WA State Standards of Practice:

Structure.

An inspection of the structure will include the visible foundation; floor framing; roof framing and decking; other support and substructure/superstructure components; stairs; ventilation (when applicable); and exposed concrete slabs in garages and habitable areas.

(1) **The inspector will:**

• **Describe** the type of building materials comprising the major structural components.

• **Enter** and **traverse** attics and subfloor crawlspaces.

• **Inspect**

(a) The condition and serviceability of visible, exposed foundations and grade slabs, walls, posts, piers, beams, joists, trusses, subfloors, chimney foundations, stairs and the visible roof structure and attic components where readily and safely accessible.

(b) Subfloor crawlspaces and basements for indications of flooding and moisture penetration.

• **Probe** a representative number of structural components where deterioration is suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is not required when probing will damage any finished surface or where no deterioration is suspected.

• **Describe** any deficiencies of these systems or components.

• **Report** all wood rot and pest-conducive conditions discovered.

• **Refer** all issues that are suspected to be insect related to a licensed structural pest inspector (SPI) or pest control operator (PCO) for follow up.

(2) **The inspector is not required to:**

• **Enter**

(a) Subfloor crawlspaces that require excavation or have an access opening less than eighteen inches by twenty-four inches or headroom less than eighteen inches beneath floor joists and twelve inches beneath girders (beams).

(b) Any areas that are not readily accessible due to obstructions, inadequate clearances or have conditions which, in the inspector's opinion, are hazardous to the health and safety of the inspector or will cause damage to components of the home.

• **Move** stored items or debris or perform excavation to gain access.

Exterior.

An inspection of the exterior includes the visible wall coverings, trim, protective coatings and sealants, windows and doors, attached porches, decks, steps, balconies, handrails, guardrails, carports, eaves, soffits, fascias and visible exterior portions of chimneys.

(1) The inspector will:

• Describe the exterior components visible from ground level.

• Inspect visible wall coverings, trim, protective coatings and sealants, windows and doors, attached porches, decks, steps, balconies, handrails, guardrails, carports, eaves, soffits, fascias and visible exterior portions of chimneys.

• Probe exterior components where deterioration is suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist. Probing is not required when probing will damage any finished surface or where no deterioration is suspected.

• Describe any deficiencies of these systems or components.

(2) The inspector is not required to:

• Inspect

(a) Buildings, decks, patios, fences, retaining walls, and other structures detached from the dwelling.

(b) Safety type glass or the integrity of thermal window seals.

(c) Flues or verify the presence of flue liners beyond what can be safely and readily seen from the roof or the firebox of a stove or fireplace.

• Test or evaluate the operation of security locks, devices or systems.

• Enter areas beneath decks with less than five feet of clearance from the underside of joists to grade.

• Evaluate the function or condition of shutters, awnings, storm doors, storm windows, screens, and similar accessories.

Roofs.

An inspection of the roof includes the roof covering materials; gutters and downspout systems; visible flashings; roof vents; skylights, and any other roof penetrations; and the portions of the chimneys and flues visible from the exterior.

(1) **The inspector will:**

• **Traverse** the roof to inspect it.

• **Inspect** the gutters and downspout systems, visible flashings, soffits and fascias, skylights, and other roof penetrations.

• **Report** the manner in which the roof is ventilated.

• **Describe** the type and general condition of roof coverings.

• **Report** multiple layers of roofing when visible or readily apparent.

• **Describe** any deficiencies of these systems or components.

(2) **The inspector is not required to:**

• **Traverse** a roof where, in the opinion of the inspector, doing so can damage roofing materials or be unsafe. If the roof is not traversed, the method used to inspect the roof must be reported.

• **Remove** snow, ice, debris or other material that obscures the roof surface or prevents access to the roof.

• **Inspect** gutter and downspout systems concealed within the structure; related underground drainage piping; and/or antennas, lightning arresters, or similar attachments.

• **Operate** powered roof ventilators.

• **Predict** remaining life expectancy of roof coverings.

Plumbing system.

An inspection of the plumbing system includes visible water supply lines; visible waste/soil and vent lines; fixtures and faucets; domestic hot water system and fuel source.

(1) **The inspector will:**

(a) **Describe** the visible water supply and distribution piping materials; drain, waste and vent materials; water-heating equipment.

