



Pre-Drywall Inspection Standards of Practice (SoP)



Introduction:

The Pre-Drywall Standards of Practice are provided to help Home Inspectors perform the service with the care and diligence necessary to complete an accurate and informative report.

Purpose & Scope:

The purpose of these Standards is to establish a uniform standard for Pre-Drywall Inspections.

Inspections performed to these Standards of Practice are intended to provide the Client, Builder and Building Official with important information regarding the construction of the home.

These standards are voluntary and shall not be construed as to limit the scope of the inspection where the inspector may have additional knowledge.

The SoP outline provides a suggested flow chart to perform the inspections in a systematic sequence to maximize the use of time in the inspection and reporting process. The Inspector may consider alternate sequences as they see fit.

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The SoP include the applicable installed components of the home at the time of inspection.

The SoP does NOT require the Inspector to inspect systems and components that are not present at the time of inspection. However, the Inspector is required to report on items concealed at the time of inspection that would otherwise be inspected, if visible.

The Inspector should have competent knowledge of Florida Building Codes and/or where and how to navigate the applicable Codes including the current and last two versions that are applicable in their region.

The Inspector should have the ability read and understand:

- construction blueprints
- specifications
- Florida product approvals
- manufacturer specifications
- surveys

- soil reports
- termite treatments
- general understanding of residential construction sequencing

The Inspector is NOT required to:

1. measure the size of any rooms;
2. measure rooms to determine if they are "square";
3. determine exact location of all electrical devices / fixtures;
4. verify all "Options" selected by Client are installed (unless specifically provided with a detailed list 24 hours prior to the inspection)
5. determine exact location of plumbing fixtures
6. inspect areas that are prohibited due to Builder restrictions

Author's Note:

The 2020 FBC has several chapters that are "Reserved" and will not have specific information the inspector is looking for. The Codes do not get less restrictive over time. If the specific code section cannot be found in the current version, refer to the previous version and the section is still applicable.

The Builder is responsible for ALL systems and components related to the construction of the house. ALL deficiencies should be reported on for "correction" by the Builder. It is NOT the responsibility of the Inspector to identify which trade is responsible for the correction. The Builder is responsible to supervise and verify the work is installed in a good and workmanlike manner; in compliance with all local codes; compliant with the applicable Florida product approvals and manufacturer specifications.



The Inspector SHALL Inspect the:

- Footings / Foundations / Concrete Slabs
- Exterior / Interior Load Bearing Walls
- Exterior / Interior Non Bearing Walls
- Exterior / Interior Steps / Stairs / Landings
- Interior backing / blocking for Cabinets and Installed Features
- Exterior Wall & Roof Sheathing
- Exterior House Wrap / Vapor Barriers
- Exterior Wire Lath / Stucco
- Exterior Siding Other Than Stucco
- Exterior Windows / Doors / Openings
- Exterior Grading
- Site Utilities
- Floor Framing Materials & Installation
- Roof Framing Materials & Installation
- Roof Dry-In & Flashings
- Roof Coverings / Penetrations / Attic Ventilation
- Plumbing Rough In / Tub Set
- Gas Piping Rough In
- HVAC Rough In
- Electrical Rough In

The Inspector is NOT required to enter or traverse areas that may be unsafe; inaccessible and/or dangerous in the opinion of the inspector.

The Inspector SHALL describe the methods used for inspecting the:

- Exterior Wall Sheathing
- Roof Framing
- Roof Coverings

The Inspector SHALL report on the systems and components that are observed to be Non-Compliant with the Approved Construction documents.

The Inspector SHOULD provide a reference to the applicable Code in the pertinent section of the report for reference.

The Inspector SHOULD report on the presence of permits, prints and other documents.



Inspection Scheduling:

The Inspector is responsible for informing the Client of any Builder specific requirements such as licenses, insurance, access requirements, etc.

The Client is responsible to provide the Inspector with the applicable contact info for the Inspector to complete all necessary paperwork to perform the inspection in a timely manner.

