

**RULE §535.228**

**Standards of Practice: Minimum Inspection Requirements for Structural Systems**

- (a) Foundations. The inspector shall:
- (1) inspect slab surfaces, foundation framing components, subflooring, and related structural components;
  - (2) report:
    - (A) the type of foundation(s); and
    - (B) the vantage point from which the crawl space was inspected; and
  - (3) generally report present and visible indications used to render the opinion of adverse performance, such as:
    - (A) open or offset concrete cracks;
    - (B) binding, out-of-square, non-latching, warped, or twisted doors or frames;
    - (C) framing or frieze board separations;
    - (D) out-of-square wall openings or separations at wall openings or between the cladding and window/door frames;
    - (E) sloping floors, countertops, cabinet doors, or window/door casings;
    - (F) wall, floor, or ceiling cracks;
    - (G) rotating, buckling, cracking, or deflecting masonry cladding;
    - (H) separation of walls from ceilings or floors; and
    - (I) soil erosion, subsidence or shrinkage adjacent to the foundation and differential movement of abutting flatwork such as walkways, driveways, and patios;
  - (4) report as Deficient:
    - (A) exposed or damaged reinforcement;
    - (B) a crawl space that does not appear to be adequately ventilated;
    - (C) crawl space drainage that does not appear to be adequate;
    - (D) deteriorated materials;
    - (E) damaged beams, joists, bridging, blocking, piers, posts, pilings, or subfloor;
    - (F) non-supporting piers, posts, pilings, columns, beams, sills, or joists; and
    - (G) damaged retaining walls related to foundation performance; and
  - (5) render a written opinion as to the performance of the foundation.
- (b) Specific limitations for foundations. The inspector is not required to:
- (1) enter a crawlspace or any area where headroom is less than 18 inches or the access opening is less than 24 inches wide and 18 inches high;
  - (2) provide an exhaustive list of indicators of possible adverse performance; or
  - (3) inspect retaining walls not related to foundation performance.
- (c) Grading and drainage. The inspector shall report as Deficient:
- (1) improper or inadequate grading around the foundation (including flatwork);
  - (2) erosion;
  - (3) water ponding; and
  - (4) deficiencies in installed gutter and downspout systems.
- (d) Specific limitations for grading and drainage. The inspector is not required to:
- (1) inspect flatwork or detention/retention ponds (except as related to slope and drainage);
  - (2) determine area hydrology or the presence of underground water; or

- (3) determine the efficiency or operation of underground or surface drainage systems.
- (e) Roof covering materials. The inspector shall:
  - (1) inspect the roof covering materials from the surface of the roof;
  - (2) report:
    - (A) type of roof covering(s);
    - (B) vantage point from where the roof was inspected
    - (C) any levels or surfaces that were not accessed;
    - (D) evidence of previous repairs to roof covering materials, flashing details, skylights, and other roof penetrations; and
    - (E) evidence of water penetration; and
  - (3) report as Deficient:
    - (A) a roof covering that is not appropriate for the slope of the roof;
    - (B) deficiencies in:
      - (i) fastening of roof covering material, as determined by a random sampling;
      - (ii) roof covering materials;
      - (iii) flashing details;
      - (iv) skylights; and
      - (v) other roof penetrations.
- (f) Specific limitations for roof covering. The inspector is not required to:
  - (1) determine the remaining life expectancy of the roof covering;
  - (2) inspect the roof from the roof level if, in the inspector's reasonable judgment, the inspector cannot safely reach or stay on the roof or significant damage to the roof covering materials may result from walking on the roof;
  - (3) determine the number of layers of roof covering material;
  - (4) identify latent hail damage; or
  - (5) provide an exhaustive list of locations of water penetrations or previous repairs.
- (g) Roof structure and attic. The inspector shall:
  - (1) report:
    - (A) the vantage point from which the attic space was inspected;
    - (B) the presence of and approximate average depth of attic insulation and thickness of vertical insulation, when visible; and
    - (C) evidence of water penetration; and
  - (2) report as Deficient:
    - (A) attic space that does not appear to be adequately ventilated;
    - (B) deficiencies in installed framing members and decking;
    - (C) deflections or depressions in the roof surface as related to the adverse performance of the framing and the roof deck;
    - (D) missing insulation;
    - (E) deficiencies in attic access ladder and access opening; and
    - (F) deficiencies in attic ventilators.
- (h) Specific limitations for roof structure and attic. The inspector is not required to:
  - (1) enter attics or unfinished spaces where openings are less than 22 inches by 30 inches or headroom is less than 30 inches;
  - (2) operate powered ventilators; or
  - (3) provide an exhaustive list of locations of water penetrations.