(b) **Report**

(i) The presence and functionality of sump pumps/waste ejector pumps when visible or confirm the float switch activates the pump when the sump is dry.

(ii) The presence and location of a main water shutoff valve and/or fuel shutoff valve(s), or report that they were not found.

(iii) The presence of the temperature and pressure relief (TPR) valve and associated piping.

(iv) Whether or not the water temperature was tested and state that the generally accepted safe water temperature is one hundred twenty degrees Fahrenheit.

(c) **Inspect** the condition of accessible and visible water supply pipes, drain/waste plumbing and the domestic hot water system when possible.

(d) **Operate** fixtures in order to observe functional flow.

(e) **Check** for functional drainage from fixtures.

(f) **Describe** any deficiencies of these systems or components in the inspection report.

(2) **The inspector is not required to:**

(a) **Operate** any valves, including faucets of freestanding or built-in appliances or fixtures, if the outlet end of the valve or faucet is connected or intended to be connected to an appliance.

(b) **Inspect**

(i) Any system that is shut down or winterized.

(ii) Any plumbing components not readily accessible.

(iii) Floor drains and exterior drain systems, including but not limited to, exterior stairwell drains and driveway drains.

(iv) Fire sprinkler systems.

(v) Water-conditioning equipment, including softeners and filter systems.

(vi) Private water supply systems.

(vii) Gas supply systems.

(viii) Interior components of exterior pumps or sealed sanitary waste lift systems.

(ix) Ancillary systems or components such as, but not limited to, those related to solar water heating and hot water circulation.

(c) **Test**

(i) Pressure or temperature/pressure relief valve.

(ii) Shower pans for leaks or use special equipment to test/scan shower or tub surrounds for moisture in surrounding substrate materials.

(d) **Determine**

(i) The potability of any water supply whether public or private.

(ii) The condition and operation of water wells and related pressure tanks and pumps.

(iii) The quantity of water from on-site water supplies.

(iv) The quality or the condition and operation of on-site sewage disposal systems such as waste ejector pumps, cesspools, septic tanks, drain fields, related underground piping, conduit, cisterns, and related equipment.

(e) **Ignite** pilot lights.

Electrical system.

The inspection of the electrical system includes the service drop through the main panel; subpanels including feeders; branch circuits, connected devices, and lighting fixtures.

(1) **The inspector will:**

(a) **Describe** in the report the type of primary service, whether overhead or underground, voltage, amperage, over-current protection devices (fuses or breakers) and the type of branch wiring used.

(b) **Report**

(i) The existence of a connected service-grounding conductor and service-grounding electrode when same can be determined.

(ii) When no connection to a service grounding electrode can be confirmed.

(c) **Inspect** the main and branch circuit conductors for proper over-current protection and condition by visual observation after removal of the readily accessible main and subelectric panel cover(s).

(d) **Report,** if present, solid conductor aluminum branch circuits. Include a statement in the report that solid conductor aluminum wiring may be hazardous and a licensed electrician should inspect the system to ensure it's safe.

(e) **Verify**

(i) The operation of a representative number of accessible switches, receptacles and light fixtures.

(ii) The grounding and polarity of a representative number of receptacles; particularly in close proximity to plumbing fixtures or at the exterior.

(iii) Ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection and arc-fault circuit interrupter (AFCI) protection where required.

(f) **Report** the location of any inoperative or missing GFCI and/or AFCI devices when they are recommended by industry standards.

(g) **Advise** clients that homes without ground fault protection should have GFCI devices installed where recommended by industry standards.

(h) **Report** on any circuit breaker panel or subpanel known within the home inspection profession to have safety concerns.

(i) **Describe** any deficiencies of these systems or components.

(2) **The inspector is not required to:**

(a) **Insert** any tool, probe or testing device into the main or subpanels.

(b) **Activate** electrical systems or branch circuits that are not energized.

(c) **Operate** circuit breakers, service disconnects or remove fuses.

(d) **Inspect** ancillary systems, including but not limited to:

(i) Timers.

(ii) Security systems.

(iii) Low voltage relays.

(iv) Smoke/heat detectors.

(v) Antennas.

(vi) Intercoms.

(vii) Electrical deicing tapes.

(viii) Lawn sprinkler wiring.

(ix) Swimming pool or spa wiring.

(x) Central vacuum systems.

(xi) Electrical equipment that's not readily accessible.

