InterNACHI Glossary

A/C (AC): Abbreviation for air conditioner and air conditioning.

A/C circuit: Alternating current, which is the flow of electrical current through a conductor, first in one direction, then in reverse. It is used exclusively in residential and commercial wiring because it provides greater flexibility in voltage selection and simplicity of equipment design.

A/C condenser: The outside fan unit of the air-conditioning system that removes the heat from the Freon® gas and turns the gas back into a liquid, then pumps the liquid back to the coil in the furnace.

A/C disconnect: The main electrical ON-OFF switch near the A/C condenser.

above-grade wall: A wall that is mostly above grade and encloses conditioned space.

ABS: Acronym for acrylonitrile butadiene styrene; rigid black plastic pipe used only for drain lines.

absolute humidity: Amount of moisture in the air indicated in grains per cubic foot.

accelerator: Any material added to stucco, plaster or mortar that speeds up the natural set.

access panel: A closure device or door used to cover an opening into a duct, wall, ceiling or enclosure near a fixture that allows access for servicing, such as for the plumbing or electrical system.

accessibility: The level of access that a building offers people with disabilities.

accessible: In the opinion of the inspector, can be approached or entered safely, without difficulty, fear or danger.

accessory structure: A building on a property in addition to the primary building.

accredited: Approved by an accrediting agency or state authority as meeting a prescribed standard, which describes InterNACHI's online and video training courses.

acre: An area equal to 43,560 square feet.

acrylic: A glassy, thermoplastic material that is vacuum-formed to cast and mold shapes that form the surface of fiberglass bathtubs, whirlpool bathtubs, shower bases, and shower stalls.

activate: To turn on, supply power to, or enable systems, equipment or devices to become active by normal operating controls. Examples include turning on the gas or water supply valves to the fixtures and appliances, and activating electrical breakers or fuses.

actual dimension (lumber): The exact measurement of lumber after it has been cut, dried and milled.

actual knowledge: The knowledge or information possessed by an individual, as opposed to that discovered through document review. Persons with actual knowledge are likely to be interviewed for the research portion of a commercial property inspection.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act): Federal U.S. legislation enacted in 1990 to provide for, among other rights, physical access for disabled persons to public accommodations and commercial facilities, mandated in new construction and requiring retrofitting for existing buildings.

adaptor: A fitting that unites different types or materials of pipe, such as ABS to cast-iron pipe.

addition: An extension or increase in the conditioned space of a building.

adhesion: The property of a coating or sealant that allows it to bond to the surface to which it is applied.

adhesive failure: Loss of bond of a coating or sealant from the surface to which it was applied.

adverse conditions: Conditions that may be dangerous for the inspector and/or others, and may limit the walk-through survey portion of the inspection.

adversely affect: To constitute, or potentially constitute, a negative or destructive impact.

aerator: An apparatus that mixes air into flowing water, which is screwed onto the end of a faucet spout to help reduce splashing.

AFCI (arc-fault circuit interrupter): A device intended to provide protection from the effects of arc faults by recognizing characteristics unique to arcing and by functioning to de-energize the circuit when an arc fault is detected.

aggregate: Crushed stone, slag or water-worn gravel that comes in a wide range of sizes and is used to surface built-up roofs.

AHJ (authority having jurisdiction): An organization, office or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure. The AHJ may be the building owner, health department, building code officer, municipal inspector, building department, or fire marshal.

air chamber: A vertical, air-filled pipe that prevents water hammer by absorbing pressure when the water is shut off at a faucet or valve.

air duct: Ducts typically made of sheet metal that carry cooled or heated air to all rooms.

air filters: Adhesive filters made of metal or various fibers that are coated with an adhesive liquid to which particles of lint and dust adhere. Air filters remove as much as 90% of dirt if they do not become clogged. The more common filters are of the disposable type.

air gap (drainage): The unobstructed vertical distance through free atmosphere between the outlet of the waste pipe and the flood-level rim of the receptacle into which the waste pipe is discharged.

air gap (water distribution): The unobstructed vertical distance through free atmosphere between the lowest opening from any pipe or faucet that supplies water to a receptacle (sink, tank, fixture, or other device) and the flood-level rim of that receptacle.

air handler: Components that blow air through ductwork for heating, cooling and/or ventilation purposes.

air infiltration: The amount of air leaking in and out of a building through cracks in walls, windows and doors.

air intake: An opening in a building's envelope whose purpose is to allow outside air to be drawn in to replace inside air.

air space: A 1-inch air gap left between insulation facing and the interior of exterior wall coverings.

air-admittance valve: Pressure-activated, one-way mechanical vent that is used when venting through the building's roof structure is not available.

air-dried lumber: Lumber that has been piled in yards or sheds for any length of time. Generally, for the United States, the minimum moisture content of thoroughly air-dried lumber is 12 to 15%, and the average is somewhat higher. In the South, air-dried lumber for use in home construction may be no lower than 19%.

airway: A space between roof insulation and roof boards that is provided to facilitate air movement.

aisle: A narrow passageway that provides a path for access and egress.

alarm signal: A signal indicating an emergency that requires immediate action, such as a fire.

alarm system: Installed or freestanding warning devices, including, but not limited to: carbon-monoxide detectors, flue-gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment, ejector pumps, and smoke alarms.

algae: Micro-organisms, sometimes referred to as fungus, that may grow into colonies in damp environments, including on certain types of rooftops and in certain environments. Algae can discolor shingles.

alligatoring: An oxidized condition of paint or aged asphalt that has lost its volatile oils due to exposure to sun and solar radiation, which is the ultimate result of the paint or asphalt's limited tolerance to thermal expansion and contraction. Alligatoring is characterized by a coarse, checked pattern that results when a new paint coating slips over the old coating to the extent that the old coating can be seen through the fissures, producing a pattern of cracks resembling an alligator hide.

allowable span: The distance between two supporting points for load-bearing lumber, such as joists, rafters or a girder.

allowance(s): A sum of money set aside in a construction contract for items that, at the time of contract execution, have not been selected and specified. Allowances are best kept to a minimum number and used for items whose choice

will not impact early stages of construction, such as the selection of tile (because the flooring may require an alternative framing or underlayment material).

alteration: Any construction or renovation to an existing structure, other than a repair or addition; also, a change in a mechanical system.

aluminum wire: A conductor made of aluminum that carries electricity. Aluminum is generally limited to the larger wire sizes. Due to its lower conductivity, aluminum wire smaller than No. 12 is not manufactured. Aluminum is lighter and less expensive than copper but does not conduct as well. It also breaks easily.

amortization: A repayment plan by which a loan is reduced through regular (usually monthly) payments of principal and interest.

amp (ampere): The rate at which electricity flows through a conductor.

ampacity: Refers to how much current a wire can safely carry. For example, a 12-gauge electrical copper wire can safely carry up to 20 amps.

amperage: The rate of flow of electricity through wire measured in terms of amperes.

anchor bolts: In residential construction, the bolts used to secure a wooden sill plate to a concrete or masonry floor or wall. In commercial construction, anchor bolts fasten columns, girders and other members to concrete or masonry, such as the bolts used to anchor sills to a masonry foundation.

angle iron: Also known as a shelf angle, a piece of iron that forms a right angle and is used to span openings and support masonry at the openings. In brick veneer, they are used to secure the veneer to the foundation.