Author's Note:

Often times, the client does not provide sufficient time to get required documents to the Builder. The inspector should have a copy of their GL & Work Comp Insurance; Auto Insurance; Licensing and Credentials printed and in their possession at all times when entering or traversing on a builder's lot.

Usually, the on-site construction manager will be the one who needs these documents. The sales rep is the one who usually doesn't know it is required.



Inspection Items & Method of Operation are provided in the report template:

General Observations:

1. Upon arrival, the inspector should take an initial photo of the property from the street and then photos of all elevations.
2. Take photos of the:
 - a. Building Permit
 - b. Completed inspections (A 110.3)
 - c. Site survey (A107.2.6)
 - d. Termite Treatment notice (105.10)
 - e. Soil compaction reports
3. Plans are required to be on site at all times. The inspector should make every effort to obtain the plans prior to the inspection if possible.
 - a. If plans are available; take the necessary time to review the structural drawings / specs and make any notes to help with the inspection.
4. Enter to structure and do a general walk around, observe the overall stage of completion and status of the project.

Footings / Foundations / Concrete Slabs FBC Chapter 4 & Parts of Chapter 5

1. Walk the interior of the house in a systematic pattern to observe the concrete slab.
 - a. Look for sawcuts in a pattern not to exceed 12' x 10' and a minimum of 1" deep.
 - b. If sawcuts are not present, refer to structural drawings and determine if the engineer has specified the slab has an alternate means to prevent cracking such as *fiber reinforcing or wire mesh*.
 - c. If sawcuts are present, verify the grid pattern and note any spider / random cracking.
 - d. Observe the concrete finish for alligating; excessive cracking; spalling; damage and/or issues that may affect the performance of floor coverings.
2. Describe the type of footings / foundations
3. Report any concerns observed



Exterior / Interior Load Bearing Walls FBC Chapter 6

1. Masonry Construction Exterior Walls should be inspected for any cracks between mortar joints; voids; damaged block units and the proper location of all the required filled cells / poured columns & beams.
 - a. Note any areas where any of the above issues have already occurred and include them in the report.
2. Wood Framed Exterior / Interior Walls
 - a. Inspect all load bearing walls for proper anchorage to the structural footings / foundations / masonry beams.
 - b. Verify the studs have full bearing on bottom sill plates.
 - c. Verify exterior wall sheathing for proper fastener spacing if visible.
 - i. Note the presence of house wrap that will obscure the inspection of exterior wall sheathing fasteners.
 - d. Verify stud groups have the proper fasteners installed in the correct pattern.
 - e. Verify all required hold downs / anchors are properly installed in accordance with the approved plans.
 - i. Refer to structural drawings for size, type and location of necessary hold downs, fasteners, etc.
 - f. Verify all necessary engineering is installed such as additional strongbacks, specific header sizes, metal connectors and bracing.
 - g. Describe the exterior wall types
 - h. Describe the floor structure
 - i. Note any concerns along with locations and photos in the report.
 - i. The inspector should include a photo of the specific location and detail from the approved construction plans in the report as reference.



Exterior / Interior Non-Bearing Walls FBC Chapter 6

3. Interior non-bearing walls shall be inspected for structural integrity and compliance with the structural framing details for stud spacing.
 - a. The Inspector, at their discretion, can inspect walls to determine if any visible "bow" is present.
 - b. Note any concerns along with locations and photos in the report.

Exterior Wall & Roof Sheathing FBC Chapter's 7 & 8

- c. Depending on the stage of construction, the wall and roof sheathing should be covered at the time of the Pre-Drywall inspection.
 - i. If any parts are visible, the Inspector should verify proper fastener size and spacing.
 - ii. A minimum 1/8" space between panels is required and the performance of the sheathing is critically dependent on the proper spacing. Minimum gaps are required for both horizontal and vertical panel edges.
 - iii. If no areas are visible the Inspector should note the sheathing could not be fully inspected.