(e) **Dismantle** any electrical device or control, except for the removal of the deadfront covers from the main service panel and subpanels.

(f) **Move** any objects, furniture, or appliances to gain access to any electrical component.

(g) **Test** every switch, receptacle, and fixture.

(h) **Remove** switch and receptacle cover plates.

(i) **Verify** the continuity of connected service ground(s).

Heating system.

The inspection of the heating system includes the fuel source; heating equipment; heating distribution; operating controls; flue pipes, chimneys and venting; auxiliary heating units.

(1) **The inspector will:**

(a) **Describe** the type of fuel, heating equipment, and heating distribution systems.

(b) **Operate** the system using normal readily accessible control devices.

(c) **Open** readily accessible access panels or covers provided by the manufacturer or installer, if readily detachable.

(d) **Inspect**

(i) The condition of normally operated controls and components of systems.

(ii) The condition and operation of furnaces, boilers, heat pumps, electrical central heating units and distribution systems.

(iii) Visible flue pipes and related components to ensure functional operation and proper clearance from combustibles.

(iv) Each habitable space in the home to determine whether or not there is a functioning heat source present.

(v) Spaces where fossil fuel burning heating devices are located to ensure there is air for combustion.

(vi) Electric baseboard and in-wall heaters to ensure they are functional.

(e) **Report** any evidence that indicates the possible presence of an underground storage tank.

(f) **Describe** any deficiencies of these systems or components.

(2) **The inspector is not required to:**

(a) **Ignite** pilot lights.

(b) **Operate:**

(i) Heating devices or systems that do not respond to normal controls or have been shut down.

(ii) Any heating system when circumstances are not conducive to safe operation or when doing so will damage the equipment.

(c) **Inspect** or **evaluate**

(i) Heat exchangers concealed inside furnaces and boilers.

(ii) Any heating equipment that is not readily accessible.

(iii) The interior of chimneys and flues.

(iv) Installed heating system accessories, such as humidifiers, air purifiers, motorized dampers, heat reclaimers; solar heating systems; or concealed distribution systems.

(d) **Remove** covers or panels that are not readily accessible or removable.

(e) **Dismantle** any equipment, controls, or gauges except readily identifiable access covers designed to be removed by users.

(f) **Evaluate** whether the type of material used to insulate pipes, ducts, jackets and boilers is a health hazard.

(g) **Determine:**

(i) The capacity, adequacy, or efficiency of a heating system.

(ii) Determine adequacy of combustion air.

(h) **Evaluate** thermostats or controls other than to confirm that they actually turn a system on or off.

Air conditioning systems.

The inspection of the air conditioning system includes the cooling equipment; cooling distribution equipment and the operating controls.

(1) **The inspector will:**

(a) **Describe** the central air conditioning system and energy sources.

(b) **Operate** the system using normal control devices and measure and record temperature differential.

(c) **Open** readily accessible access panels or covers provided by the manufacturer or installer.

(d) **Inspect** the condition of controls and operative components of the complete system; conditions permitting.

(e) **Describe** any deficiencies of these systems or components in the inspection report.

(2) **The inspector is not required to:**

(a) **Activate** cooling systems that have been shut down.

(b) **Inspect**

(i) Gas-fired refrigeration systems.

(ii) Evaporative coolers.

(iii) Wall or window-mounted air-conditioning units.

(iv) The system for refrigerant leaks.

(c) **Check** the coolant pressure/charge.

(d) **Determine** the efficiency, or adequacy of the system.

(e) **Operate** cooling system components if the exterior temperature is below sixty degrees Fahrenheit or when other circumstances are not conducive to safe operation or when doing so might damage the equipment.

(f) **Remove** covers or panels that are not readily accessible.
(g) **Dismantle** any equipment, controls, or gauges except readily identifiable access covers designed to be removed by users.
(h) **Determine** how much current the unit is drawing.
(i) **Evaluate** digital-type thermostats or controls.

Interiors.