angle stop: A shutoff valve in which the inlet connects to the water supply pipe in the wall, and the outlet angles 90 degrees upward toward the faucet or toilet.

annealing: In the manufacturing of float glass, the process of controlled cooling done in a lehr to prevent residual stresses in the glass. Re-annealing is the process of removing objectionable stresses in glass by re-heating it to a suitable temperature, followed by controlled cooling.

annual fuel-utilization efficiency (AFUE): Measures the amount of fuel converted to space heat in proportion to the amount of fuel entering the boiler or

furnace, commonly expressed as a percentage. Procedures have been developed by the U.S. Department of Energy to test AFUE.

annual percentage rate (APR): Annual cost of credit over the life of a loan, including interest, services charges, points, fees, mortgage insurance, and other costs.

anti-scald: A valve that restricts water flow or fluctuations to help prevent burn injuries. In some areas, plumbing codes require anti-scald valves, so a local professional should be consulted for more information and help with code requirements. See also **thermostatic valve**.

anti-siphon: A device that prevents wastewater from being drawn back into supply lines and possibly contaminating the water supply.

anti-walk blocks: Elastomeric blocks that limit glass movement in the glazing channel that may result from thermal, seismic or wind-load effects, or building movement or other forces.

antiquated: Obsolete; no longer in use, useful or functioning.

APA plywood: Plywood that has been rated by the American Plywood Association (APA). For example, No. 1 APA-rated exterior plywood contains no voids between its laminate layers.

aperture: The diameter of the opening in pipes.

appliance: A household device operated by use of electricity or gas. Not included in this definition are components covered under central heating, central cooling or plumbing. In commercial applications, equipment other than industrial that is installed or connected as a unit to perform one or more functions.

appraisal: An expert valuation of a property.

approach: The area between the sidewalk and the street that leads to a driveway, or the transitional path from the street leading to the driveway.

approve, approved: Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ); also, accepted by an internationally recognized organization, such as InterNACHI.

apron: A trim board that is installed beneath a window sill.

arbitration service: A service used to resolve complaints, such as InterNACHI's Arbitration Service.

arc-fault circuit interrupter (AFCI): A device intended to provide protection from the effects of arc faults by recognizing characteristics unique to arcing and functioning to de-energize the circuit when an arc fault is detected.

architect: A tradesman who designs and produces plans for buildings, often overseeing the building process.

architect's rule (or ruler): Three-sided ruler having different scales of measurement on each side; also referred to as a scale.

architectural service: Any practice involving the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or grouping of structures, and the use of space within and surrounding the structures, or the design, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and the administration of the construction contract.

architectural shingles: Shingles that have added dimensionality because of extra layers or tabs, giving them a shake-like appearance. Also called **laminated shingles** and **three-dimensional shingles**.

area wells: Corrugated metal or concrete barrier walls installed around a basement window to hold back earth.

areaway: An open sub-surface space adjacent to a building used to admit light and/or air, or as a means of access to a basement.

asbestos: A common form of magnesium silicate and naturally occurring mineral fiber that was used in various construction products and older homes because of its stability and resistance to fire. Asbestos is also the name given to certain inorganic minerals in their fibrous form. Although asbestos is fire-resistant, it is considered a serious health hazard because its extremely fine fibers are easily inhaled, and exposure to these fibers over a long period of time has been linked to cancers of the lung and the lung-cavity lining, as well as asbestosis, which is a severe lung impairment. Homeowners should be alert for the existence of friable asbestos (that which is readily crumbled or brittle) and always seek professional advice before disturbing it.

asphalt: A dark brown to black, highly viscous hydrocarbon produced from the residue left after the distillation of petroleum. Asphalt is used on roofs and highways as a waterproofing agent.

asphalt plastic cement: An asphalt-based cement used to bond roofing materials.

assessment: A tax levied or value placed on a property.

associate member: Beginning or probationary level of inspection association membership. See also **candidate**.

astragal: A molding that is attached to one of a pair of swinging doors against which the other door strikes.

attic access: An opening that is placed in the drywalled ceiling of a home providing access to the attic.

attic ventilators: In houses, the screened openings provided to ventilate an attic space. They are located in the soffit area as inlet ventilators and in the gable end or along the ridge as outlet ventilators. They may also consist of power-driven fans used as an exhaust system.

auger: A tool used by carpenters to bore holes into wood.

authority having jurisdiction (AHJ): An organization, office or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure. The AHJ may be the building owner, health department, building code officer, municipal inspector, building department, or fire marshal.

automatic: That which provides a function without the necessity of human intervention.

automatic fire-extinguishing system: A system of devices and equipment that automatically detects a fire and discharges water or a fire-retardant medium in an attempt to put the fire out.

automatic sprinkler system: An automated sprinkler system activated for fire-protection purposes.

awning window: A window with hinges at the top that allow it to open out and up.

back-nailing: The practice of nailing roofing felts to the deck under the overlap, in addition to hot-mopping, to prevent slippage of felts.

backer rod: In glazing, a polyethylene or polyurethane foam material installed under compression and used to control sealant joint depth, provide a surface for

sealant tooling, serve as a bond breaker to prevent three-sided adhesion, and provide an hourglass contour of the finished bead.

backfill: The slope of the ground adjacent to a house. The replacement of excavated earth into a previously excavated area, such as a trench around and against a basement foundation. In carpentry, the process of fastening together two pieces of board by gluing blocks of wood in the interior angle.

backflow: Movement of water (or other liquid) in any direction other than that intended.

backflow preventer: A device or means to prevent backflow of contaminated water into the potable water supply.

backhand: A simple molding sometimes used around the outer edge of plain rectangular casing as a decorative feature.

backhoe: Self-powered excavation equipment that digs by pulling a boom-mounted bucket toward itself, and used to dig basements and footings, and to install drainage and sewer systems.

backout: Work that the framing contractor does after the mechanical subcontractors (heating, plumbing and electrical) finish their phase of work at the rough stage (before insulation) to get the home ready for a municipal frame inspection. Generally, the framing contractor repairs anything disturbed by others and completes all framing necessary to pass a Rough Framing Inspection.

backsplash: The raised portion of tile, stone, etc., located at the rear of a wall-mount sink or lavatory that is installed to protect the wall behind.

balancing damper: Baffle or plate used to control the volume of air flow into a confined area.

balcony: An exterior floor projecting from and supported by a structure without additional independent supports.

balloon framing: In carpentry, the lightest and most economical form of construction in which the studding and corner plates are set up in continuous lengths from the first floor line or sill to the roof plate to which all floor joists are fastened.

balusters: The vertical members in a railing installed between the top rail and bottom rail or stair treads.

balustrade: A railing made up of balusters, top rail and sometimes bottom rail, used on the edge of stairs, balconies and porches.

band joist: Dimensional lumber used as a perimeter joist of a building's framing.

barge: Horizontal beam rafter that supports shorter rafters.

barge board: A decorative board covering the projecting rafter (fly rafter) of the gable end. At the cornice, this member is a fascia board.

barometer: An instrument that measures atmospheric pressure.

barrel roof: A roof design that in cross-section is arched.

base flashing: The upturned edge of a watertight membrane formed at a roof's termination point by the extension of the felts vertically over the cant strip and up the wall for a varying distance, where they are secured with mechanical fasteners.