- (i) Interior walls, ceilings, floors, and doors. The inspector shall:
  - (1) report evidence of water penetration; and
  - (2) report as Deficient:
    - (A) doors and hardware that do not operate properly;
    - (B) deficiencies related to structural performance or water penetration; and
    - (C) lack of fire separation between the garage and the residence and its attic space.
- (j) Specific limitation for interior walls, doors, ceilings, and floors. The inspector is not required to:
  - (1) report cosmetic damage or the condition of floor, wall, or ceiling coverings; paints, stains, or other surface coatings; cabinets; or countertops, or
  - (2) provide an exhaustive list of locations of water penetrations.
- (k) Exterior walls, doors, and windows. The inspector shall:
  - (1) report evidence of water penetration; and
  - (2) report as Deficient:
    - (A) the lack of functional emergency escape and rescue openings in all sleeping rooms;
    - (B) the lack of a solid wood door not less than 1-3/8 inches in thickness, a solid or honeycomb core steel door not less than 1-3/8 inches thick, or a 20-minute fire-rated door between the residence and an attached garage;
    - (C) missing or damaged screens;
    - (D) deficiencies related to structural performance or water penetration; and
    - (E) deficiencies in:
      - (i) claddings;
      - (ii) water resistant materials and coatings;
      - (iii) flashing details and terminations;
      - (iv) the condition and operation of exterior doors, garage doors, and hardware; and
      - (v) window operation and components.
- (l) Specific limitations for exterior walls, doors, and windows. The inspector is not required to:
  - (1) report the condition or presence of awnings, shutters, security devices, or systems;
  - (2) determine the cosmetic condition of paints, stains, or other surface coatings; or
  - (3) operate a lock if the key is not available.
- (m) Exterior and interior glazing. The inspector shall:
  - (1) inspect the window and door glazing; and
  - (2) report as Deficient:
    - (A) insulated windows that are obviously fogged or display other evidence of broken seals;
    - (B) deficiencies in glazing, weather stripping, and glazing compound in windows and exterior doors; and
    - (C) the absence of safety glass in hazardous locations.
- (n) Specific limitation for exterior and interior glazing. The inspector is not required to:
  - (1) exhaustively observe insulated windows for evidence of broken seals;
  - (2) exhaustively observe glazing for identifying labels; or
  - (3) identify specific locations of damage.
- (o) Interior and exterior stairways. The inspector shall report as Deficient:

- (1) spacing between intermediate balusters, spindles, or rails for steps, stairways, guards, and railings that permit passage of an object greater than 4 inches in diameter, except that on the open side of the staircase treads, spheres less than 4-3/8 inches in diameter may pass through the guard rail balusters or spindles; and
  - (2) deficiencies in steps, stairways, landings, guardrails, and handrails.
- (p) Specific limitation for stairways. The inspector is not required to exhaustively measure every stairway component.
- (q) Fireplace and chimney. The inspector shall report as Deficient:
- (1) built-up creosote in visible areas of the firebox and flue;
  - (2) the presence of combustible materials in near proximity to the firebox opening;
  - (3) the absence of fireblocking at the attic penetration of the chimney flue, where accessible;
  - (4) an inoperative circulating fan; and
  - (5) deficiencies in the:
    - (A) damper;
    - (B) lintel, hearth, hearth extension, and firebox;
    - (C) gas log lighter valve and location;
    - (D) combustion air vents; and
    - (E) chimney structure, termination, coping, crown, caps, and spark arrestor.
- (r) Specific limitations for fireplace and chimney. The inspector is not required to:
- (1) verify the integrity of the flue;
  - (2) perform a chimney smoke test; or
  - (3) determine the adequacy of the draft.
- (s) Porches, Balconies, Decks, and Carports. The inspector shall:
- (1) inspect balconies, attached carports, and attached porches and abutting porches, decks, and balconies that are used for ingress and egress; and
  - (2) report as Deficient:
    - (A) on decks 30 inches or higher above the adjacent grade, spacings between intermediate balusters, spindles, or rails that permit passage of an object greater than four inches in diameter;
    - (B) deficiencies in visible footings, piers, posts, pilings, beams, joists, decking, water proofing at interfaces, flashing, surface coverings, and attachment points of porches, decks, balconies, and carports; and
    - (C) deficiencies in, or absence of required, guardrails and handrails.
- (t) Specific limitation for porches, balconies, decks, and carports. The inspector is not required to:
- (1) exhaustively measure the porch, balcony, deck, or attached carport components; or
  - (2) enter any area where headroom is less than 18 inches or the access opening is less than 24 inches wide and 18 inches high.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §535.228 adopted to be effective February 1, 2009, 33 TexReg 9242