

LIVING SPACES, FIREPLACE, WOODSTOVE.

SCOPE OF THE INTERIORS SYSTEM INSPECTION: 266CMR: BOARD OF REGISTRATION OF HOME INSPECTORS

266 CMR 6.00: STANDARDS OF PRACTICE:

6.09 System: General Interior Conditions

(1) The *Home Inspector* shall **Observe**:

- (a) Walls, ceiling, and floors.
- (b) Steps, stairways, balconies, and hand and guard railings.
- (c) Counter tops and a **Representative Number** of cabinets.
- (d) A **Representative Number** of doors and windows.
- (e) Separation walls, ceilings, and doors between a dwelling unit and an attached garage or another dwelling unit.

(2) The *Home Inspector* shall **Describe**:

- a. The condition and type of exposed floor material (brick, carpet, ceramic tile, linoleum, slate, vinyl tile, wood, other).
- b. The condition and type of exposed wall materials (brick, ceramic tile, fiberglass, laminates, paneled, plaster, gypsum wallboard, plastic tile, other).
- c. The condition and type of exposed ceiling materials (acoustical tile, gypsum wallboard, plaster, wood, other).

(3) The *Home Inspector* shall **Report On** and recommend repair (if need):

- a. The floor.
- b. The walls.
- c. The ceilings.
- d. The condition of the interior stairs, hand and guard railings.
- e. Report signs of water penetration.
- f. The interior doors observed and tested.
- g. The condition of the windows in general including:
 - Broken sash cords
 - Broken parting beads
 - Broken glass lites
 - Missing locks
 - Broken locks
 Recommend the installation of replacement insulating windows where applicable to reduce the heat loss.

(4) The *Home Inspector* is **not** required to **Observe, Describe, or Report On** :

- (a) Paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments on the interior walls, ceilings, and floors.
- (b) Draperies, blinds, or other window treatments.
- (c) Household appliances.
- (d) Recreational facilities, detached garages, out buildings or any other dwelling unit(s) or addresses.

NOTICE: The inspector is NOT required to move furniture, stored goods or other obstructions to view interior spaces. When the owner has removed the obstructions, all such spaces should be further investigated for potential concealed problems prior to commitment. You should consult the home inspector if problems are found that were not readily accessible at time of inspection. Consultation is free, but a fee will be charged for a "return visit."

DISCLAIMERS: The following items are **EXCLUDED** from the interior inspection: A. Paint, wallpaper or other finish treatments on the interior walls, ceilings and floors. The condition of walls & floors beneath wall or floor coverings or where hidden by furniture. B. Carpeting. C. Draperies, blinds, or other window treatments. D. Portable appliances. E. Recreational facilities. F. Alarm, security, intercom and stereo systems. G. Fire sprinkler or alarm systems & smoke detectors. H. Inaccessible fireplace or chimney flue spaces. I. Vacuum systems. J. Determining odors or stains. K. Determining the condition of thermopane window & exterior glass door seals when the glass is dirty. L. **MOLD AND INDOOR AIR QUALITY.**

GENERAL COMMENTS: A. If major defects are revealed by your pre-passing walk through, you should telephone my office for further advice or schedule an optional "return visit inspection" for additional professional evaluation. B. Fireplace

& wood stove flues should be inspected by a member of the chimney sweep guild as not all interior flue areas are *readily accessible* during a limited home inspection. **C. You should ask the owner to provide you with a copy of the wood or coal stove "building permit," documenting that the appliance and the installation meet all fire code, safety and UL requirements. This documentation is needed for your homeowner's insurance file. D. The owner of the property is required to have the fire department examine and evaluate smoke detectors and fire alarm systems prior to purchase and provide you with documentation at time of closing.** E. Small cracks & nail pops in walls and ceilings are usually minor cosmetic defects caused in part by the expansion & contraction of the wood frame beneath the drywall or plaster wall covering and by wood frame vibration. Unless the wall or ceiling coverings are in danger of falling, the repairs are of no structural significance and should require maintenance patching, caulking, priming and painting. F. Not all problems are found during a brief inspection. G. The condition of walls and framing behind wallpaper, drywall, paneling, other coverings and furniture cannot be determined. H. Determining the presence of asbestos in acoustic ceiling tiles or sprayed ceilings is beyond the scope of this inspection. I. The inspector will not determine the origin of odors or stains in carpets. J. The condition of flooring beneath carpets is undetermined. K. All closets and cabinets should be further inspected for concealed problems after all storage is removed. L. Firewall rating determination is beyond the scope of this inspection. M. A "**Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon**" is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/radon/pubs/hmbyguid.html>

We recommend having all fireplace(s) / flue(s), solid burning appliance(s) and gas fireplaces cleaned, inspected and serviced NOW PRIOR TO PURCHASE (a LEVEL II inspection) and annually by a licensed chimney sweep. Obtain ALL proper permits and instruction manuals NOW on the installation and use of solid fuel appliances and gas fireplaces. Do NOT use gas fireplace(s) or solid burning appliance(s) without proper servicing and / or signed installation permits.

