



## WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE A HOME INSPECTED?

While homes have been trading hands for centuries, only in the past 20 – 30 years has a professional inspection of a home become a part of the purchase process. The State of Texas, the first to license the Home Inspection Industry, licensed its first inspector in October of 1985.

These inspections are routinely performed on homes of all ages, regardless of the builder, the price or perceived quality of the home.

There are many reasons to inspect a property. These include;

### Structural Integrity

**Design errors** – The International Residential Code (IRC) for One and Two Family Dwellings is the basis of home design and construction. Each municipality, county, or state may, however, make changes or additions to this book of codes to ensure that the residence is safe. The 2006 IRC alone is over 670 pages of fine print and does not include all of the additional rules and code from the National Electric Code, Plumbing Code, etc. A home inspection is not a code inspection but may identify code exceptions or changes because of new understanding of risks.

**Construction errors** – Builders have every intention of building a pleasing, long lasting home, but people make mistakes. Builders typically have site supervisors and their own inspectors in addition to the local code authority inspectors, but errors are often made. The impact of these errors may not show up for years.

**Wear and Failure** – As the home ages, so do the parts it was built from. The siding and roof covering ages, mechanical equipment such as heating and cooling equipment wears, and things just sometimes fail or break.

### Safety

**Improper Modifications and Repairs** – In the age of Do-It-Yourself television programs, everyone is encouraged to take care of their own home. Some things, however, should be left to licensed, professional tradesmen. An inspection will often identify repairs, updates, remodeling, etc. which create unsafe conditions.

**Codes change** – Building codes are intended to protect the populace. While many code changes are considered to be “grandfathered”, there are often components and systems that should be brought up-to-date when a home is sold. These updates are typically required when there is a safety issue such as fire safety equipment, electrical, etc.

## WHAT IS A HOME INSPECTION?

A Home Inspection is observation and evaluation of *visible* conditions present at the time of the inspection by a disinterested third-party following a Standards of Practice issued by the Texas Real Estate Commission. The Standards of Practice reflects *minimum requirements*. That is, an inspector can do more, but may not do less. The Standards of Practice are available to the public and may be found and downloaded at <http://www.trec.state.tx.us/pdf/inspectors/535.227-535.233.pdf>

As an independent third-party, you can trust your inspector to provide you the most accurate information possible without some concern that he or she is trying to sell you products or services. The Inspector must not have any interest in the property or stand to gain in any way from the sale or failure to sell the property. An inspector may not accept employment to repair, replace, maintain or upgrade systems or components of property covered by the Standards of Practice within 12 months of the date of the inspection.

## WHAT IS INSPECTED?

An inspector will conduct a limited, visual inspection of the structure and specific components and

equipment mandated by the TREC Standards of Practice.

**The inspector is required to:**

**Inspect** items, parts, systems, components and conditions which are present and visible at the time of the inspection, but the inspector is not required to determine or estimate the remaining life expectancy or future performance of any inspected item, part, system or component. It is a fact of life that things fail. An inspection might report the poor condition of some appliance, but while it might last several years longer, an appliance that is new may fail tomorrow.

**Operate** mechanical and electrical equipment, systems, and appliances during an inspection in normal modes and operating range at the time of the inspection. The inspection will treat electrical appliances and fixtures, the HVAC system, water heater and kitchen appliances just as you would during normal use.

**Report** which of the parts, components, and systems present in the property have or have not been inspected.

**Report as in need of repair** inspected parts, components or systems that are not functioning or that the standards of practice require the inspector to report as in need of repair.

In addition the Inspector is required to report certain items that, while may have been acceptable when the house was built, are now considered to be safety issues.

**WHAT IS NOT INSPECTED**

A home inspection is *not a technically exhaustive inspection* of every aspect of every component or equipment.

***Technically Exhaustive**--A comprehensive investigation beyond the scope of a real estate inspection which would involve determining the cause or effect of deficiencies, exploratory probing or discovery, the use of specialized knowledge, equipment or procedures.*

While the list of parts, components and systems to be inspected is a very thorough list for most homes, some may have slightly uncommon, if not unusual features. The SOP excludes all parts, components or systems other than those specifically described;

The SOP excludes all conditions other than those specifically described in the SOP. These include:

- environmental conditions
- mold
- radon
- presence of toxic or hazardous wastes or substances
- asbestos
- lead
- Chinese drywall
- presence of termites or other wood-destroying insects or organisms
- compliance with codes, ordinances, statutes or restrictions or the efficiency, quality, durability of any item inspected;

An inspector should exclude any part, component or system which the inspector is not competent or qualified to inspect.