base molding: Molding used to trim the upper edge of interior baseboard.

base ply: An asphalt-saturated and/or -coated felt installed as the first ply with 4-inch laps in a built-up roof system under the subsequent courses of felt, which can be installed in a shingle-like fashion.

base shoe: Molding used next to the floor on interior base board, sometimes called a carpet strip.

baseboard: Wood or vinyl installed around the perimeter of a room to cover the space where the wall and floor meet; a board placed against the wall around a room next to the floor to properly finish the area between the floor and the plaster.

baseboard heat: An electric or hot-water heating system whose heating unit is located along the perimeter of the wall where the baseboard would normally be located.

basement: That portion of a building that is partly or completely below grade.

basement wall: A wall that is mostly below grade.

basement window insert: The window frame and glass unit that is installed in the window buck.

basket strainer: Basket-shaped strainer for a sink drain that has holes which allow water to drain while catching food and other solids. Can also be closed to fill the sink with water.

bathroom: A room containing plumbing fixtures, including a lavatory/sink, water closet, urinal, bidet, bathtub and/or shower.

batt insulation: Strips of (typically) fiberglass insulation that fit between studs and other framing.

batten: Narrow strips of wood used to cover joints and/or as decorative vertical members over plywood or wide boards.

batten plate: A formed piece of metal designed to cover the joint between two lengths of a metal edge.

batter board: One of a pair of horizontal boards nailed to posts set at the corners of an excavation used to indicate the desired level, and also used as a fastening for stretched strings to indicate the outlines of foundation walls.

batter boards: Temporary structures that hold strings used to locate and square the corners of a building.

bay window: A window space projecting outward from the walls of a building, typically square or polygonal in plan.

bead: In glazing, an applied sealant in a joint, irrespective of the method of application, such as caulking bead, glazing bead, etc.; also, a molding or stop used to hold glass or panels in position.

beam: A supporting member of wood or steel; structural support member (of steel, concrete, lumber, etc.) transversely supporting a load that transfers weight from one location to another.

bearing header: (a) A beam placed perpendicular to joists and to which joists are nailed in framing for a chimney, stairway or other opening. (b) A wood lintel. (c) The horizontal structural member over an opening, such as a door or window.

bearing partition: A partition that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight.

bearing point: A point where a bearing or structural weight is concentrated and transferred to the foundation.

bearing wall: A wall that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight.

bed molding: A molding in an angle, as between the overhanging cornice or eaves of a building and its side walls.

bed, bedding: In glazing, the bead compound or sealant applied between a lite of glass or panel and the stationary stop or sight bar of the sash or frame. It is usually the first bead of compound or sealant to be applied when setting glass or panels.

bedrock: A sub-surface layer of earth that is suitable for supporting a structure.

bedroom: A room used for sleeping purposes.

bell reducer: In plumbing, a bell-shaped fitting that has one opening of a smaller diameter used to reduce the size of the pipe in the line, with its opposite opening of larger diameter.

below grade: Describes the portion of a building that is below ground level.

bent glass: Flat glass that has been shaped during manufacture into curved shapes.

bevel: The angle of the front edge of a door, usually from 1/8-inch to 2 inches.

bevel siding: Wedge-shaped boards installed in a lapped pattern used as horizontal siding. This siding varies in butt thickness from 1/2-inch to 3/4-inch and in widths up to 12 inches, and is normally installed over some type of sheathing. Also called lap siding.

bid: A formal offer by a contractor, in accordance with specifications for a project, to do all or a phase of the work at a certain price, in accordance with the terms and conditions stated in the offer.

bid bond: A bond issued by a surety on behalf of a contractor that provides assurance to the recipient of the contractor's bid that, if the bid is accepted, the contractor will execute a contract and provide a performance bond. Under the bond, if the bid is accepted and the contractor fails to execute the contract or to provide a performance bond, the surety is obligated to pay the recipient of the bid the difference between the contractor's bid and the bid of the next lowest responsible bidder.

bid documents: Drawings, details and specifications for a particular project.

bid security: Funds or a bid bond submitted with a bid as a guarantee to the recipient of the bid that the contractor, if awarded the contract, will execute the contract in accordance with the bidding requirements of the contract documents.

bid shopping: A practice by which contractors, both before and after their bids are submitted, attempt to obtain prices from potential subcontractors and material suppliers that are lower than the contractors' original estimates on which their bids are based, or after a contract is awarded, seek to induce subcontractors to reduce the subcontract price included in the bid.

bidding requirements: The procedures and conditions for the submission of bids. The requirements are included on documents, such as the notice to bidders, advertisements for bids, instructions to bidders, invitations to bid, and sample bid forms.

bidet: A toilet-like plumbing fixture designed to promote posterior hygiene; not a toilet.

bifold doors: Doors that are hinged in the middle to allow them to open in a smaller area than standard swing doors, typically used for closet doors in residential installations, and kitchen doors separating the kitchen from the dining area in commercial installations.

binder: A receipt from a seller for a deposit from a buyer that secures the right to purchase a home under agreed-upon terms.

bird's-mouth cut: A cutout in a rafter where it crosses the top plate of a wall, providing a bearing surface for nailing. Also called a **heel cut**.

bite: The dimension by which the framing system overlaps the edge of the glazing infill.

bitumen: Refers to any of a variety of mixtures of hydrocarbons occurring naturally or obtained through the distillation of coal or petroleum. (See also coal tar pitch and asphalt).

blankets: Fiberglass or rock-wool insulation that comes in long rolls 15 or 23 inches wide.

bleeding: The migration of a liquid to the surface of a component or into/onto an adjacent material.

blind nailing: Nailing in such a way that the nail heads are not visible on the face of the work, usually at the tongue of matched boards.

blind stop: A rectangular molding, usually 3/4-inch by 1-3/8 inches or more in width, used in the assembly of a window frame, serving as a stop for storm and screen or combination windows and to resist air infiltration.

blister: An enclosed raised spot evident on the surface of a building, mainly caused by the expansion of trapped air, water vapor, moisture or other gases.

block out: To install a box or barrier within a foundation wall to prevent the concrete from entering an area. Foundation walls are sometimes blocked in order for mechanical pipes to pass through the wall, to install a crawlspace door, or to depress the concrete at a garage door's location.

blocked (door blocking): Wood shims used between the door frame and the vertical, structural wall framing members.

blocked (rafters): Short 2x4s used to keep rafters from twisting, and installed at the ends and at mid-span.

blocking: In carpentry, the process of fastening together two pieces of board by gluing blocks of wood in the interior angle.

blown-in insulation: Fiber insulation in loose form used to insulate attics and existing walls where framing members are not exposed.

blue stain: A bluish or grayish discoloration of sapwood caused by the growth of certain mold or other fungi on the surface and in the interior.

blue stake: A utility company (telephone, gas, electric, cable TV, sewer and water, etc.) locating and spray-painting the ground and/or small flags inserted in the ground to show where their service is located underground. Also called utility notification.

blueprints: Architectural plans for a building or construction project typically including floor plans, footing and foundation plans, elevations, plot plans, and various schedules and/or other details.

board and batten: A method of siding in which the joints between vertically-placed boards or plywood are covered by narrow strips of wood.