NOTICE: We recommend "indoor air quality testing" NOW, prior to purchase if you have the slightest concern about mold, mildew or any other potential respiratory irritant. Any potential contaminant or environmental hygiene problem that may effect health is a deeply personal responsibility that requires further investigation by specialists. Such testing is beyond the scope of this limited visual inspection.

The inspection and reporting of minor, easily correctable, or cosmetic defects and deficiencies is not the intent or focus of the inspection; if such conditions are reported it is as a courtesy only. If certain conditions are mentioned, verbally or in the report, it is not meant to imply that there are not other unreported conditions.

NOTICE: Please understand that the inspection of the living spaces is greatly restricted by the owner's furniture, window treatments, carpeting and stored goods. Be advised that hidden defects could exist that were not *readily accessible* at time of inspection. For that reason, you should schedule a "pre-passing walk through inspection" to examine the home after the owner has removed furniture and storage. You may elect to perform this inspection yourself or request that the inspector return. (Call for fee schedule.) If concealed problems are found, please call the inspector for free consultation.

1. FLOOR COVERINGS:

TYPES OF EXPOSED FLOOR MATERIALS:

Areas of hardwood.
 Areas of wall to wall carpeting. (Note: A home inspector cannot remove carpeting and is unable to see through carpeting or padding. The condition of hidden floor surfaces or subfloor materials is undetermined. There is a potential for concealed damage.)
 Areas of ceramic tile.

CONDITION: ** FUNCTIONAL with EXCEPTIONS as noted:

FLOOR PROBLEMS:

Observation: Cracked ceramic floor tiles or loose grout were observed.
Analysis: **** UNSAFE, cracked tiles with sharp edges can cause personal injury.

Safety repairs are needed. (Note: The availability of matching tiles is questionable as manufacturers change patterns & dye lots.) Be advised that the tile industry requires a firm substrate beneath ceramic tiles. A substrate that is not firm is considered as a sub-standard installation that will cause future tiles & grout to crack or loosen due to floor frame movement or vibration.

Recommendation: Ask a tile contractor to further evaluate the tile floor and repair or replace as required.

Web Resource: <http://www.floorstransformed.com/tilecare.html>

Observation: Worn wall to wall carpeting noted.

Analysis: Carpeting is *fully depreciated* or is nearing or at end of service life.

Recommendation: Budget for age replacement.

Web Resource: <http://www.carpet-rug.org/index.cfm>

Observation: The home has living space below grade.

Analysis: Living spaces below grade are required to have a means of "waterproofing." Be advised that the typical black dampproofing materials painted on the exterior surface of a foundation does not comply. If no waterproofing system is present, then the living space below grade is at risk of water damage.

Note: Finished surfaces and storage may have prevented the home inspector from determining if a waterproofing system is present. Further investigation is needed.

Recommendation: YOU should ask the owner if the finished basement was done with a building permit and if a waterproofing system is present. This research should be completed prior to commitment.

2. WALL COVERINGS:

TYPES OR EXPOSED MATERIALS:

Gypsum board (drywall).
Paneling on some walls.

CONDITION:

**** FUNCTIONAL with EXCEPTIONS noted:**

WALL COVERING PROBLEMS:

Observation: No visible problems where *readily accessible* at time of inspection. Other than previously mentioned.

DISCLAIMER: CONDITIONS BEHIND FURNITURE, STORARE AND OTHER OBSTRUCTIONS ARE UNDETERMINED. BE SURE TO EXAMINE ALL WALLS DURING YOUR PRE-PASSING WALK-THROUGH INSPECTION AS THERE IS A RISK OF CONCEALED PROBLEMS.

3. CEILINGS:

TYPES OF EXPOSED CEILING MATERIALS:

Gypsum wallboard.

CONDITION: ** FUNCTIONAL with the following EXCEPTIONS:

CEILING PROBLEMS:



Observation: There is a visible water stain on a ceiling.

Analysis: A prior plumbing leak is suspected as the cause of the ceiling water stain.

Note: There is a potential for concealed damage. Be advised that any source of water penetration or ventilation imbalance can cause interior damage and / or mold.

Recommendation: Ask the owner to disclose any knowledge of a past leak.

Investigate and make sure that the moisture source has been correctly identified and corrected. Apply a product called stain-kills to the stained area and then re-paint the ceiling as required.

4. HALLWAYS:

Floors

* **FUNCTIONAL** - no visible problems where *readily accessible*.

Walls

* **FUNCTIONAL** - no visible problems where *readily accessible*.

Ceiling

* **FUNCTIONAL** - no visible problems where *readily accessible*.

5. CLOSETS:

CONDITION & PROBLEMS:

* **FUNCTIONAL.** Observation - The exposed portions of the closets appear **FUNCTIONAL**. No visible problems where *readily accessible*. (Note: Be advised that stored goods prevented complete access for inspection. Hidden closet problems could exist. Be sure to examine all closets when empty during your pre-passing inspection.)

6. DOORS & WINDOWS:

CONDITION & PROBLEMS:

* **FUNCTIONAL.** Observation - No visible interior door trim problems observed where *readily accessible*.

