spaces.

18.10.1.2 Ventilation of attics and foundation areas.

18.10.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.10.2.1 Insulation and vapor retarders in accessible unfinished spaces.

18.10.2.2 Absence of insulation in accessible unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces.

18.10.3 The home inspector is not required to disturb insulation.

18.11 Fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances.

18.11.1 The home inspector shall inspect:

18.11.1.1 System components

18.11.1.2 Chimney and vents.

18.11.2 The written report shall include description of:

18.11.2.1 Fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances.

18.11.2.2 Chimneys and vents.

18.11.3 The home inspector is not required to:

18.11.3.1 Inspect:

18.11.3.1.1 Interiors of flues or chimneys.

18.11.3.1.2 Fire screens and doors.

18.11.3.1.3 Seals and gaskets.

18.11.3.1.4 Automatic fuel feed devices.

18.11.3.1.5 Mantles and fireplace surrounds.

18.11.3.1.6 Combustion and make-up air devices.

18.11.3.1.7 Heat distribution assists (gravity fed and fan assisted).

18.11.3.1.8 Wood or pellet stoves.

18.11.3.2 Ignite or extinguish fires.

18.11.3.3 Determine draft characteristics.

18.11.3.4 Move fireplace inserts and stoves or firebox contents.

18.12 General limitations.

18.12.1 The home inspector is not required to perform any action or make any determination not specifically stated in these Regulations.

18.12.2 Inspections performed in accordance with these Regulations are not technically exhaustive and are not required to identify concealed conditions, latent defects or consequential damage(s).

18.13 General exclusions.

18.13.1 Home inspectors are not required to determine:

18.13.1.1 Conditions of systems or components that are not readily accessible.

18.13.1.2 Remaining life expectancy of any system or component.

18.13.1.3 Strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any system or component.

18.13.1.4 The causes of any condition or deficiency.

18.13.1.5 Methods, materials, or costs of corrections.

18.13.1.6 Future conditions, including but not limited to failure of systems and components.

18.13.1.7 The suitability of the property for any specialized use.

18.13.1.8 Compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.)

18.13.1.9 Market value of the property or its marketability.

18.13.1.10 The advisability of purchase of the property.

18.13.1.11 The presence of potentially hazardous plants or animals, including, but not limited to, wood destroying organisms or insects or diseases harmful to humans including molds or mold-like substances.

18.13.1.12 The presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to, toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in the soil, water, or air.

18.13.1.13 The effectiveness of any system installed or method utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.

18.13.1.14 Operating costs of systems or components.

18.13.1.15 Acoustical properties of any system or component.

18.13.1.16 Soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties.

18.13.2 Home inspectors are not required to offer or perform:

18.13.2.1 Any act or service contrary to law.

18.13.2.2 Engineering services.

18.13.2.3 Any trade or any professional service other than home inspection.

18.13.3 Home inspectors are not required to operate:

18.13.3.1 Any system or component that is shut down or otherwise inoperable.

18.13.3.2 Any system or component that does not respond to normal operating controls.

18.13.3.3 Shut-off valves or manual stop valves

18.13.4 Home inspectors are not required to enter:

18.13.4.1 Any area that will, in the opinion of the licensee, likely be dangerous to the licensee or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components.

18.13.4.2 Under-floor crawl spaces or attics that are not readily accessible.

18.13.5 Home inspectors are not required to inspect:

18.13.5.1 Underground items including but not limited to underground storage tanks or other underground indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active.

18.13.5.2 Items that are not installed.

18.13.5.3 Installed decorative items.

18.13.5.4 Items that are not entered in accordance with section 18.13.4.

18.13.5.5 Detached structures other than residential garages and carports.

18.13.5.6 Common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing.

18.13.6 Home inspectors are not required to:

18.13.6.1 Perform any procedure or operation that will, in the opinion of the inspector, likely be dangerous to the inspector or other persons or damage the property or its systems or components.

18.13.6.2 Describe or report on any system or component that is not included in these Regulations and was not inspected.

18.13.6.3 Move personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.

18.13.6.4 Dismantle any system or component, except as specifically required by these Regulations.