4. Exterior House Wrap / Vapor Barriers FBC Chapter 7

- a. The house wrap should be installed and covered with a secondary layer to provide a drainage plane for moisture infiltration.
- b. Verify visible areas are installed and the applicable flashing is present at wall openings.
 - i. The Inspector should make every effort to fully inspect any installed house wrap and/or vapor barrier installation around any wall penetrations.

5. Exterior / Interior Steps / Stairs / Landings FBC Chapter 3

- a. The Inspector shall measure any rough framing of stair treads and risers to confirm compliance with Code requirements and report any deficiencies.



6. Interior backing / blocking for Cabinets and Installed Features

- a. The Inspector shall inspect the interior walls at kitchen, pantry closets, laundry rooms and other areas as applicable for installation of backing at any type of cabinet or equipment mounting locations.
 - i. Upper cabinets usually have backing installed at 7' AFF and 30" below that. Dimensions may vary if cabinets are taller. The important part is to confirm backing is installed.
 - ii. Backing needed for wood shelving, wall mounted TV's, handrails, etc.

Required Interior Photos:

- Kitchen walls / cabinet backing
- Plumbing walls
- Exterior walls @ window sills / door openings



7. Exterior Wire Lath / Stucco FBC Chapter 7

- a. Inspect all wall openings for proper flashing and drainage to the exterior.
- b. Inspect all roof to wall intersections for proper drainage & flashing.
- c. Inspect all house wraps / substrates for proper installation per manufacturer specifications.
- d. Verify the presence of required accessories for caulk installation around window and door openings.
- e. Exterior wire lath is required by most jurisdictions to be installed per ASTM 1063.
- f. ASTM 1063 requires all accessories to be installed in such a manner that the flanges are completely embedded into the plaster
 - i. The accessories are installed when the wire lath is installed, and it is impossible to embed the flanges. The accessories should be installed after the initial stucco coat which is never done.
- g. The Inspector shall inspect wire lath for compliance with the ASTM standards adopted by the local jurisdiction and report any deficiencies.

8. Exterior Siding Other Than Stucco FBC Chapter 7

- a. Inspect all wall openings for proper flashing and drainage to the exterior.
- b. Inspect all roof to wall intersections for proper drainage & flashing.
- c. Inspect all house wraps / substrates for proper installation per manufacturer specifications.
- d. Inspect any installed siding components for proper installation per manufacturer specifications, including flashings, fastener spacing and details.
- e. Verify the presence of required accessories for caulk installation around window and door openings.
- f. Report any deficiencies observed.



9. Exterior Windows / Doors / Openings FBC Chapter 6

- a. Inspect all installed windows for smooth operation.
- b. Verify the installed window / door is the same product listed in the approved construction documents.
- c. Verify all fasteners are installed per Florida Notice of Acceptance.
- d. Verify the spacing between wood bucks and frame meets the NoA specifications.
- e. Verify the installed window and door bucks are properly attached to the respective structural wall as required by the approved engineering plans.
- f. Verify any garage door bucks are properly installed per the approved structural engineering plans.
- g. In HVHZ and/or Wind-Borne Debris regions the Inspector shall verify compliance with impact resistance ratings for all windows and doors and that they are compliant with the FL NoA and approved construction plans.
- h. Describe the type of windows.
- i. Report the Florida product approval number for exterior windows & doors.
- j. Report on all concerns observed at the time of inspection.

Required Photos:

- Window & exterior door product approval stickers
- Listed Window & exterior door product approval on permit documents

Author's Note:

Builders may submit a specific Florida product approval document when they submit their permit packet. In the current market, some products are difficult to procure. Builders may substitute a window or door from a different manufacturer. Our experience is the code inspector doesn't look at the product approvals during their inspection because most windows and doors are installed with little differences.