An inspector may exclude any part, component or system required for inspection by the standards of

practice which is inaccessible, cannot be inspected due to circumstances beyond the control of the inspector, or the inspector's client has agreed is not to be inspected.

In addition, inspectors cannot fully assess items that they can't access, or view. Examples are:

- Framing behind wall, or under floor, coverings.
- A crawl space with inadequate access or unsafe conditions such as moisture.
- A roof that is too high to access, or too steep to safely walk on, or hidden from view from accessible areas.
- An attic with insufficient or unsafe access.
- Areas with furnishings or other items blocking access, including attics, garages, closets, etc.
- Electrical panels in garages blocked by storage shelves, workbenches, peg-boards, boxes, tools, etc.

If an inspector excludes any part, component or system listed in the SOP, other than one which the client has agreed is not to be inspected, the inspector must advise the client at the earliest practical time that the specific part, component or system will not be included in the inspection; and state in any written inspection report that the excluded part, component or system was not inspected.

## WHAT A HOME INSPECTION IS NOT

It is just as important to know what a Home Inspection is not.

**An inspection is not a Pass/Fail report.** While a lender may have certain minimum standards or requirements on its collateral (such as remaining life on a roof, no presence of wood destroying insects, etc.) you, the buyer, are the one evaluating the price you are paying and your desire for the property against the reported condition.

**An inspection is not a warranty.** A house will continue to age, weather, wear, change, deteriorate, require maintenance, etc. There is no expectation that because the house is in good shape at the time of inspection, that it will remain in that condition. A homeowner's attention to the home is critical to a long lasting structure.

**An inspection is not an exhaustive inspection of every aspect or component.** Generally speaking, inspectors are expert generalists who have training, education and/or experience in many different areas. This training, however, does not compare to a specialist in one particular area. An inspector, therefore, will often refer to specialists such as structural engineers, plumbers, electricians, HVAC specialists, etc., when potentially significant issues are detected, or sometimes, suspected.

**An inspection does not identify recalled appliances, equipment or systems.** While there are some products that have well publicized conditions or hazards that lead to recall, there are tens of thousands that you will never hear about unless it directly affects you! While your inspector may be able to tell you about the more noteworthy, an inspection cannot identify every product recalled.

**An inspection does not guarantee insurability.** Your underwriter may have specific minimum requirements which may vary between different states, counties and municipalities. In addition, Windstorm and Flood prone areas may be excluded by certain underwriters.

**An inspection is not an appraisal.** The value of the home is often subjective but may be evaluated based on many factors. In Texas, an appraiser must be licensed by the Texas Appraiser Licensing and Certification Board.

**An inspection is not a mold inspection.** Under the Texas Mold Assessment and Remediation Rules (25 TAC §§295.301-295.338), all companies and individuals who perform mold-related activities

will have to obtain appropriate licensing from the department beginning January 1, 2005.

**An inspection is not a wood destroying insect (aka “termite”) inspection.** Under the Texas Administrative Code, any person engaged in structural pest control must secure a business license from the Board for each business location, including branch offices, in accordance with the Texas Structural Pest Control Act and the regulations of the Board §593.1(a).

## TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

**Buyer’s Inspection** – The typical inspection is based on the Texas Real Estate Commission’s Property Inspection Report (form REI-7A-0). This form establishes the minimum standards for inspection reporting. Additional information may be included, however, such as photographs, illustrations and reference information.

**Pre-Listing Inspection** – Since most buyers do elect to have a home inspected during the purchase process, a pre-listing inspection offers the seller information in time to make repairs themselves, or contract out repairs with an eye toward quality and price rather than immediate availability.

**Phase Inspection** – Having a home inspected during the construction process ensures that details not visible after the foundation is poured and walls are covered are considered. Typical phases for these inspections include, but are not limited to:

- Foundation pre-pour
- Open frame inspection
- Final walk-through inspection

**Warranty Inspection** – Avoid missing an opportunity to have repairs made under warranty because you are not aware of problems. Having an inspection performed 30-60 days prior to the expiration of your warranty may save you money in the long term.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY HOME INSPECTOR

### License Type

The State of Texas licenses individuals to inspect homes. The requirement for a license is a law not just a good idea. There are three (3) levels of licensing. You should know the type of license that the inspector you are using has.

