



## **Board for Asbestos, Lead, and Home Inspectors**

### **Guidance Document: Inspections Without a Written Evaluation (Report) Conducted by a Home Inspector**

*Adopted August 26, 2021  
Effective Date: October 28, 2021*

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#### **I. Background**

Board staff has received inquiries regarding whether inspections of residences conducted by a home inspector which do not include a written report are 1) considered home inspections, and 2) allowed under the law. Informally known as “walk-and-talk inspections,” these are a specialized service offered by some home inspectors wherein the home inspector and client walk through the home and the home inspector verbally reports on the observable components of the residence. The client is expected to make notes and/or take pictures during the walk-through and the home inspector does not provide a written report. Based on anecdotal information from those in the real estate industry, these types of inspections have become more commonplace as a result of the current competitive real estate market.

#### **II. Issue**

Section 54.1-500 of the Code of Virginia defines a home inspection as:

“...any inspection of a residential building for compensation conducted by a licensed home inspector. A home inspection shall include a written evaluation of the readily accessible components of a residential building, including heating, cooling, plumbing, and electrical systems; structural components; foundation; roof; masonry structure; exterior and interior

components; and other related residential housing components. A home inspection may be limited in scope as provided in a home inspection contract, provided that such contract is not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter or the regulations of the Board. For purposes of this chapter, residential building energy analysis alone, as defined in § 54.1-1144, shall not be considered a home inspection.”

The definition of “home inspection” contains several elements that are necessary for an inspection of a residential building to fall within the meaning of home inspection: 1) the service is provided for compensation; 2) it is conducted by a home inspector; and 3) there is a written evaluation of readily accessible components. While a home inspection contract can limit the scope of a home inspection, these three conditions, at a minimum, must be satisfied to be considered a home inspection under the Board’s laws and regulation. The “walk-and-talk” inspections described herein do not include a written evaluation.

### **III. Board Guidance**

The Board provides the following guidance regarding home inspectors conducting inspections of residential buildings that do **not** include a written evaluation (report):

Based on the definition of “home inspection” in § 54.1-500, a home inspection must include, among other things, a written evaluation of readily accessible components. Because a “walk-and-talk” inspection does not include a written evaluation, it is not considered a home inspection. It would be contrary to state law for a home inspector to represent a “walk-and-talk” inspection as a home inspection. While the Board’s authority over an individual licensed as a home inspector is limited to such individual’s performance of home inspections, the specialized service described herein should not be called, described, or referred to as a “home inspection” as it does not comply with the definition of a home inspection in § 54.1-500 of the Code of Virginia. A home inspector who represents a “walk-and-talk” inspection as a home inspection may be subject to disciplinary action by the Board.

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