board foot: The volume of a piece of wood measuring 12 inches square and 1 inch thick. A piece of lumber that is 1/2-inch thick, 6 inches wide and 24 inches long is equal to 1 board foot.

boards: Yard lumber less than 2 inches thick and 2 or more inches wide.

bodied linseed oil: Linseed oil that has been thickened in viscosity by suitable processing with heat or chemicals. Bodied oils are obtainable in a great range in viscosity, from a little greater than that of raw oil to just short of a jellied condition.

boiled linseed oil: Linseed oil in which enough lead, manganese or cobalt salts have been incorporated to make the oil harden more rapidly when spread in thin coatings.

bolster: A short horizontal timber or steel beam on top of a column that supports and decreases the span of beams or girders.

bond breaker: A substance or a tape applied between two adjoining materials to prevent adhesion between them.

bond plaster: In addition to gypsum, bond plaster used as a base coat that contains 2% to 5% lime by weight and chemical additives that improve the bond with dense, non-porous surfaces, such as concrete.

bond, bonded: An amount of money (usually between $5,000 and $10,000) that must be on deposit with a governmental agency in order to secure a contractor\'s license. The bond may be used to pay for the unpaid bills or disputed work of the contractor. (Not to be confused with a performance or surety bond, which is an insurance policy that guarantees proper completion of a project, and rarely used in residential construction.)

bonding: The permanent joining of metallic parts to form an electrically conductive path that ensures electrical continuity, and the capacity to safely conduct any fault current likely to be imposed.

bonding strip (electrical): A thin strip of metal inside armored or BX cable, which is meant to back up the primary ground.

boom: A truck used to hoist heavy material up and into place, such as to put trusses on a home or to set a heavy beam into place.

Boston ridge: A method of applying asphalt or wood shingles at the ridge or at the hips of a roof as a finish.

bottom chord: The lower or bottom horizontal member of a truss.

bottom plate: The 2x4s or 2x6s that lay on the subfloor upon which the vertical studs are installed. Also called a **sole plate**.

bow: A curve, bend, warping or other deviation from flatness in glass or wood.

box cornice: A cornice completely closed with trim work.

brace: An inclined piece of framing lumber applied to a wall or floor to stifle the structure, often used on walls as temporary bracing until framing has been completed.

bracing: Ties and rods placed to support and strengthen various parts of a building; used for lateral stability for columns and beams.

brake metal: Sheet metal that has been bent to the desired configuration.

branch circuit: Wiring that runs from a service panel or sub-panel to outlets; the circuit conductors between the final over-current device protecting the circuit and the receptacle(s)/outlet(s). Branch circuits are protected by fuses or breakers at the panel.

breaker box: A metal box that contains circuit breakers or fuses that control the electrical current in a home.

breaker panel: The electrical box that distributes electric power entering the home to each branch circuit (each plug and switch) and composed of circuit breakers.

breezeway: A covered/roofed and closed- or open-sided passageway connecting two structures, such as a house and a garage.

brick ledge: Part of the foundation wall where brick veneer rests.

brick lintel: The metal angle iron that brick rests on, typically found above a window, door or other opening.

brick mold: Trim used around an exterior door jamb onto which siding butts.

brick tie: A small, corrugated metal strip (1x6 to 8 inches long) nailed to wall sheeting or studs that are inserted into the grout mortar joint of veneer brick to hold the veneer wall to the sheeted wall behind it.

brick veneer: A facing of brick laid against and fastened to the sheathing of a frame wall or tile wall construction.

bridging: Small wood or metal members that are inserted in a diagonal position between floor joists at midspan to act as both tension and compression members for the purpose of bracing the joists and spreading the action of loads.

broker: One who acts as an agent for others in the negotiation of contracts, purchases and/or sales in return for a fee or commission.

browncoat: The coat of plaster directly beneath the finish coat. In three-coat work, the browncoat is the second coat.

BTU: Acronym for British thermal unit, which is a measure of the capacity of a heating or cooling system; the amount of heat energy required to raise the temperature of 1 pound of water through a change of 1 degree.

bubbling: In glazing, open or closed pockets in a sealant caused by the release, production or expansion of gases.

buck: Often used in reference to rough-frame opening members. Door bucks are used in reference to a metal door frame.

buckling: The bending of a building material as a result of wear and tear or contact with a substance, such as water.

builder's risk insurance: Insurance coverage on a construction project during construction, which may include extended coverage that can be added to the contract for the customer's protection.

building: The primary building subject of an inspection.

building brick: Brick for building purposes not especially treated for texture or color, formerly called "common brick." It is stronger than face brick.

building code: Minimum local and/or state regulations established to protect health and safety, which apply to building design, construction, rehabilitation, repair, materials, occupancy and use; community ordinances governing the manner in which a home may be constructed or modified.

building department: Local authority having jurisdiction over the construction, alteration and use of a property.

building envelope: The enclosure (exterior walls and roof) that defines the heated/cooled area of a building.

building paper: A general term for papers, felts and similar sheet materials used in buildings without reference to their properties or uses. Generally comes in long rolls.

building permit: Written authorization from the city, county or other governing regulatory body giving permission to construct or renovate a building. A building permit is specific to the building project described in the application.

building systems: Components, assemblies and systems that are a part of the overall building and property, such as pavement, flatwork, structural components, roofing, exterior walls, plumbing, HVAC, electrical components, fire prevention, etc.

built-in: Permanently installed.

built-up beam: Beam or girder created by sistering or scabbing two or more pieces of lumber together. Also called a **build-up girder**.

built-up roof, roofing (BUR): Generally used on flat or low-pitched roofs, a roofing system composed of three to five layers of asphalt felt laminated with coal tar, pitch or asphalt, and finished on top with crushed slag or gravel.

bullfloat: A large flat tool with a handle, usually made of wood, aluminum or magnesium, used to finish and flatten a slab. Also describes the first stage in the final finish of concrete to smooth and level hills and voids left after screeding; sometimes substituted for darbying.

bullnose drywall: Rounded drywall corners.

bundle: A package of shingles that contains three, four or five bundles per square.

BUR: See **built-up roofing**.

bushing: A pipe fitting for joining pipes having different diameters. A bushing is threaded on the inside and outside.

butt glazing: The installation of glass products where the vertical glass edges are without structural supporting mullions.

butt joint: The junction where the ends of two timbers or other members meet in a square-cut joint.

butterfly roof: A roof assembly that pitches sharply from either side toward the center.

buttering: In glazing, the application of sealant or compound to the flat surface of some member before placing the member in position, such as the buttering of a removable stop before fastening the stop in place.

butyl: A type of non-curing and non-skinning sealant made from butylene usually used for internal applications.

buy-down: A subsidy paid by a builder or developer to reduce monthly payments on a mortgage.

