

Georgia Association of Home Inspectors

Standards of Practice for Pre-Drywall Inspections

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the GAHI (Georgia Association of Home Inspectors) Standards of Practice for Pre-Drywall Inspections is to establish a uniform guide for performing inspections of construction in one and two family dwellings.

The Standards are intended to set minimum requirements for inspecting, reporting and describing conditions that affect the property and human safety.

The Standards define and clarify terms, procedures, scope and conditions and limitations as they relate to a GAHI approved inspection and report.

GAHI is proud that these are the most rigorous requirements of any home inspection organization in the United States.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the GAHI Pre-Drywall Inspection is to reduce the public's risk by providing a general inspection of the conditions of the structure as they exist at the time of the inspection and to attempt to identify areas where substandard or deficient construction has the potential for future damage or injury.

The purpose of the GAHI Pre-Drywall Inspection is to supply a written summary describing the inspection findings.

SCOPE

The scope of the GAHI Pre-Drywall Inspection is a visual inspection, with limited use of mechanical instruments and should not be considered exhaustive. Due to time consideration it is a general inspection of visible conditions. The inspection is limited to readily accessible areas of the grounds and building components.

Systems and conditions that are not within the scope of the inspection include, but are not limited to environmental hazards, pest infestation, portable appliances, security systems, telephone systems, audio equipment, intercom systems, timers, fire or lawn sprinklers, swimming pools, spas, jetted tubs, tennis courts, playground or other recreational equipment, solar heating systems, below ground septic or drainage systems, water wells, zoning ordinances, building code conformity, or any item considered to be cosmetic in nature.

Any comments about these systems and conditions are informational only and do not represent an inspection. The GAHI inspector takes no position on property value nor makes any representation as to advisability of purchase or suitability of use of the property.

INSPECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

GAHI recommends that only GAHI "Certified Inspectors" be retained to perform this type of inspection.

GAHI "Certified Inspectors" have demonstrated extensive knowledge of Pre-Drywall Inspections by passing the Council of American Building Officials (CABO) approved "One and Two Family Dwelling Inspection" examination or the four examinations required to obtain the International Code Council Residential Combination Inspector Certification. GAHI Certified Inspectors are required to maintain a current Residential Combination Inspector Certification through the International Code Council (ICC). The International Code Council writes building codes for residential construction in the United States. These codes have been adopted into law by the State of Georgia and many others.

"Certified Inspectors" have also demonstrated knowledge of construction by passing GAHI's other required exams.

Finally, each “Certified Inspector” is required to have performed at least 250 home inspections according to the GAHI Standards of Practice, has had their reports reviewed by the association, and is required to maintain GAHI approved continuing education.

WARRANTIES AND GUARANTEES

The GAHI inspection report is not intended to be used as a guarantee or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding adequacy, performance, or condition of any inspected building, improvement, mechanical system or appliance.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

The following Standards provide guidelines for the GAHI inspector. The guidelines outline what the GAHI inspector should observe, identify, inspect and describe. The guidelines provide the minimum contents of a written report and are not intended to limit the GAHI inspector from performing additional inspection services.

Consult the Glossary for the definition of the intended use of words. Words not included in the Glossary should be defined using Webster’s Dictionary.

A pre-drywall inspection is commonly made after the roof, masonry, all framing, firestopping, draftstopping and bracing are in place and after the plumbing, mechanical and electrical rough inspections are approved.

We intend to base our inspections on this Standard. Different designs, types of construction and situations may necessitate that other items be inspected.