**Apprentice Inspector** – An apprentice inspector works under the direct supervision of a Professional Real Estate Inspector. The apprentice is also required to have taken and passed an examination on required courses pertaining to home inspections processes, reporting, the applicable TREC codes, etc.

**Real Estate Inspector** – A real estate inspector works under the indirect supervision of a Professional Real Estate Inspector. The inspector is also required to have taken and passed an examination on required courses pertaining to home inspections processes, reporting, the applicable TREC codes, etc.

**Professional Real Estate Inspector** – A Professional Real Estate Inspector is required to have taken and passed an examination on required courses pertaining to home inspections processes, reporting, the applicable TREC codes, etc.

The TREC web site includes a link to Licensee Info Search under Consumer Information which allows you to verify that an individual or business is licensed to perform an inspection.

### TREC Licensee Info Search

Tip: A License Number search is faster than a Name search.

License Type:  Salesperson or Broker  Inspector  E.R.W.  
License Number or Name: "LastName, FirstName" or "Business Name"  
7147  (see search tips)  
Optional:  any part of name (for name searches only)

Licensee Details for: Inspector - "Collins, Clay Michael"

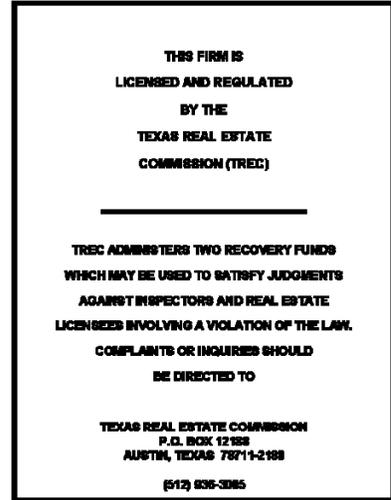
Licensee Name	Lic. Nbr	Lic. Type	Lic. Status	Exp. Date	Designated Supervisor
Collins, Clay Michael	7147	Professional Inspector	Active	05/31/2016	
Licensee Email Address <a href="#">(see disclosure policy)</a>			Licensee Phone		
<a href="#">click for email address</a>			281-489-9040		

Doing Business As (DBA) Names  
Grace Home Inspection Services, LLC

## Insurance

The State of Texas requires that an Inspector carry **\$100,000 in Errors and Omissions Insurance**. This is not intended to ensure a home buyer against a problem that might develop after your purchase. It is intended to protect against real damage caused by an error or oversight in the inspection.  
Recovery Fund

A *Recovery Fund* is also maintained by the State of Texas to help protect the consumer. This fund pre-dates the Insurance requirement but remains in place. Questions and Answers about the Real Estate Inspection Recovery Fund may be found at <http://www.trec.state.tx.us/pdf/faq/insprf-faq.pdf>



## WHERE DO I FIND A HOME INSPECTOR

You may find that your inspector is booked as much as a week in advance. You need to select your inspector before your option period begins.

**Referrals** – Friends or acquaintances that have purchased a home recently may be a good source. Did they have an inspector that they were pleased with?

**BBB** – The Better Business Bureau rates businesses based on complaints not resolved. It may be a source to search for inspectors, or vet inspectors you have found through other sources.

**Inspection Associations** – Inspector who are members of Associations tend to be exposed to more training, more experienced inspectors and even more rigorous standards. Associations will generally provide searchable lists that will help you find their members.

**Your Agent** – While your Agent can not insist that you use a specific inspector, and may not be willing to give you a single individual's or business name, they may be able to provide you with a list of inspectors with whom they have worked and trust.

## CHOOSING THE HOME INSPECTOR

As you choose your inspector candidates, there are good questions to ask.

- What level of license do they have (Apprentice, Inspector, Professional Inspector)?
- What is their license number? You may verify their information with the Texas Real Estate Commission ([www.TREC.state.tx.us](http://www.TREC.state.tx.us)).
- What Associations are they a member of?
- Will you (the Buyer) be allowed to attend the entire inspection?
- How and when will they deliver the report (email, on-site)?
- Will they provide you a Sample report?

## WHAT DOES AN INSPECTION COST?

The price for your structural and mechanical inspection may be based on several factors and more than one may apply to your property and/or inspection.