BX cable: Armored electrical cable wrapped in a galvanized-steel outer covering. A factory assembly of insulated conductors inside a flexible metallic covering. It can be run anywhere except where exposed to excessive moisture. It should not be run below grade. It must always be grounded and uses its armor as an equipment ground. It is difficult to pull out old wires or insert new ones.

bypass doors: Doors that slide by each other, commonly used as closet doors.

caisson: A 10- or 12-inch-diameter hole drilled into the earth and embedded into bedrock 3 to 4 feet. The structural support for a type of foundation wall, porch, patio, monopost, or other structure. Two or more sticks of reinforcing bars (rebar) are inserted into and run the full length of the hole, and concrete is poured into the caisson hole.

calcium chloride: A chemical used to speed up the curing process of concrete in damp conditions.

calibrate: To check, adjust or determine by comparison with a standard (the graduations of a quantitative measuring instrument), such as to calibrate a thermometer.

calibration: The act or process of calibrating, or the state of being calibrated.

camber: A slightly arched surface, such as that in a road, a ship's deck, an airfoil, or a snow ski.

camber arch: An arch whose intrados, though apparently straight, has a slightly concave curve upward.

camber beam: A beam whose underside has a concave curve upward.

camber window: A casement window with a curved top.

candidate: Beginning level of inspection association membership. See also **associate member**.

canopy: An overhanging roof.

cant strip: A beveled support used at the junction of a flat surface and a vertical surface to prevent bends and/or cracking of the roofing membrane at the intersection of the roof deck and wall. Used with a base flashing to minimize breaking of the roofing felts.

cantilever: A projecting beam or other structure supported at only one end. Any part of a structure that projects beyond its main support and is balanced on it.

cantilevered void: Foundation void material used in unusually expansive soil conditions.

cap: The upper member of a column, pilaster, door cornice, molding, and similar components.

cap flashing: The portion of the flashing attached to a vertical surface used to prevent water from migrating behind the base flashing.

cap sheet: A top layer in built-up roofing.

cap sheets: In roofing, one to four plies of felt bonded and top-coated with bitumen that is laid over an existing roof as a treatment for defective roofs.

cape chisel: A tool used to clean out mortar joints on brick.

capital: The principal part of a loan; the original amount borrowed.

capital and interest: A repayment loan structure and the most conventional form of home loan. The borrower pays an amount each month to cover the amount borrowed (capital or principal) plus the interest charged on the capital.

capped rate: A mortgage whose interest rate will not exceed a specified value during a certain period of time, but it will fluctuate up and down below that level.

carbon monoxide (CO): A colorless, odorless, highly poisonous gas formed by the incomplete combustion of carbon.

carbon-monoxide (CO) detector: A device that detects the presence of carbon monoxide gas and sounds an alarm in order to alert occupants of unsafe levels. Many models also have smoke alarms as a dual feature. CO detectors may be solely battery-operated or may be hard-wired into a structure's electrical system, with batteries as a backup power source.

casement frames and sash: Frames of wood or metal enclosing part or all of the sash, which may be opened by means of hinges affixed to the vertical edges.

casement window: A side-hinged window that opens on hinges secured to the side of the window frame.

casing: Molding of various widths and thicknesses used to trim door and window openings at the jambs.

cast iron: Heavy metal formed by casting on molds. The metal is covered with a porcelain enamel coating to make fixtures, such as the cast-iron tubs.

cast-iron pipe (plumbing): Drain and vent lines. Most older drain-waste venting systems are made of cast-iron pipes, but ABS and PVC are now more popular replacement materials. Cast-iron pipes were originally joined with molten lead, but most plumbers now join them with no-hub couplers.

cat's paw: A variation of a pry bar used to pry up deep-set or counter-sunk nails.

catch basin: A drain for a low or wet spot, with pipe exiting the side and a pit at the bottom to collect sediment.

caulk: The application of sealant to a joint, crack or crevice. A compound used for sealing that has a minimum capability of joint movement. Sometimes called low-performance sealant.

caulking: Material used to seal exterior cracks and openings, such as at windows or foundations.

CCA (chromated copper arsenate): A pesticide that is forced into wood under high pressure to protect it from termites and other wood-boring insects, as well as decay caused by fungus.

ceiling joist: One of a series of parallel framing members used to support ceiling loads and supported, in turn, by larger beams, girders or bearing walls. Also called **roof joist**.

cells (masonry): The hollow spaces in concrete blocks.

cellulose insulation: Ground-up newspaper that is treated with fire-retardant.

Celotex: UK-based brand of black fibrous board that is used as exterior sheeting.

cement: The gray powder that serves as the glue in concrete; Portland cement; also, any adhesive.

cement mixtures: Cement mixtures are labeled with their ratios of cement to sand to aggregate. A rich cement mixture consists of one part cement, two parts sand and three parts coarse aggregate, and is commonly used for concrete roads and waterproof structures. A standard cement mixture consists of one part cement, two parts sand and four parts coarse aggregate, and is used for reinforced work floors, roofs, columns, arches, tanks, sewers, conduits, etc. A medium cement mixture consists of one part cement, 2-1/2 parts sand and five parts coarse aggregate, and is used for foundations, walls, abutments, piers, etc. A lean cement mixture consists of one part cement, three parts sand and six parts coarse aggregate, and is used for all mass concrete work, large foundations, backing for stone masonry, etc.

center-set: A style of faucet that is installed on a lavatory with 4-inch center-to-center faucet holes and having the spout and handle(s) combined into a single part.

ceramic disk valve: A type of valve that relies on two-part revolving disks in a sealed cylinder. Each disk has a port in it that, when aligned with the other, allows water to pass through.

ceramic tile: A man-made or machine-made clay tile used to finish a floor or wall. Generally used in bathtub and shower enclosures and on countertops.

Certificate of Occupancy (CO): A document stating that a building is approved for occupancy. The building authority issues the Certificate of Occupancy.

certified: Having a formal document testifying to the qualification or completion of requirements.

Certified Commercial Inspector (CCI)®: A professional designation and a U.S. federal certification mark administered by InterNACHI, the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors.

Certified Professional Inspector (CPI)®: A professional designation and a U.S. federal certification mark administered by InterNACHI, the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors.

CFM (cubic feet per minute): Measure of a volume of air. When testing systems, the CFM can be found by multiplying the face velocity, or amount of air

passing through the face of an outlet or return, multiplied by the free area, or the total area of the openings in the outlet or inlet through which air can pass, in square feet.

chair rail: A molding that runs horizontally along the wall at about 3 feet from the ground. In storefront, window wall or curtain wall systems, a chair rail is an aluminum extrusion applied horizontally to the inside of the system 3 feet from the floor to create a barrier in floor-to-ceiling glazing applications.

chalk line: A line made on the roof by snapping a taut string or cord dusted with chalk and used for alignment purposes.

change order: A written document that modifies the plans and specifications and/or the price of a construction contract.

channel glazing: The installation of glass products into U-shaped glazing channels. The channels may have fixed stops; however, at least one glazing stop on one edge must be removable.

chapter: A local group of members of a larger association, as in a local InterNACHI chapter; a local branch.

chase: A framed, enclosed space around a flue pipe or a channel in a wall or through a ceiling for something to lie in or pass through.

checking: Fissures that appear with age in many exterior paint coatings. At first, it is superficial but, in time, it may penetrate entirely through the coating. It produces a pattern of surface cracks running in irregular lines. When found in the top pour of an asphalt built-up roof, checking is the preliminary stage of alligatoring.

checkrails (check rails): The meeting rails that are sufficiently thicker than a window used to fill the opening between the top and bottom sash made by the parting stop in the frame of double-hung windows. They are usually beveled with a diagonal or rabbeted overlap.

chemical-injection grouting: Leak-repair technique usually used below grade in cracks and joints in concrete walls and floors; involves the injection of sealant (usually urethane) that reacts with water to form a seal.

chimney: A structure containing one or more flues for removing gases to the outside atmosphere.

chink: To install fiberglass insulation around all exterior door and window frames, wall corners, and small gaps in the exterior wall. A narrow opening, such as a crack or fissure; to create a narrow opening, such as a crack or fissure. To fill the chinks of, as with caulking.

chipboard: A manufactured wood panel made out of 1- to 2-inch wood chips and glue, often used as a substitute for plywood in the exterior wall and roof sheathing. Also called **OSB (oriented strand board)**, **flakeboard** and **waferboard**.

circuit: A network of wiring that typically starts at a panel box, feeds electricity to receptacles/outlets, and ultimately returns to the panel box.

circuit breaker: A protective device that automatically opens an electrical circuit when it is overloaded.

cistern: A reservoir or storage tank used for a household's water supply.

cladding: Something that covers or overlays; term used to describe the exterior wall covering, as well as the metal components cover windows, doors and/or fascia for weather protection.