10. Exterior Grading

- a. At this stage of construction, the site should be at what is referred to as "stucco grade". This is a step in the construction when the framers are completed; the lumber is used and most materials are either removed from the jobsite or stored in the garage. A rough grading is performed so the siding contractors can set up scaffold on a reasonably level ground condition.
- b. The Inspector should review the site survey and note the elevation differences between the finished floor and the exterior site grade.
- c. Review the "Proposed" site elevations with the actual grades and make notes to verify at the final inspection.
- d. In some cases, the customer may be installing a pool and it could be under construction while you are there.
 - i. It is critical to review the pool excavations (if Applicable) to verify the foundations have not been compromised.
- e. Report any obvious grading issues.

Author's Note:

There have been several times the final grades of the site were significantly different than the proposed grades. This can be very costly for the homeowner for several reasons.

For example:

- Proposed grade at rear of property on the site plan (at the time the customer purchased the home) shows an elevation change from the back porch to the finished soil of +/- 8".
- When the final inspection was performed, the actual elevation change is +/- 36".
- Homeowner intends to put a pool in after closing on the house.
- Homeowner is now forced to IMPORT significant amount of fill dirt materials to provide a suitable elevation for the pool on the back of the house.
- The Builder did not disclose this information during the construction process.
- The site survey was never changed; the overall grading of the site development inhibits additional fill dirt to be installed as it will create water runoff to adjacent properties.
- Therefore, in addition to importing fill materials, the homeowner must construct a retaining wall.
- If it was missed by the Inspector, potential for lawsuits increase.



11. Site Utilities

- a. The Inspector shall inspect the water service entrance for proper installation. This includes estimating the depth of burial is below the frost line (if applicable).
- b. The Inspector shall observe installed pressure gauges and record the pressures at time of inspection.
- c. The Inspector shall inspect any sewer service lines for proper installation and verify cleanouts are installed at the property line and adjacent to the structure.
- d. The Inspector shall inspect any visible gas piping and meters for proper location and note the tracer wire is installed on the buried piping.
- e. The Inspector shall inspect any visible electrical conduits for proper installation; verify grounding electrode is installed near electrical panel.
- f. Report all concerns observed at the time of inspection.

12. Rough Framing System Materials & Installation FBC Chapter 6 & 8

- a. The Inspector shall inspect the exterior load bearing walls for compliance with the approved construction plans including but not limited to:
 - i. Stud size, bearing points, multi stud groups and spacing requirements
 - ii. Header sizes for wall openings
 - iii. Continuous load paths
 - iv. Required hold downs / uplift connectors
 - v. Shear wall components
 - vi. Attachment to any masonry or concrete systems
 - vii. Fastener spacing for multi ply framing members
 - viii. Overall condition of materials and installation for good and workmanlike installation
 - ix. Excessive fungal growth / elevated moisture levels on framing materials
 - x. Evidence of termite treatment
- b. The Inspector shall inspect the floor framing systems for compliance with the approved construction plans including but not limited to:
 - i. Bearing points
 - ii. Truss engineering / permanent bracing
 - iii. Hold downs
 - iv. Fastener spacing of multi-ply members
 - v. Proper installation of any metal hangers or metal connectors
 - vi. Drilling, Cutting or Notching that is excessive and/or non-compliant
 - vii. Wood floor sheathing for proper installation with adhesives; spacing between panels and adequate screw patterns
 - viii. Excessive loading of the floor system with construction materials
 - ix. Installation of any strongbacks to help stabilize the floor systems
- c. The Inspector shall inspect the roof framing components for compliance with the structural plans and truss installation package including but not limited to:
 - i. Roof to wall attachments



- ii. Truss engineering / permanent bracing
 - iii. Metal plate connectors
 - iv. Damage to truss materials
 - v. Excessive moisture / fungal growth
 - vi. Roof structural sheathing
 - vii. Roof over framing for dormers, gables etc....
 - viii. Truss bearing points
 - ix. Continuous load path connections
 - x. Attic ventilation openings and access locations
- d. The Inspector shall inspect the interior wall framing for compliance with the approved construction documents.
- i. Verify walls are secured to the foundation / floors and ceiling for proper stabilization.
 - ii. Inspect for damaged framing members caused by the MEP trades.
 - iii. Verify all vertical MEP rough-ins are inside the respective wall lines and do not protrude into the finished drywall.
 - iv. Verify all nail plates are installed where applicable.
 - v. Verify all fire stop / draft stop is completed.
- e. The Inspector shall describe the roof structural components.
- f. The Inspector shall describe the method used to inspect the roof.
- g. The Inspector shall report the type of roof to wall connections.
- h. The Inspector shall report:
- i. any elevated moisture levels
 - ii. excessive algae growth
 - iii. damaged structural framing members
 - iv. improper / incomplete structural framing / truss engineering
 - v. any concerns noted at the time of inspection