* **FUNCTIONAL.** Observation: No visible problems at the interior trim components of the windows where *readily accessible*.

Note: Only a random sample of windows (1/room) are inspected. Windows blocked by furniture or nick-nacks or decorations are not inspected.)

WAS AT LEAST ONE INTERIOR DOOR PER ROOM OPERATED?

YES.

WAS AT LEAST ONE WINDOW PER ROOM OPERATED?

YES (Not all windows are tested.)

7. FIREPLACE(S):

DISCLAIMER:

* **DISCLAIMER: 266 CMR 6.07 (3)(g)1: "Inspectors are not required to observe the interior of chimneys." THE INSPECTION AND REPORTING ON CHIMNEY INTERIOR OR FLUE LINERS IS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS LIMITED VISUAL INSPECTION, AND ARE EXCLUDED FROM THIS REPORT PER CONTRACT. THE CHIMNEY SAFETY INSTITUTE RECOMMENDS A LEVEL II INSPECTION BY A CHIMNEY SWEEP DURING A PROPERTY TRANSFER.**

Chimney and Fireplace Inspections:

The National Fire Protection Association and I, recommend an NFPA 211, **Level II** inspection of any chimney and fireplace when a home is sold. Such an inspection, performed by a qualified chimney sweep, might uncover additional problems that were not *readily accessible* for me. For safety reasons, all chimney and fireplace problems should be corrected before use. A list of Chimney Safety Institute of America Certified Chimney Sweeps' is available online at <http://www.csia.org/>

Differing inspection levels:

Level I : is a visual inspection of readily accessible areas of the chimney structure and flue and basic appliance installation and connection. There must be a lack of obstructions or combustible deposits in the flue.

Level II: includes Level I visual inspection. Proper clearances from combustibles in accessible locations, proper construction and condition of accessible portions of the chimney structure and all enclosed flues, all accessible portions the chimney exterior and interior, including areas within accessible attics, crawl spaces, and basements. Most Include inspection by video camera scanning.

Level III: includes Level II inspection. Proper construction and condition of concealed portions of the chimney structure and flues (this requires demolition or removal of portions of the building where necessary). This type of inspection is used for cause and origin [fire investigations](http://www.inspectionnews.net/home_inspection/autolink.php?id=9&script=showthread&forumid=7) http://www.inspectionnews.net/home_inspection/autolink.php?id=9&script=showthread&forumid=7 or when a chimney has known damages such as a chimney fire or lightning strike.

TYPE & CONDITION:

Recommendation: A new inspection tool offered by professional chimney companies consist of a video inspection to determine the true condition of the interior flue surfaces and joints. The technique is called a chim-scan (budget \$100-150) and is the only way to fully evaluate the chimney.

FIREPLACE PROBLEMS:

Not applicable.

8. WOOD / COAL STOVE:

**TYPE &
CONDITION:**

Observation: The home has a free standing wood stove.



**VISIBLE
PROBLEMS:**



Recommendation: Ask the owner if a permit is available for the stove installation. **(Permits have been required for stove installations since 1975.)** You need this documentation for insurance purposes. If the document is not available, ask the owner to request local inspection by the building or fire officials prior to purchase.

Observation: Unplugged openings are present in chimney. In the basement the insulation is not an appropriate means to plug a flue. Also in the first floor there are what appear to be vents in the brick work.

Analysis: The concern is if the flues or brick wythe have been damaged by moisture poisonous combustion gases can enter the home and cause personal injury FIRE.***
UNSAFE

Recommendation: I advise that you hire a mason to perform safety repairs as required and have a level 2 inspection performed on the chimney liners.

9. SIGNS OF WATER PENETRATION:

Signs of water penetration on interior surfaces?



Observation: Signs of water penetration (stains) were observed on ceilings. The moisture stains tested as being dry at time of inspection.

Analysis: The above observation should NOT be considered as a guaranty against future water penetration. There is a potential for future water penetration and / or concealed damage, further investigation is needed. The source of the moisture stain may or may not have been determined during the home inspection due to the finished ceiling or systems or components that were not readily accessible. Be advised that any source of water penetration or ventilation imbalance can cause interior damage and / or mold.

Recommendation: YOU should ask the owner about the source of the ceiling stains and if the problem has been corrected. If the problem has been identified and corrected, then cosmetic ceiling repairs are needed.

Observation: Moist or wet stains are present on the Attic floors, as determined by the use of a portable moisture meter.

Analysis: Active water penetration is suspected. The source of the problem appears to be the leaks at the plumbing vents and the missing ridge cap. There is a potential for concealed damage. Be advised that any source of water penetration or ventilation imbalance can cause interior damage and / or mold.

Recommendation: YOU should ask the owner to disclose any knowledge regarding the source of the moist stains on the floors. Hire a tradesman to perform required repairs as needed to correct the source of water penetration.

10. OVER-ALL CONDITION / RECOMMENDATIONS:

Interior summary: Analysis: You should consult applicable tradesmen relative to the above concerns to further investigate and to provide cost estimates for repairs or replacement NOW, prior to commitment.