

Senior Home Safety Network Standards of Practice

PROGRAM GOAL

We recognize that more citizens are “living in place” as an alternative to group housing. Group housing can mean assisted living, MHMR residences, senior housing, high rise and other housing for persons less capable of maintaining the condition of their residence.

KEEPING SENIORS SAFE IN THEIR HOMES is our mission

Currently, many services are provided to assist in this “quality of life” decision to remain in the home. This program is a critical program needed in addition to those programs provided for home health care, provision of meals, transportation needs, assistance with financial and tax issues, and other areas of need.

The Center for Disease Control has identified home hazards as a serious and significant factor on the health of Seniors and other at risk populations. A fall, fire, carbon monoxide or other event can end the ability of people to continue to “live in place”. Environmental conditions can trigger serious health decline in that population. As an example, mold can be the source of unnecessary medical costs and reduced quality of life for a respiratory patient.

Senior Home Safety Network Inspections are intended to provide the client, occupant, health care providers, home services providers and other responsible parties with objective information regarding the observed condition of the systems and components of the property. This information can be used to increase quality of life and reduce health care costs and better direct the care of the property occupants.

Senior Home Safety Network Policies

For the purpose of this document, the Home Safety Checkup Network will be indicated by “Network”

All inspectors will be screened for compliance with all requirements established by the **Network**.

All inspector assignments will be processed through the **Network** office

The **Network** office will provide appointment confirmations, appropriate notices and completed reports to clients and other directed parties.

The **Network** will provide and maintain a uniform reporting system

Reports are subject to **Network** administrative review

Senior Home Safety Network Inspector Requirements

All inspectors must have passed the NHIE (National Home Inspector Exam)

All inspectors must be compliant with all regulations, oversight and license requirements within the jurisdictions where they practice

All inspectors must complete the **Network** Initial Training Program and be current on all **Network** Continuing Education requirements.

All inspectors must be compliant with **Network** Member Procedures and Policies

All inspectors must have clear criminal clearance reports on file

All inspectors must wear Network Photo Identification ID’s during all site visits

All inspectors must have an identification photograph posted on the **Network** website for clients to verify identity.

All inspectors must not visit the inspection site until assigned and confirmation of the appointment is provided to clients . Clients or occupants will receive advance notice of the inspection as well as a copy of the inspector’s photo

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Overview and Purpose of Home Safety Inspections

1.1 The **Senior Home Safety Network** is an association intended to provide information, guidance for safe home practices for those citizens “living in place” and in need of such services. These services are to be provided without discrimination. Installation services, other than those required within this standard of practice, are not to be provided in the property inspected by the Home Safety Inspector

General Policies of the Standards of Practice

2.1 The purpose of these Standards of Practice is to establish a minimum and uniform standard for inspectors who subscribe to these Standards of Practice. *Senior Home Safety Inspections* performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the client, occupant, care providers and other responsible parties with objective information regarding the observed condition of the *systems* and *components* of the home as inspected at the time of the inspection.

2.2 *Inspectors* shall:

- A. Adhere to this standard of practice and be absolutely current in every aspect of the training, preparation, background screening, continuing education, insurance, reporting and performance standards set by the Home Safety Network.
- B. *Responsibly inspect readily accessible*, visually observable, *systems* and *components* listed in these Standards of Practice.
- C. *report* :
 1. those *systems* and *components inspected* under these standards that, in the professional judgment of the home Safety *Inspector*, are not functioning properly, significantly deficient or are *unsafe*.
 2. recommendations to correct, or monitor for future correction, the deficiencies *reported*, or items needing *further evaluation*. *Inspectors* are NOT required to determine methods, materials, or costs of corrections.
 3. reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies *reported*, that are not self-evident in order to facilitate responsible repair.
 4. *systems* and *components* designated for inspection in these Standards of Practice that were present at the time of the *Home Safety Inspection* but were not *inspected* and the reason(s) they were not *inspected*.

2.3 These Standards of Practice are not intended to limit *inspectors* from:

- A. including other inspection services or *systems* and *components* in addition to those specifically mentioned. Not all safety issues or occupant’s personal requirements and conditions can reasonably be anticipated in a single document. Common sense issues should be considered in the performance of the work, though inspectors can’t reasonably anticipate every potential use, misuse, defect and outcome that the mixture of the people and products can create.
- B. Designing, suggesting or specifying repairs or methods and materials, provided the safety inspector is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.
- C. excluding *systems* and *components* from the inspection if requested by the client, or if they are outside of the expertise, license or approved qualifications of the inspector.