Required Photos:

- Representative number of roof structural framing system
- Representative number of roof to wall attachments
- Representative number of gable end bracing

Author's Note:

Framing is one of the more complex systems of the home building process and requires a significant amount of time to understand and comprehend complex framing systems.

The Inspector should spend time educating themselves on specific framing details. Understanding how to read truss engineering; load bearing points; uplift requirements; shear walls and general framing requirements is critical to the inspection process.



13. Roof Dry-In & Flashings FBC Chapter 9

- a. The Inspector should make every effort to walk the roof surfaces unless conditions are unsafe, builder prohibits walking roof, roof slope is too steep or walking the roof surfaces will cause damage to the materials.
- b. The Inspector shall inspect the roof dry-in for installation compliance with manufacturer specifications including but not limited to:
 - i. Fastener spacing
 - ii. Overlaps
 - iii. Flashing of roof penetrations
 - iv. Roof to wall flashings
 - v. Valley flashings
 - vi. Drip edge installation
 - vii. Bump out flashings
 - viii. Exposure limitations
- c. The Inspector shall describe the roof underlayment and visible valley flashings.
- d. Report all areas that may be suspect and/or non-compliant.

Author's Note:

During the pre-drywall stage of construction, the roof coverings may or may not be installed. Most Builders will have a policy that prevents walking the roof when you do a final inspection. They usually don't have any policies preventing that on a pre-drywall inspection.

The Inspector should be familiar with various types of roof coverings and the specific underlayment required for installation of shingles, tile and metal roof coverings.

The codes usually refer to manufacturer specifications for underlayment and roof coverings. The Architectural drawings may have specific details that may be more stringent than the manufacturer specifications.



14. Roof Coverings FBC Chapter 9

- a. The Inspector should make every effort to walk the roof surfaces unless conditions are unsafe, builder prohibits walking roof, roof slope is too steep or walking the roof surfaces will cause damage to the materials.
- b. The Inspector shall inspect the roof coverings for compliance with manufacturer specifications and codes including but not limited to:
 - i. Roof to wall flashings
 - ii. Roof penetration flashings
 - iii. Finished roof surfaces
 - iv. Finished valleys
 - v. Attic ventilation
- c. The Inspector shall describe the roof covering materials
- d. The Inspector shall report the roof covering Florida product approval numbers.
- e. Inspector shall report any exposed fasteners, damaged materials, improper flashings, improper fastening, dead valleys, problematic areas and/or other concerns observed at the time of inspection.

Required Roof Photos:

- All roof slopes
- Roof covering product approval number on permit
- Roof covering product approval number of installed materials
- Representative number of roof to wall flashings
- Any dead valley locations



15. Plumbing Rough-in / Tub Set FBC Chapter 25 - 32

- a. The Inspector shall inspect the visible rough plumbing for compliance with the approved construction documents and manufacturer specifications.
- b. Inspect the water supply piping for pressurization and report on the system holding pressure or not.
- c. Inspect the location of all fixtures to ensure water supply piping is installed with hot and cold on the correct side of the fixture.
- d. Inspect the DWV piping for head pressure and report on the system holding pressure or not.
- e. Inspect all installed shower pans for proper installation.
- f. Verify all water closets have proper clearances on the sides and front.
- g. Verify all visible drain piping is properly sloped for positive drainage.
- h. Verify DWV system is properly vented in accordance with the approved plans.
- i. Inspect all built in nooks / seats at walk in showers for any potential issues.
- j. Verify location of all exhaust fans required at bathrooms and they are properly vented.
- k. Describe the type of water supply piping inside the house.
- l. Describe the type of DWV piping inside the house.
- m. Report any concerns observed at the time of inspection.