Class A fire resistance: The highest fire-resistance rating for roofing, per the ASTM E-108, and indicates that roofing is able to withstand severe exposure to fire originating from sources outside the building.

Class B door: A fire-resistance rating applied by the Underwriters Laboratories for a door having a one to 1-1/2 hour rating, which indicates that the door will withstand a fire for one to 1-1/2 hours, as well as restrict the travel of smoke.

Class B fire resistance: Fire-resistance rating that indicates that roofing material is able to withstand moderate exposure to fire originating from sources outside the building.

Class C fire resistance: Fire-resistance rating that indicates that roofing material is able to withstand light exposure to fire originating from sources outside the building.

cleanout: A plug in a trap or drainpipe that provides access for the purpose of clearing an obstruction.

cleanout (plumbing): A wye or tee drain fitting with a removable plug that permits inspection and access for an auger or snake.

clearance: The minimum distance through air measured between the surface of something heat-producing and the surface of something combustible.

clearly identifiable: Capable of being recognized by a person of normal vision.

cleat: A wedge-shaped piece of metal that serves as a support or check; a strip fastened across something to give it strength or hold it in position.

client: The party that retains the services of the inspector and pays for the inspection.

clip ties: Sharp, cut metal wires that protrude out of a concrete foundation wall that formerly held the foundation form panels in place.

closed-cut valley: A method of valley treatment by which shingles from one side of the valley extend across the valley, while shingles from the other side are trimmed 2 inches from the valley centerline. The valley flashing is not exposed.

closet auger: A flexible rod with a curved end used to access a toilet's built-in trap and remove clogs.

closet bend: A curved fitting that connects a closet flange to a toilet drain.

closet bolt: A bolt whose head is fitted to a closet flange and protrudes up through a toilet base. A nut is tightened around it on the toilet base. Two or four bolts serve one toilet.

closet flange: An anchoring ring secured to the floor to which the base of a toilet is secured using bolts.

CO: The chemical formula for carbon monoxide, and the acronym for Certificate of Occupancy.

coal tar: A viscous, liquid mixture of hydrocarbon compounds, derived (along with coke) from the destructive distillation of coal.

coal tar pitch: A bituminous material that is a byproduct of the coking of coal and used as the waterproofing material for tar and gravel built-up roofing.

Code of Ethics: Ethical standards of conduct for home inspectors.

code official: The officer or other government-designated authority charged with the enforcement of local building codes.

coefficient of performance (COP): A measure of efficiency in a furnace or HVAC system\'s heating mode that represents the ratio of total heating capacity

to electrical energy input. For example, if a heating system has a COP of 3, it will deliver 3 units of energy for every 1 unit of electricity consumed.

cohesive failure: Internal splitting of a compound resulting from over-stressing of the compound.

cold patch: In roofing, a roof repair done with cold-applied material.

cold-air return: The ductwork and related grilles that carry room air back to the furnace for re-heating.

cold-applied: Describes products that can be applied without heating. These differ from products that need to be heated before being applied.

cold-method or lap cement: Special multipurpose adhesive for low-sloped, cold-applied roof construction. Bonds 19-inch selvedge, mineral surface and cap sheets to the underlayment. Doubles as an adhesive on 2-inch selvedge lap of mineral-, granule- or smooth-surfaced roofing. Available in both summer and winter grades.

cold-process adhesive: Mastic prepared with SBS modifiers to adhere laps, flashing and joints of built-up or low-slope roofing without hot-mopping or torching equipment.

collar: In roofing, a conical metal cap flashing used in conjunction with vent pipes or stacks, usually located several inches above the plane of the roof, for the purpose of shedding water away from the base of the vent.

collar beam: In carpentry, a tie that keeps the roof from spreading. They serve to stiffen the roof structure. Connects similar rafters on opposite sides of the roof.

collar tie: A horizontal board attached perpendicular to rafters.

column: In architecture, a perpendicular supporting member, circular or rectangular in section, usually consisting of a base, shaft and capital. In engineering, a vertical structural compression member that supports loads acting in the direction of its longitudinal axis.

combination doors or windows: Combination doors or windows are used over regular openings to provide winter insulation and summer protection. They typically have self-storing or removable glass and screen inserts, which eliminates the need for handling a different unit each season.

combustible: Describes any material that will burn.

combustion air: The ductwork installed to bring fresh outside air to the furnace and/or hot water heater. Normally, two separate supplies of air are brought in: one high and one low.

combustion chamber: The part of a boiler, furnace or wood stove where the burn occurs; normally lined with firebrick or molded or sprayed insulation.

commercial cooking appliances: Appliances used in a commercial food-service establishment for heating and/or cooking food.

commercial property: The building structures and improvements located on a parcel of commercial real estate. These may include structures such as buildings with residential units operated for profit, mixed-use buildings, strip malls, motels, factories, storage facilities, restaurants, and office buildings.

common rafter: Rafter that extends from the top plate to the ridge. Generally set 12, 16 or 24 inches apart.

compatible: Two or more substances that can be mixed or blended without separating, reacting or affecting either material adversely.

component: A permanently installed or attached fixture, element or part of a system.

composite board: An insulation board that has two different insulation types laminated together in two or three layers.

compression fitting: Used to join or connect pipes and conduit by causing a ring to compress against the connecting tube when tightened with a wrench.

compression gasket: A gasket designed to function under compression.

compression set: The permanent deformation of a material after removal of the compressive stress.

compression valve: A type of valve that works by raising or lowering a stem. Water passes through the valve by turning the faucet handle, which causes the stem to drop or rise.

compression web: A member of a truss system that connects the bottom and top chords, providing downward support.

compressor: A mechanical device that pressurizes a gas in order to turn it into a liquid, thereby allowing heat to be removed or added. A compressor is the main component of conventional heat pumps and air conditioners. In an air-

conditioning system, the compressor normally sits outdoors and has a large fan to remove heat.