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3. Structural Issues

- 3.1 The *inspector* shall *inspect* & report observed defects as to
- A. Unsecured decks, porches or roofs
 - B. Visibly collapsing, bowed or rotted beams, support posts or foundations
 - C. Rotted flooring, holes in floors
 - D. Loose steps and stringers or rails
 - E. Loose, hanging or missing wall or ceiling finishes
 - F. Severely bowed roof structures
 - G. Tripping hazards on sidewalks, steps, walkways or driveways
 - H. Hanging or loose siding, roofing or masonry structures that could fall and cause injury or damage.
- 3.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to
- A. provide any *engineering* or architectural service or analysis.
 - B. offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any *structural system* or *component*
 - C. *use ladders, scaffolds or other methods than visual inspection from ground level to view any item in this standard of practice*
 - D. inspect soil or geological conditions, antennae, roof flashings, Communication or TV components.

4.0 Plumbing System

- 4.1 The *inspector* shall:
- A. *inspect*:
 1. visible interior water supply and distribution *systems* including operation of all fixtures and faucets.
 2. visible drain, waste and vent *systems* including all fixtures.
 3. operation of water heating equipment and hot water supply *system*.
 - B. The *inspector* is NOT required to check .
 1. interiors of flues or chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
 2. wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment.
 3. water conditioning *systems*.
 4. solar water heating *systems*.
 5. fire and lawn sprinkler *systems*.
 6. private waste disposal *systems*.

5.0 Electrical system

- 5.1 The *inspector* shall:
- A. *inspect* :
 1. exterior service drop cable, weather head and meter for frayed or rusted components
 2. exposed service equipment, cables, and raceways for rust, melted wires and other exposed or visible defects
 3. a *representative number* of *installed* lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles.
 4. ground fault circuit interrupters, identifying areas that current rules would suggest that they be installed

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5. frayed cables and extensions, extensions and other cords crossing surface traffic areas or creating other hazards, visibly unsafe appliances and electrically over-rated appliances such as heaters

B. *describe*:

1. amperage and types of service, including observing the existence of fused panels or visible and exposed knob and tube wiring
2. visible presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring, and recommendations for safety.
3. presence or absence of smoke detectors.
4. Inspector will install smoke detectors in each sleeping room and a minimum of one detector at each level at no additional cost if these items are provided to the safety inspector at the time of the site visit.
5. Incandescent exposed bulbs where they can create a fire and suggest appropriate replacement with florescent bulbs. These will be changed at no additional labor costs if provided to the inspector and if replacement is possible by normal reaching of the inspector. Burned out bulbs will also be replaced at not additional labor cost if provided under the same conditions

5.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:

A. *inspect* :

1. remote control devices.
2. *alarm systems* and *components*.
3. low voltage wiring *systems* and *components*.
4. ancillary wiring *systems* and *components* not a part of the primary electrical power distribution *system*.
5. measure amperage, voltage or impedance.
6. Operate appliances

Heating System

6.1 The *inspector* shall:

A. open *readily removable access panels*.

B. *inspect*:

1. *Visible burners installed* in oil and gas fuel heating equipment to assure these are not corroded or blocked with debris.
2. Check exposed gas lines with a combustible gas detector and vent *systems* areas with a Carbon Monoxide detector
3. Examine surfaces adjacent to the flues and chimneys areas for evidence of back venting or carbon buildup
4. Note space heaters are not being used according to instructions if they are provided.
5. Provide instruction as to proper operation including storage and loading of fuel if instructions are provided to the inspector.
6. Oil and gas fueled vent *systems* , flues, and chimneys shall be checked with a CO detector
7. fuel storage and fuel distribution *systems* visible for leaks at readily accessible pathways. Exposed and reachable combustible gas fittings and valves need checked for gas leaks

C. *describe*:

1. HVAC Equipment that requires regular maintenance

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2. Furnace filters or other ancillary equipment that requires periodic cleaning or replacement
- 6.2 The *inspector* is NOT required to:
- A. *inspect*:
 1. interiors of flues or chimneys that are not *readily accessible*.
 2. heat exchangers.
 3. humidifiers or dehumidifiers.
 4. electronic air filters.
 5. solar space heating *systems*.
 - B. determine heat supply adequacy or distribution balance.