The inspection of the interior includes the walls, ceilings, floors, windows, and doors; steps, stairways, balconies and railings.
(1) **The inspector will:**
(a) **Verify**
That steps, handrails, guardrails, stairways and landings are installed wherever necessary and **report** when they are missing or in need of repair and **report** when baluster spacing exceeds four inches.
(b) **Inspect**
(i) The overall general condition of cabinets and countertops.
(ii) Caulking and grout at kitchen and bathroom counters.
(iii) The interior walls, ceilings, and floors for indicators of concealed structural deficiencies, water infiltration or major damage.
(iv) The condition and operation of a representative number of windows and doors.
(c) **Comment** on the presence or absence of smoke detectors.
(d) **Describe** any noncosmetic deficiencies of these systems or components.
(2) **The inspector is not required to:**
(a) **Report** on cosmetic conditions related to the condition of interior components.
(b) **Verify** whether all walls, floors, ceilings, doorways, cabinets and window openings are square, straight, level or plumb.

Insulation and ventilation.

The inspection of the insulation and ventilation includes the type and condition of the insulation and ventilation in viewable unfinished attics and subgrade areas as well as the installed mechanical ventilation systems.
(1) **The inspector will:**
• **Inspect** the insulation, ventilation and installed mechanical systems in viewable and accessible attics and unfinished subfloor areas.
• **Describe** the type of insulation in viewable and accessible unconditioned spaces.
• **Report** missing or inadequate vapor barriers in subfloor crawlspaces with earth floors.
• **Report** the absence of insulation at the interface between conditioned and unconditioned spaces where visible.
• **Report** the absence of insulation on heating system ductwork and supply plumbing in unconditioned spaces.
• **Describe** any deficiencies of these systems or components.
(2) **The inspector is not required to:**
• **Determine** the presence, extent, and type of insulation and vapor barriers concealed in the exterior walls.
• **Determine** the thickness or R-value of insulation above the ceiling, in the walls or below the floors.

Fireplaces and stoves.

Includes solid fuel and gas fireplaces, stoves, dampers, fireboxes and hearths.
(1) The inspector will:
• Describe fireplaces and stoves.
• Inspect dampers, fireboxes and hearths.
• Describe any deficiencies of these systems or components.
(2) The inspector is not required to:
• Inspect flues and verify the presence of flue liners beyond what can be safely and readily seen from the roof or the firebox of a stove or fireplace.
• Ignite fires in a fireplace or stove.
• Determine the adequacy of draft.
• Perform a chimney smoke test.
• Inspect any solid fuel device being operated at the time of the inspection.
• Evaluate the installation or adequacy of fireplace inserts.
• Evaluate modifications to a fireplace, stove, or chimney.
• Dismantle fireplaces or stoves to inspect fireboxes or remove rain caps to inspect chimney flues.

Site.

The inspection of the site includes the building perimeter, land grade, and water drainage directly adjacent to the foundation; trees and vegetation that adversely affect the structure; walks, grade steps, driveways, patios, and retaining walls contiguous with the structure.
(1) The inspector will:
(a) Describe the material used for driveways, walkways, patios and other flatwork around the home.
(b) Inspect
(i) For serviceability of the driveways, steps, walkways, patios, flatwork and retaining walls contiguous with the structure.
(ii) For proper grading and drainage slope.
(iii) Vegetation in close proximity to the home.
(c) Describe any deficiencies of these systems or components.
(2) The inspector is not required to:
• Inspect fences, privacy walls or retaining walls that are not contiguous with the structure.
• Report the condition of soil, trees, shrubs or vegetation unless they adversely affect the structure.
• Evaluate hydrological or geological conditions.
• Determine the adequacy of bulkheads, seawalls, breakwalls, and docks.

Attached garages or carports.

The inspection of attached garages and carports includes their framing, siding, roof, doors, windows, and installed electrical/mechanical systems pertaining to the operation of the home.
(1) **The inspector will:**
• **Inspect** the condition and function of the overhead garage doors and associated hardware.
• **Test** the function of the garage door openers, their auto-reverse systems and secondary entrapment devices (photoelectric and edge sensors) when present.
• **Inspect** the condition and installation of any pedestrian doors.
• **Inspect** fire separation between the house and garage when applicable.
• **Report** as a fire hazard the presence of any ignition source (gas and electric water heaters, electrical receptacles, electronic air cleaners, motors of installed appliances, etc.) that is within eighteen inches of the garage floor.
• **Describe** any deficiencies of these systems or components.
(2) **The inspector is not required to:**
• **Determine** whether or not a solid core pedestrian door that is not labeled is fire rated.
• **Verify** the functionality of garage door opener remote controls.
• **Move** vehicles or personal property.
• **Operate** any equipment unless otherwise addressed in the SOP.