ComSOP: International Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties.

concealed: Rendered inaccessible by the structure or finish of the building. Wires in concealed raceways are considered concealed, even though they may become accessible by withdrawing them.

concealed nail method: Application of roll roofing by which all nails are driven into the underlying course of roofing and covered by a cemented, overlapping course. Nails are not exposed to the weather.

concrete (plain): Concrete without reinforcement or reinforced only for shrinkage or temperature changes.

concrete block: A hollow concrete brick that is typically 8x8x16 inches in size and often used in low-rise commercial and some residential construction. The original design and use is attributed to the architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

concrete board (or Wonderboard®): A panel made of concrete and fiberglass that is usually used as tile-backing material.

concrete grout: A mixture of 3/8-inch pea gravel, sand, cement and water that is poured into the cells of concrete-block walls to reinforce them.

condensate line: The copper pipe that runs from the outside air-conditioning condenser to the inside furnace, where the A/C coil is located.

condensation: Water accumulation or sweat on walls, ceiling and pipes, which is normal in areas of high humidity, and usually controlled by ventilation or a dehumidifier.

condensing unit: The component of a cooling system located outdoors, which includes a compressor and condensing coil designed to give off heat.

condition: The plainly visible and conspicuous state of being of a material object.

conditioned space: The sections of a house that are intentionally heated and/or cooled and surrounded by a continuous thermal envelope, which includes an air barrier and thermal barrier. For example, an attic is an unconditioned space if it is

vented and has insulation on its floor. An unvented attic with insulation along the attic slopes is part of the conditioned space.

Conditions, Covenants and Restrictions (CC&Rs): The standards that define the manner in which a property may be used and the protections the developer provides for the benefit of all owners in a subdivision.

conduction: The flow of heat from one part of a substance to another part. A piece of iron with one end placed in a fire will soon become warm from end to end due to the transfer of heat by the actual collision of the air molecules.

conductivity: The rate at which heat (energy) is transmitted through a material.

conductor: In roofing, a pipe for conveying rainwater from the roof gutter to a drain, or from a roof drain to the storm drain; also called a leader, downspout or downpipe. In electrical contracting, a wire through which a current of electricity flows, better known as an electric wire.

conductor (electrical): Anything that conducts or carries electricity.

conduit: Tubing or hollow pipe casing through which electrical lines run.

connector: The pipe that connects a fuel-burning appliance to a chimney.

console lavatory: A table-like lavatory whose basin is attached to a wall at the back and by table or piano legs at the front.

construction (frame-type): A type of construction by which the structural parts are wood or depend upon a wood frame for support. In building codes, if masonry veneer is applied to the exterior walls, the classification of this type of construction is usually unchanged.

construction adhesive: Thick-bodied adhesive suited to a wide range of repair and construction tasks and packaged in convenient cartridges for use in caulking guns.

construction contract: A legal document that specifies the details of a construction project. A desirable construction contract includes: the contractors' license/registration number; a statement of work quality, such as "Standard Practices of the Trades" or "according to manufacturers' specifications"; a set of blueprints or plans; a set of specifications; any allowances; a construction timetable, including starting and completion dates; a fixed price for the work, or a

time-and-materials formula; a payment schedule; a written warranty; and a clause that outlines the methods for resolving any disputes that arise.

construction drywall: A type of construction by which the interior wall finish is applied in a dry condition, generally in the form of sheet materials or wood paneling, as opposed to plaster.

construction loan: A loan provided by a lending institution specifically to construct or renovate a building.

consultant: A person with expertise in a particular area who assists the inspector with specific portions of a commercial property inspection.

contamination: An impairment of the quality or tainting of the potable water supply.

Continuing Education: Ongoing training and education, often recognized and accredited by state and other governmental agencies, and typically a requirement for membership in a home inspection association, such as InterNACHI's Continuing Education policy and requirements.

continuity tester: An electrical tool used to identify and diagnose a circuit as either open or closed.

contractor: An individual licensed to perform certain types of construction activities. In most states, the general contractor's license and some specialty contractors' licenses don't require compliance with bonding, workers' compensation or similar regulations. Some of the specialty contractor licenses involve extensive training, testing and/or insurance requirements. There are various types of contractors, including the general contractor, who is responsible for the execution, supervision and overall coordination of a project, and may also perform some of the individual construction tasks. Most general contractors are not licensed to perform all specialty trades and must hire specialty contractors for such tasks, such as electrical and plumbing. A remodeling contractor is a general contractor who specializes in remodeling work. A specialty contractor is licensed to perform a specialty task, such as electrical, side sewer, or asbestos abatement. A sub-contractor is a general or specialty contractor who works for another general contractor.

control joint: A control joint controls or accommodates movement in the surface component of a roof.

convection: A method of transferring heat by the actual movement of heated molecules, usually by a freestanding unit, such as a furnace.

conventional loan: A mortgage loan that is not insured by a government agency, such as the FHA or VA.

convertibility: The ability to change a loan from an adjustable-rate schedule to a fixed-rate schedule.

cooling load: The amount of cooling required to keep a building at a specified temperature during the summer, usually 78° F, regardless of outside temperature.

cooling tower: A large device mounted on a roof and consisting of several baffles over which water is pumped in order to reduce its temperature.

coped: Removing the top and bottom flange of the end(s) of a metal I-beam to permit it to fit within and become bolted to the web of another I-beam in a "T" arrangement.

coped joint: Cutting and fitting woodwork to an irregular surface.

coping: A construction unit placed at the top of a parapet wall to serve as a cover for the wall.

coping joint: The intersection of a roof slope and an exterior vertical wall.

copper pipe types: Type K is identified by a green stripe and has the heaviest or thickest wall and is generally used underground. Type L is identified by a blue stripe and has a medium wall thickness and is most commonly used for water service and for general interior water piping. Type M is identified by a red stripe and has a thin wall, and many codes permit its use in general water piping installation.

corbel: The triangular, decorative and supporting member that holds a mantel or horizontal shelf.

corbel out: To build out one or more courses of brick or stone from the face of a wall to form a support for timbers.

core: A small section cut from any material to show its internal composition.

corner bead: A strip of formed sheet metal, sometimes combined with a strip of metal lath, placed on corners before plastering to reinforce them. Also, a strip of 3/4-round or angular wood finish placed over a plastered corner for protection.

corner boards: Used as trim for the external corners of a house or other frame structure against which the ends of the siding are finished.

corner braces: Diagonal braces at the corners of frame structure to stiffen and strengthen the wall.

Cornerite™: Metal mesh lath cut into strips and bent to a right angle used in interior corners of walls and ceilings on lath to prevent cracks in plastering.

cornice: A horizontal projecting course on the exterior of a building, usually at the base of a parapet. In residential construction, the overhang of a pitched roof at the cave line, usually consisting of a fascia board, a soffit for a closed cornice, and appropriate moldings.

cornice return: The portion of the cornice that returns on the gable end of a house.

corrosion: The deterioration of metal by chemical or electrochemical reaction resulting from exposure to weathering, moisture, chemicals or other agents or media.

corrugated: Folded or shaped into parallel ridges or furrows so as to form a symmetrically wavy surface.

cost breakdown: A breakdown of all the anticipated costs on a construction or renovation project.

cost plus contract: See **time and materials contract**.

counter-flashing: The formed metal secured to a wall, curb or rooftop unit used to cover and protect the upper edge of a base flashing and its associated fasteners. This type of flashing is usually used in residential construction on chimneys at the roofline to cover shingle flashing and to prevent moisture entry.

counterfort: A foundation wall section that strengthens (and is generally perpendicular to) a long section of foundation wall.

coupling: In plumbing, a short collar with only inside threads at each end for receiving the ends of two pipes that are to be fitted and joined together. A right/left coupling is one type used to join two gas pipes in a limited space.

course: A single layer of brick, stone or other building material.

cove molding: A molding with a concave face used as trim or to finish interior corners.

covenants: Rules usually developed by a builder or developer regarding the physical appearance of buildings in a particular geographic area. Typical covenants address building height, appropriate fencing and landscaping, and the type of exterior material (stucco, brick, stone, siding, etc.) that may be used.

coverage: The amount of weather protection provided by the roofing material that depends on the number of layers of material between the exposed surface of the roofing and the deck (single coverage, double coverage, etc.).