Required Plumbing Photos:

- Water service entrance
- Pressure gauge reading of water service piping
- DWV cleanout at exit of the building
- Visible DWV piping under bathrooms
- Tub / Shower Units and applicable drains
- Water heater location

16. Gas Piping Rough-in FBC Chapter 24

- a. The Inspector shall inspect all gas piping for proper installation including but not limited to:
 - i. Proper bonding to electrical system
 - ii. Location of required shut off valves
 - iii. Sediment traps if applicable
 - iv. Meter locations
 - v. Gas service entrance and wire tracer
- b. Report any concerns observed at the time of inspection.



17. HVAC Rough-in FBC Chapter's 12 - 19

- a. The Inspector shall inspect the installation of the HVAC ducts for compliance with the approved duct design and manufacturer specifications.
- b. Inspect the return air path and installation of transfer ducts.
- c. Inspect the installation of the condensate drain system.
- d. Inspect the installation of refrigerant piping.
- e. Inspect the control wiring from outdoor unit to air handler.
- f. Inspect the exhaust systems for proper installation including the:
 - i. Clothes dryer exhaust
 - ii. Bathroom exhaust fans
 - iii. Kitchen exhaust hoods
- g. Describe location of HVAC equipment.
- h. Describe the energy source.
- i. Report any locations where ducts are restricted, sagging, not fully extended, not sealed or otherwise deficient.
- j. Report any excessive exhaust lengths and / or excessive bends

Required Photos:

- Interior unit locations
- Outdoor unit locations
- Condensate drain
- Representative number of duct system photos
- Dryer exhaust route



18. Electrical Rough-in FBC Chapter's 34 - 41

- a. The Inspector shall inspect the installation of the rough electrical for compliance with the approved plans including but not limited to:
 - i. Main & Service entrance conductors
 - ii. Main & Service panels
 - iii. Grounding conductors & grounding electrode system
 - iv. Equipment bonding
 - v. Branch circuit wiring
 - vi. Interior of electrical panels
- b. The Inspector shall inspect the grounding and neutral conductors inside the rough-in boxes are made up.
- c. The Inspector shall inspect rough-in boxes for over fill conditions.
- d. The Inspector shall inspect kitchen area for minimum of 2 individual circuits.
- e. The Inspector shall inspect ceiling boxes and report the rating of the fan box.
- f. The Inspector shall inspect and verify the presence of required smoke / carbon monoxide detectors have been installed and wiring is interconnected.
- g. The Inspector shall verify specific locations have the required devices (receptacles / switches) per NEC requirements including but not limited to:
 - i. Kitchen countertops
 - ii. Bathrooms
 - iii. Exteriors / Garages
 - iv. Interior walls
 - v. Equipment
 - vi. Appliances
- h. The Inspector shall describe:
 - i. the service entrance conductors
 - ii. location of main & service panels
 - iii. wiring type
 - iv. electrical panel manufacturer
- i. The Inspector shall report any concerns observed at the time of inspection.



19. Exterior Balconies / Walking Surfaces:

- a. The Inspector shall inspect all locations where balcony or other elevated walking surfaces are exposed to water from direct or blowing rain, snow or irrigation and verify all the structural framing is protected by an impervious moisture barrier.
- b. If any areas are concealed, the Inspector should note that elements of the impervious-moisture-barrier system are concealed.
- c. The Inspector shall inspect the connections of the balcony structure to the building.
- d. The Inspector shall inspect the visible structural components.
- e. Describe the balcony structural components.
- f. Describe the connection type to the building.
- g. Describe the type of water proofing system.
- h. Report any concerns or suspect areas.

Author's Helpful Links:

www.floridabuilding.org

<https://codes.iccsafe.org/codes/florida>