GENERAL LIMITATIONS

The inspector is not required to:

1. Perform any task or access any area that may place him or her in danger.
2. Perform any task that may cause damage to the structure or contents.
3. Dismantle any item by other than means provided for the end user.
4. Move any items.
5. Perform Engineering or Cost Estimates.
6. Determine the life expectancy of any component or system.
7. Perform efficiency or performance evaluation of equipment or systems.
8. Inspect any item or system not specifically required by these Standards.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The inspector is required to report:

1. Observed items that may be a threat to human safety.
2. Observed failure of any item or system.
3. Observed conditions that may lead to potential problems.
4. Observed items or systems that are not complete.
5. Observed items that appear to be in used condition.
6. Why any item requires by these standards was not reported on.
7. The GAHI inspector is not required to perform code inspections; however, should the inspector choose to cite code deficiencies, the inspector must identify the code by year and section for the permit year of the house.

The GAHI Inspector should describe the materials used and report on the condition and/or any deficiencies in the following areas of the structure.

FRAMING INSPECTION

Roof / Ceiling Construction

Components of roof/ceiling construction fastened per appropriate IRC Tables

Rafter spans are adequate per appropriate IRC Tables

Grade marks on rafters

Allowable deflection of structural members per appropriate IRC Table

Ends of rafters to bear on 1 ½" of wood or metal or 3" on masonry

Cutting and notching of rafters

Boring of holes in rafters

Framing around openings/headers

Attic ventilation

Bracing of trusses (trusses require engineer's design) (any truss supporting equipment must be designed for such)

Altered or damaged trusses (repairs require design by engineer or truss manufacturer)

Plywood where required must have edge blocking or clips

Roof purlins, struts and bracing where required

Roof bracing to load bearing wall or beam

Depth of ridge board not less than end cut of rafter

Lower rafter ties where required (when ceiling joist not nailed to rafters to form a continuous tie between exterior walls)

Hip and valley rafters supported at ridge or designed to carry specific load

Hip and valley rafters not less than 2" nominal thickness and not less in depth than end cut of rafter

Ceiling joist spans

Grade marks on ceiling joists

Ends of ceiling joists to bear 1 ½" on wood or metal, or 3" on masonry

Cutting and notching of ceiling joists

Boring of holes in ceiling joists

Cathedral ceilings rafters ends supported on bearing walls attached to ridge beam capable of supporting imposed roof loads (may require engineer's design)

Ceiling joists used to resist rafter thrust lapped minimum 3" or butted and attached in manner to resist such thrust

Lateral bracing of rafters and ceiling joists where required

Bridging of rafters and ceiling joists where required

Roof tie-downs where required

Walls

Components of wall construction fastened per appropriate IRC Tables

Grade marks on studs #3 standard or stud grade (see code exceptions)

Allowable deflection of structural members per appropriate IRC Table

Studs over 10' may require engineer's design

Bearing wall studs spaced and sized per appropriate IRC Table

Exterior wall top plates doubled and joints spaced properly

Interior load bearing partitions constructed, framed and firestopped as specified for exterior walls

Drilling and notching of studs

Drilling and notching of top plates

Headers (#2 grade lumber) sized per appropriate IRC Table (header tables not for use with concentrated loads – engineer's design required)

Appropriate firestopping installed

Cripple walls framed and braced properly

Exterior and foundation wall panels framed and braced per appropriate IRC Table

Anchor bolts/straps installed and spaced correctly (IRC or manufacturer's requirements for alternate anchors)

Fire separation for walls, penetrations and openings protected as required per IRC Table

Minimum size window openings required in bedrooms

Masonry veneers greater than 40 pounds per square foot not to be supported by wood construction unless by design

Floors

Components of floor construction fastened per appropriate IRC Tables

Floor joist spans

Grade marks on floor joists

Allowable deflection of structural members per appropriate IRC Table

Floor joists, beams and girders capable of accommodating all loads imposed

Floor joists under parallel or perpendicular bearing partitions sized to accommodate loads imposed

Floor joists to bear on 1 ½" of wood or metal, 3" on masonry

Floor joists lapped appropriately

Floor joists framed into the side of wood girder supported appropriately (hangers or ledgers)

Cutting and notching of floor joists

Boring of holes in floor joists

Floor joists supported laterally at ends

Bridging where required

Framing of openings and required header and trimmer joists and approved hangers

Posts, beams and girder construction require positive connection to ensure against uplift and lateral displacement

