

National Home Inspector Certification Council

Key Checkpoints for Compliant Report Writing

One of the most common concerns noted during the process of reviewing home inspection reports is the inspector's lack of understanding what a "must find" condition is. The explanation below should help in directing what is the duty of every inspector to attain compliance in their reporting. Also noted is the importance of indicating the implication or potential impact the condition will have on their client.

When reviewing the TIPR reports both the Examiners and Chief Examiner must look for the "must find" conditions, or more specifically the reference in ASHI Standards of Practice to "not functioning properly, significantly deficient, unsafe or are near the end of their service lives". (See 2.2 B.1 below) These are all considered "must finds".

The home inspector is also required to report reasoning or explanation to correct, or monitor for future corrections the deficiencies reported. In other words – "report the must finds and in conjunction with those conditions, report to the client the advice or action required to alleviate the condition". (See 2.2 B.2 & 3 below) These are considered the inspector's duty to warn, thus fulfilling the obligation to reduce the risk of liability of injury and or cause further damages. The clients need to be advised of the potential hazard that exists.

Equally as important is the inspector's notation of any specific systems or components that were not inspected, and the reason why they were not inspected.

More specifically the ASHI – SOP: Purpose and Scope (notes from version 2014)

2.1 The purpose of this document is to establish a minimum standard (Standard) for home inspections performed by home inspectors who subscribe to this Standard. Home inspections performed using this Standard are intended to provide the client with information about the condition of inspected systems and components at the time of the home inspection.

2.2 The inspector shall:

A. inspect readily accessible, visually observable, installed systems and components listed in this Standard.

B. provide the client with a written report, using a format and medium selected by the inspector, that states:

1. those systems and components inspected that, in the professional judgment of the inspector, are not functioning properly, significantly deficient, unsafe, or are near the end of their service lives,
2. recommendations to correct, or monitor for future correction, the deficiencies reported in 2.2.B.1, or items needing further evaluation (Per Exclusion 13.2.A.5 the inspector is NOT required to determine methods, materials, or costs of corrections.),
3. reasoning or explanation as to the nature of the deficiencies reported in 2.2.B.1, that are not self-evident,
4. those systems and components designated for inspection in this Standard that were present at the time of the home inspection but were not inspected and the reason(s) they were not inspected.

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C. adhere to the ASHI® Code of Ethics for the Home Inspection Profession.

2.3 This Standard is not intended to limit the inspector from:

A. including other services or systems and components in addition to those required in Section 2.2.A.

B. designing or specifying repairs, provided the inspector is appropriately qualified and willing to do so.

C. excluding systems and components from the inspection if requested or agreed to by the client.

Note: underlined words are defined in the SOP glossary.