7. Air Conditioning System

- A. The *inspector* shall:
 1. For wall and window air conditioners: inspect electrical cords, outlets and the cords that the appliance cords may be plugged into, Window and wall units for proper support
 2. For central air conditioning: disconnect boxes for rust condensate lines for proper discharge and trapping
- B. The *inspector* is NOT required to:
 1. The operation of the units
 2. The size, life expectancy or efficiency of the units

8. Interior

- A. The *inspector* shall *inspect* :
 1. walls, ceilings, and floors for loose finished or indications of water intrusion surfaces for organic growth.
 2. Proper installation of smoke detectors in each level of the property and in each sleeping room. There should also be one operable Carbon Monoxide detector in the home. If these items, or replacement batteries are provided to the inspector, they are to be installed at no additional cost.
 3. interior steps, stairways, and railings for placement and secure fastening
 4. Windows, screen and locks for safe operation as a means of fire egress and ventilation
 5. Lighting of walkway and stairwell areas and dangerous conditions or obstructions.
 6. Missing railings where installation would be prudent based on the conditions in the property at the time of the inspection.
 7. garage doors and garage door operators for safe operation and proper automatic reverse
 8. Observe and note any broken or cracked glass or the existence of other materials that can create injury such as exposed nails in an walkwalk
 9. Proper operation of at existing fixtures
 10. *Proper operation of the vents*
- B. The *inspector* is NOT required to *inspect* :
 1. paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments.
 2. carpeting and other flooring except for tripping hazards.
 3. window treatments.
 4. central vacuum *systems*.

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5. *household appliances. recreational facilities.*

9. Fresh air ventilation

- A. The *inspector* shall *inspect*:
1. Proper operation of at least one window in each room
 2. Proper operation of dryer ventilation
 3. *Proper operation of the bathroom vents*

10. Indoor Air & Environmental Hazards

We recognize that indoor air, mold, chemical and pollution can and do adversely affect the health of many citizens.

- A. The *inspector* shall report and suggest appropriate additional actions
1. observed areas of water intrusion
 2. visible organic growth
 3. exposed chemical hazards.
- B. The inspector, if qualified to perform such services and in compliance of the environmental services Standards of Practice
1. provide such services under the environmental standards of practice on a "fee for service" basis, through the network.
 2. Identify the source of the condition that needs corrected

11. Fireplace and solid fuel burning appliances

- A. The *inspector* shall:
1. inspect and note location of carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
 2. observe proximity of flammable objects and materials to combustion area
- B. The *inspector* is NOT required to inspect the fireplace and fuel burning appliances

General limitations and exclusions

13.1 General limitations:

- A. The *inspector* is NOT required to perform any action or make any determination not specifically stated in these Standards of Practice.
- B. Inspections performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice :
1. are not *technically exhaustive*.
 2. are not required to identify concealed conditions, latent defects, or consequential damage(s).
- C. These Standards of Practice are applicable to buildings with four or fewer dwelling units and their garages or carports.

13.2 General exclusions:

- A. *Inspectors* are not required to determine:
1. conditions of *systems* or *components* that are not *readily accessible*.
 2. remaining life expectancy of any *system* or *component*.
 3. strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any *system* or *component*.
 4. the causes of any condition or deficiency.
 5. methods, materials, or costs of corrections.
 6. future conditions including, but not limited to, failure of *systems* and *components*.
 7. the suitability of the property for any specialized use.

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8. compliance with regulatory requirements (codes, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc.).
 9. market value of the property or its marketability.
 10. the advisability of purchase of the property.
 11. the presence of potentially hazardous plants or animals including, but not limited to wood destroying organisms or diseases harmful to humans including molds or mold-like substances.
 12. the presence of any environmental hazards including, but not limited to toxins, carcinogens, noise, and contaminants in soil, water, and air.
 13. the effectiveness of any *system installed* or method utilized to control or remove suspected hazardous substances.
 14. operating costs of *systems* or *components*.
 15. acoustical properties of any *system* or *component*.
 16. soil conditions relating to geotechnical or hydrologic specialties.
- B. *Inspectors* are NOT required to offer:
1. or perform any act or service contrary to law.
 2. or perform *engineering services*.
 3. or perform work in any trade or any professional service other than *home inspection*.
 4. warranties or guarantees of any kind.
- C. *Inspectors* are NOT required to operate:
1. any *system* or *component* that is *shut down* or otherwise inoperable.
 2. any *system* or *component* that does not respond to *normal operating controls*.
 3. shut-off valves or manual stop valves.
- D. *Inspectors* are NOT required to enter:
1. any area 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*.
 2. *under-floor crawl spaces* or attics that are not *readily accessible*.
- E. *Inspectors* are NOT required to *inspect*:
1. underground items including, but not limited to underground storage tanks or other underground indications of their presence, whether abandoned or active.
 2. items that are not *installed*.
 3. *installed decorative* items.
 4. items in areas that are not entered in accordance with 13.2.D.
 5. detached structures other than garages and carports.
 6. common elements or common areas in multi-unit housing, such as condominium properties or cooperative housing.
- F. *Inspectors* are NOT required to:
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*.
 2. describe or report on any *system* or *component* that is not included in these Standards and was not *inspected*.
 3. move personal property, furniture, equipment, plants, soil, snow, ice, or debris.
 4. *Dismantle* any *system* or *component*, except as explicitly required by these Standards of Practice.