**Qualifications of the inspector** – The qualifications, certifications and experience of your inspector will factor into pricing. A more experienced inspector that had taken the time and

made the effort to earn certifications through education and testing will generally cost more.

**Type of inspection** – Re-sell, pre-sell, phase and warranty inspections each have challenges and requirements that will affect the time required, and therefore the price.

**Size of the house** – While there are usually minimum pricing levels, basic pricing is based on the total square footage to be inspected. Prices range from \$0.10 to \$0.20 per square foot depending on factors such as the qualifications of the inspector.

**Age of the house** – The age of a structure may be considered in pricing. The older a home, the greater likelihood of reportable issues from general aging, poor or no maintenance and changes in building standards. These all increase the amount of time that an inspector spends identifying and documenting findings.

**Type of foundation** – A structure on piers or blocks requires that the inspector crawl beneath the structure. This is both time consuming and potentially hazardous, contributing to higher inspection costs.

**Optional systems** – Pools, spas, lawn irrigation systems, private waste systems (aka “septic”), private water wells and other optional features may be inspected but should be expected to increase the price.

**Other buildings to be inspected** – Out-buildings, shops and additional garage structures not included in the total square footage may increase the price.

**Special testing** – Testing utilizing special equipment such as thermal imagers, electronic elevation gauges, etc. may be offered for an additional price.

**Additional types of Inspection** – An inspection for wood destroying insects, performed by a licensed pest control operator, may be arranged on your behalf. Only a licensed Pest Control Operator and a licensed Mold Technician and Analyst may perform these inspections. Some Home Inspectors may also carry these additional licenses. You may be required to provide separate payment for these services.

## INTERNET SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Licensing Agencies

Texas Real Estate Commission ..... [www.trec.state.tx.us](http://www.trec.state.tx.us)  
Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation ..... <http://www.tdlr.texas.gov/>

### Code Authorities

International Code Council ..... [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org)  
National Fire Protection Association..... <http://www.nfpa.org/>  
National Electric Code  
National Fuel Gas Code  
National Fire Code  
Int'l Assoc. of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials ..... <http://www.iapmo.org/Pages/IAPMOgroup.aspx>  
Uniform Plumbing Code  
Uniform Swimming Pool, Spa and Hot Tub Code  
Uniform Solar Energy and Hydronics Code

### Inspection Trade Associations

American Society of Home Inspectors®..... [www.ashi.org](http://www.ashi.org)  
Houston Assoc. of Real Estate Inspectors ..... [www.harei.com](http://www.harei.com)  
International Association of Certified Home Inspectors..... [www.nachi.org](http://www.nachi.org)  
Texas Association of Real Estate Inspectors ..... [www.tarei.com](http://www.tarei.com)  
Texas Professional Real Estate Inspectors Association ..... [www.tarei.com](http://www.tarei.com)

## Construction Trade Associations

Post-Tensioning Institute .....	
Tile Roofing Institute .....	
National Spa and Pool Foundation.....	
Energy and Environmental Building Association.....	<a href="http://www.eeba.org">www.eeba.org</a>
National Air Duct Cleaners Association.....	<a href="http://www.nadca.com">www.nadca.com</a>
National Association of the Remodeling Industries .....	<a href="http://www.nari.org">www.nari.org</a>
National Pesticide Tele Network.....	<a href="http://ace.orst.edu/info/nptn">ace.orst.edu/info/nptn</a>

## Health and Safety Agencies

Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology.....	<a href="http://www.aaaai.org">www.aaaai.org</a>
Center for Disease Control and Preparation .....	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>
Consumer Product Safety Commission .....	<a href="http://www.cpsc.gov">www.cpsc.gov</a>
Environmental Protection Agency .....	<a href="http://www.epa.gov">www.epa.gov</a>
Index.....	<a href="http://www2.epa.gov/home/az-index">http://www2.epa.gov/home/az-index</a>
Asbestos.....	<a href="http://www2.epa.gov/asbestos">http://www2.epa.gov/asbestos</a>
Chinese Drywall .....	
Lead.....	<a href="http://www2.epa.gov/lead/forms/lead-hotline-national-lead-information-center">http://www2.epa.gov/lead/forms/lead-hotline-national-lead-information-center</a>
Mold.....	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/index.html">www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/index.html</a>
National Antimicrobial Info Network.....	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/oppad001">www.epa.gov/oppad001</a>
National Fire Protection Association.....	<a href="http://www.nfpa.org">www.nfpa.org</a>
National Safety Council .....	<a href="http://www.osha.gov">www.osha.gov</a>
Product Recalls.....	<a href="http://www.recall.gov">www.recall.gov</a>
Texas Department of Health (TDH).....	<a href="http://www.tdh.state.tx.us">www.tdh.state.tx.us</a>

