

Texas Administrative Code

RULE §535.228

Standards of Practice: Inspection Guidelines for Structural Systems

(a) Foundations. The inspector shall:

- (1) report the type of foundation (for example, slab-on-grade or pier and beam);
- (2) inspect the foundation, related structural components and/or slab surfaces;
- (3) inspect the crawl space area to determine the general condition of foundation components and report the method used to observe the crawl space if the inspector did not enter the crawl space because the space was inaccessible, hazardous conditions were present, or access or visibility was limited;
- (4) render a written opinion as to the performance of the foundation;
- (5) report general indications of foundation movement that are present and visible, such as sheetrock cracks, brick cracks, out-of-square door frames or floor slopes;
- (6) report as in need of repair any post tensioned cable ends that are not protected;
- (7) report as in need of repair a crawl space that does not appear to be adequately ventilated;
- (8) report as in need of repair conditions or symptoms that may indicate the possibility of water penetration that are present and visible, such as improper grading around foundation walls or plumbing leaks; and
- (9) report as in need of repair conditions that are present and visible and may be adversely affecting foundation performance, such as erosion or water ponding.

(b) Specific limitations for foundations. The inspector is not required to enter a crawl space or any areas where headroom is less than 18 inches and the width of the access opening is less than two feet, or where the inspector reasonably determines conditions or materials are hazardous to health or safety of the inspector.

(c) Interior walls, doors, ceilings and floors. The inspector shall:

- (1) report as in need of repair deficiencies of the surfaces of walls, ceilings and floors as related to structural performance or water penetration that are present and visible;
- (2) report as in need of repair accessible doors that do not operate properly, excluding locks and latches;
- (3) report as in need of repair deficiencies in steps, stairways, balconies and railings,
- (4) report as in need of repair spacings between intermediate balusters, spindles, or rails for steps, stairways, balconies, and railings that permit passage of an object greater than four inches in diameter; and
- (5) report as in need of repair the absence of safety glass in hazardous locations.

(d) Specific limitations for Interior walls, doors, ceilings and floors. The inspector is not required to do the following:

- (1) determine the condition of floor, wall or ceiling coverings unless such conditions affect structural performance or indicate water penetration;
- (2) report obvious damage to floor, wall or ceiling coverings;
- (3) determine the condition of paints, stains and other surface coatings; or
- (4) determine condition of cabinets.

(e) Exterior walls and doors, windows and door glazing. The inspector shall:

- (1) report as in need of repair present and visible deficiencies of exterior walls that are related to structural performance and water penetration;
- (2) report as in need of repair deficiencies in the condition and operation of exterior doors and garage doors, including door locks and latches when present.
- (3) report as in need of repair damaged glazing in windows and exterior doors;
- (4) report as in need of repair any insulated windows that are obviously fogged or display other evidence of broken seals;
- (5) report as in need of repair the absence of safety glass in hazardous locations;
- (6) report as in need of repair missing or damaged window and door screens;
- (7) report as in need of repair in homes having burglar bars the absence of functional keyless burglar bars in appropriate locations;
- (8) report as in need of repair inoperable windows at burglar bar locations of sleeping rooms or egress areas and any inoperable windows at other randomly sampled accessible burglar bar locations; and
- (9) report as in need of repair spacings between intermediate balusters, spindles and rails that permit passage of an object greater than four inches in diameter.

(f) Specific limitations for exterior walls and doors, windows and door glazing. The inspector is not required to do the following:

- (1) report the condition or presence of storm windows or doors, awnings, shutters or security devices or systems;
- (2) determine the condition of paints stains or other surface coatings; or
- (3) determine the presence of, or extent or type of, insulation or vapor barriers in exterior walls.

(g) Fireplace and chimney. The inspector shall:

- (1) report as in need of repair deficiencies in the visible components and structure of the chimney and fireplace;
- (2) inspect the interior of the firebox and the visible flue area, and report as in need of repair built up creosote in visible areas of the firebox and flue (the inspector is not required to determine the adequacy of the draft or perform a chimney smoke test);

- (3) report as in need of repair a damper that does not operate;
- (4) report as in need of repair the presence of non-combustible hearth extension;
- (5) report as in need of repair deficiencies in the lintel, hearth and material surrounding the fireplace, including clearances from combustible materials;
- (6) report as in need of repair the absence of firestopping at the attic penetration of the chimney flue, where accessible;
- (7) report as in need of repair any gas log lighter valves that do not function or leak gas;
- (8) report as in need of repair any circulating fan that does not operate, if present;
- (9) report as in need of repair deficiencies in combustion air vent, if present; and
- (10) report as in need of repair deficiencies in chimney coping or crown, caps or spark arrestor (inspected from ground level at a minimum).

(h) Roof, roof structure and attic. The inspector shall:

- (1) report the type of roof covering and report as in need of repair:
 - (A) a roof covering that is not appropriate for the slope of the roof;
 - (B) fasteners that are not present or that are not appropriate, (where it can be reasonably determined); and
 - (C) roof jacks, flashing and counter flashing that are not present or not properly installed.
- (2) inspect the general condition of, and report evidence of previous repairs to, flashing, skylights and other roof penetrations;
- (3) report as in need of repair inadequate attic space ventilation;
- (4) report as in need of repair deficiencies in the roof covering, structure and sheathing;
- (5) report any visible evidence of moisture penetration;
- (6) report as in need of repair the lack of or inappropriate installation of components such as purlins, struts, collar ties or rafter ties, where necessary;
- (7) report as in need of repair excessive deflections or depressions in the roof's surface relating to the performance of the framing and the roof deck;
- (8) enter and inspect attic space(s) except when inadequate access or hazardous conditions exist as reasonably determined by the inspector and report the method used to inspect the attic if the inspector did not enter the attic;
- (9) report the method used to inspect the roof if the inspection is performed from other than roof level;
- (10) inspect for the presence, and report the approximate depth of, insulation where visible; and
- (11) report as in need of repair deficiencies in visible installed gutter and downspout systems.

(i) Specific limitations for roof, roof structure and attic. The inspector is not required to do the following:

- (1) determine the remaining life expectancy of the roof covering; or
- (2) inspect the roof from the roof level if the inspector reasonably determines that the inspector cannot safely reach or stay on the roof, or that damage to the roof or roof covering may result from walking on the roof.

(j) Porches and decks. The inspector shall:

- (1) report as in need of repair structural deficiencies in porches, decks, steps, balconies and carports as to visible footings, joists, deckings, railings and attachment points, where applicable; and
- (2) report as in need of repair (except for decks which are not higher than 30 inches as measured from the adjacent grade) spacings between intermediate balusters, spindles or rails that permit passage of an object greater than four inches in diameter.

(k) Specific limitations for porches and decks. The inspector is not required to inspect detached structures or waterfront structures and equipment, such as docks or piers.