Floor trusses designed by engineer

Firestopping and draftstopping materials as required

Grade marks on floor sheathing and installed and fastened per appropriate IRC Table

General

Protection against decay of joists, sill plates, siding, wall sheathing, studs, etc. where applicable due to clearances

Minimum headroom at stairs

Minimum ceiling heights

Chimneys and Fireplaces

Masonry chimney minimum clearance to combustibles, 2" for interior clearances, 1" for chimney located entirely outside the exterior walls

Chimney crickets sized appropriately

Chimney height

Factory built fireplaces installed from combustible material per manufacturer's installation instructions

Required firestopping installed at floor and ceiling penetrations

ELECTRICAL ROUGH INSPECTION

Service Entrance

- Proper clearance of overhead conductors
- Main disconnect readily accessible and within 6' 7" of final grade
- Ampacity sufficient for service entrance conductors (record size)
- Support of service conductors
- Record location of main service disconnect

Bonding and Grounding

- Verify grounding electrode installed properly (note that should be concrete encased electrode – Ufer)
- Grounding electrode conductor continuous (no splices) and properly attached
- Service equipment properly bonded
- Metallic water and gas piping, building steel properly bonded
- Separate equipment grounding conductor for sub panels
- Metal boxes properly grounded
- Whirlpool pump/motor bonding

Main Electrical Panel

- Sufficient working space
- Panel not located in bathroom or clothes closet
- Record sizes and type of cable installed for major appliance circuits

Wiring Methods and Materials

- Device boxes installed on exterior front and rear, not to exceed 6' 6" above grade
- Device box located for garage outlet
- Device box located for basement outlet
- Proper spacing of outlets for habitable rooms (2' wall spaces, 6' spacing rule)
- Proper spacing of outlets for kitchen counter tops (12" and wider, 2' spacing rule)
- Installation of outlet for island and peninsular counters (greater than 1' x 2')
- Outlet provision for bathroom sinks (one per each unless located between basins)
- Outlet provision for laundry area

Provision for hallway outlet (hallway greater than 10')

Heating, air conditioning and water heater disconnects

Service outlets for heating and air conditioning

Service lights (in attic and crawl space)

Required lighting outlets and switches

Lighting at exterior entrances

Support of conductors and installation of wiring method

Proper identification of conductors

Boxes properly located and supported

Junction boxes located so as to be accessible

Floor boxes suitable for use

Box fill

Unused openings closed

Wiring protected from physical damage, stud edges, attic access

General

Mechanical execution of work (plumb, level, etc)

PLUMBING ROUGH INSPECTION

Drain, Vent and Sewer Piping

Sewer cleanout installed

Drains and vents sized properly

Slope

Fittings installed with proper orientation for flow

Cleanouts installed and accessible as required

Vent termination

Water Supply Piping

Accessibility and location of plumbing fixtures correct

Backflow preventers installed as required

General

Notching and boring according to code

Protective straps installed (extend two inches above bottom plate, below top plate)

Piping properly supported according to size, function, etc

Workmanship

MECHANICAL ROUGH INSPECTION

Gas Piping

Sized properly for appliances

Properly supported

Shut off valves installed as required

Sediment trap installed

Equipment

Equipment properly located and installed

Clearances

Walkway and service platform correct for attic installations

Light and outlet for attic and crawl space

Ductwork

Material approved for use

Clearances

Insulation and joints properly sealed

Ductwork properly supported

Exhaust Systems

Dryer exhaust (smooth pipe, length within requirements, etc.)

Bathroom vent fans (located where required and properly terminated to outside)

Terminations (hood, etc.)

Combustion Air

Requirements per rated input for appliances

Proper installation of ducts

Chimney and Gas Flues

Material correct

Clearances

Properly sized

Properly supported

Properly terminated through roof or wall

General

Condensate drain pans installed where required

Drain piping (normal and emergency) properly supported and sloped