## Other Information Sources

Appliance Recall Check .....	<a href="http://www.appliancerecallcheck.com/">http://www.appliancerecallcheck.com/</a>
Appliance411 (determine age of appliances) .....	<a href="http://www.appliance411.com/service/date-code.php">http://www.appliance411.com/service/date-code.php</a>
Building Intelligence Center (determine age of HVAC & Water Heater). .....	<a href="http://www.buildingcenter.org/">http://www.buildingcenter.org/</a>

# THE INSPECTION REPORT

TREC SOP Rule §535.223 requires that an inspection report for a buyer or a seller be made using Property Inspection Report form [TREC REI 7-5](#). While the form may be customized to some extent, every inspector should use the same form.

This form has sections and sub-sections which address all required topics in the SOP. The form has six (6) major categories, each of which includes sub-categories. In all, this creates an overview of the property that will help identify non-performing systems and unsafe conditions.

## I. STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

- A. Foundations
- B. Grading and Drainage
- C. Roof Covering Materials
- D. Roof Structures and Attics
- E. Walls (Interior and Exterior)
- F. Ceilings and Floors
- G. Doors (Interior and Exterior)
- H. Windows
- I. Stairways (Interior and Exterior)
- J. Fireplaces and Chimneys
- K. Porches, Balconies, Decks, and Carports
- L. Other

## II. ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

- A. Service Entrance and Panels
- B. Branch Circuits, Connected Devices, and Fixtures

## III. HVAC SYSTEMS

- A. Heating Equipment
- B. Cooling Equipment
- C. Duct Systems, Chases, and Vents

## IV. PLUMBING SYSTEM

- A. Plumbing Supply, Distribution Systems and Fixtures
- B. Drains, Wastes, and Vents
- C. Water Heating Equipment
- D. Hydro-Massage Therapy Equipment
- E. Other

## V. APPLIANCES

- A. Dishwasher
- B. Food Waste Disposers
- C. Range Hood and Exhaust Systems
- D. Ranges, Cooktops, and Ovens
- E. Microwave Ovens
- F. Mechanical Exhaust Vents and Bathroom Heaters
- G. Garage Door Operators
- H. Dryer Exhaust Systems
- I. Other

## VI. OPTIONAL SYSTEMS

1. Landscape Irrigation (Sprinkler) Systems
2. Swimming Pools, Spas, Hot Tubs, and Equipment
3. Outbuildings
4. Private Water Wells (A coliform analysis is recommended.)
5. Private Sewage Disposal (Septic) Systems
6. Other

*Note that additional Sections and Bullets may be added for clarification and convenience. Some optional bullets and sections may be removed if not applicable.*

## SCHEDULING AN INSPECTION

This is information that you should have ready when you contact an Inspector to schedule a property inspection.

### Client Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (home): \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (cell): \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (work): \_\_\_\_\_

### Property Information

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Size (in square feet) \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_

### Scheduling Timeframe

End of Option Period (re-sell): \_\_\_\_\_  
Final Walk-Through (New construction): \_\_\_\_\_

### Access

SupraKey®     Combination (Code \_\_\_\_\_)     Gated (Code \_\_\_\_\_)  
 Occupied     Unoccupied

### Agent

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (cell): \_\_\_\_\_

### Provided to you courtesy of:

Clay M. Collins  
Professional Inspector, TREC License #7147  
Grace Home Inspection Services, LLC  
[www.gracehis.com](http://www.gracehis.com)    [Clay@GraceHIS.com](mailto:Clay@GraceHIS.com)  
Telephone Cell/Text 713 503-1820  
ICC Certified Combination Residential Inspector # 8061161  
ICC Certified Commercial Inspector # 8061161  
ICC Certified Energy Conservation Inspector/Plans Examiner #8061161  
Certified Level 1 Unbonded Post-Tensioning Inspector #912090009  
NSPF Certified Pool Operator/Inspector  
TRI Certified Tile Roof Installer  
ASHI Certified Inspector #250932  
TPREIA Master Inspector #17  
InterNACHI Certified Inspector #11101302