CPVC (chlorinated polyvinyl chloride): Rigid plastic pipe used in plumbing and water supply systems, where code permits its use and installation.

crater: Pit in the surface of concrete resulting from cracking of the mortar due to expansive forces associated with a particle of unsound aggregate or a contaminating material, such as wood or glass.

crawlspace: A shallow, open area enclosed within the foundation and located between the ground and the underside of the lowest floor's structural component.

crazing: A series of hairline cracks in the surface of weathered materials having a web-like appearance. Also, hairline cracks in pre-finished metals caused by bending or forming. See also **brake metal**.

credit rating: A report ordered by a lender from a credit agency to determine a borrower's credit habits.

cricket: A peaked saddle construction at the back of a chimney to prevent the accumulation of snow and ice and to deflect water around the chimney.

cripple stud: Short stud used as support in wall openings that replaces a normal 93-inch or 96-inch stud.

cripple walls: In a wood-frame house, the section of wall under the house between the concrete foundation and the floor joists; also called crawlspace walls.

crock: Crockery or cement or other container used in the ground to hold water for pumping sump pumps.

cross tee (cross-T): Short metal T-beam used in suspended-ceiling systems to bridge the spaces between the main beams.

cross-bridging: Diagonal bracing between adjacent floor joists placed near the center of the joist span to prevent joists from twisting.

cross-connection: Any connection between two otherwise separate piping systems, one of which contains potable water and the other that contains something which could contaminate the potable water.

cross-cutting: Cutting across the wood grain; to cross-cut a board is to cut across its width.

crown: The sloped top of a masonry chimney designed to shed water away from the flue; also called a splay or a wash.

crown molding: A molding used on a cornice or wherever an interior angle is to be covered.

CSA: Canadian Standards Association.

culvert: A round, corrugated drainpipe, normally 15 or 18 inches in diameter, that is installed beneath a driveway parallel to and near the street.

cupola: A small dome at the peak of a pitched roof.

cupping: A type of warping that causes boards to curl up at their edges.

curb: A short wall of masonry built above the level of the roof that provides a means of flashing the deck equipment.

curb roof: A roof with an upper and lower set of rafters on each side whose under-set is less inclined to the horizon than the upper; a mansard roof.

curing (concrete): In concrete applications, the process by which mortar and concrete harden. The length of time is dependent upon the type of cement, mix proportion, required strength, size and shape of the concrete section, weather, and future exposure conditions. The period may be three weeks or longer for lean concrete mixtures used in structures such as dams, or it may be only a few days for richer mixes. Favorable curing temperatures range from 50° to 70° F. Design strength is achieved in 28 days.

curing (paint): The process by which paint bonds to a surface. Curing and drying are not the same.

curing agent: One part of a multi-part sealant that, when added to the base, causes the base to change its physical state via chemical reaction.

curtain drain: A ditch, sometimes filled with gravel, and a drain tile that diverts storm and rainwater away from a structure.

curtain wall: A thin wall supported by the structural steel or concrete frame of a building independent of the wall below. Also, an aluminum framing system on the face of a building containing vision glass panels and spandrel panels made of glass, aluminum or other material.

cut-in brace: Nominal 2-inch-thick members, usually 2x4s, cut in between each stud diagonally.

cutback: In roofing, basic asphalt or tar which has been "cut back" with solvents and oils so that the material becomes fluid.

cutoff: A piece of roofing membrane consisting of one or more narrow plies of felt that is usually hot-mopped to seal the edge of insulation.

cutoff valve: Valve used to shut water off, generally located under a sink and behind the bathtub and shower access panel. It cuts off hot and/or cold water at the source without cutting off the water supply throughout the entire house.

dado: A rectangular groove across the width of a board or plank. In interior decoration, a special type of wall treatment.

damp-proofing: A process used on concrete, masonry and stone surfaces to repel water in order to prevent the coated surface from absorbing rainwater while still permitting moisture vapor to escape from the structure, as moisture vapor readily penetrates coatings of this type. The term damp-proofing generally applies to surfaces above grade, while the terms waterproofing generally applies to surfaces below grade.

damper: An air valve that regulates the flow of air inside the flue of a furnace or fireplace.

darby: A flat tool used to smooth concrete flatwork immediately after screeding. Also called a **bullfloat**.

dead load: The static design-weight of a roof and any permanent fixtures attached above or below it.

decay: Disintegration or rot of wood or other substance through the action of mold.

deck: An elevated platform typically located outdoors at a residential structure. The term deck is also commonly used to refer to the above-ground floors in a multi-level parking garage.

deck paint: An enamel paint with a high degree of resistance to mechanical wear designed for use on such surfaces as porch floors.

decorative: Ornamental; not required for the operation of essential systems or components of a home or building.

defensible space: An area around a structure that is cleared of trees, brush, and other potential fuel whose purpose is to slow the rate of an advancing wildfire.

deferred-maintenance items: Deficient items that cannot be remedied with routine maintenance, generally caused by neglect.

deflect: To bend or deform under weight.

deflection: The amount of bending movement of any part of a structural member perpendicular to the axis of the member under an applied load.

dehumidistat: A control mechanism used to operate a mechanical ventilation system based on the relative humidity in the home.

density: The mass of substance in a unit volume. When expressed using the metric system, it is numerically equal to the specific gravity of the same substance.

describe: To report in writing on a system or component by its type or other observed characteristics in order to distinguish it from other components used for the same purpose.

design pressure: Specified pressure that a product or component is designed to withstand.

designer: One who designs houses, interiors, landscaping or other objects. When used in the context of residential construction, it usually suggests that a designer is not a licensed architect. Most jurisdictions don't require an architectural license for most single-family construction.

destructive: An act of demolishing, damaging or probing any system, structure or component, or to dismantle any system or component that would not be taken apart by an ordinary person in the course of normal maintenance.

determine: To arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to examination.

dew point: The temperature at which vapor condenses from the atmosphere and forms water.

dimensional lumber: Yard lumber from 2 inches up to, but not including, 5 inches thick and 2 or more inches wide, and includes joists, rafters, studs, planks and small timbers.

direct nailing: To nail perpendicular to the main surface or the junction of the pieces joined. Also called **face-nailing**.

direct-gain system: A passive solar heating system in which sunlight penetrates and directly warms the house's interior.

disconnected: Shut down.

dismantle: To open, take apart or remove any component, device or piece that would not typically be opened, taken apart or removed by an occupant.

disposer: A device that grinds food sufficiently to enter drains for disposal without clogging them.

distortion: Alteration of viewed images caused by variations in glass flatness or in homogeneous portions within the glass; an inherent characteristic of heat-treated glass.

diverter: A valve that has a single inlet and directs water to one of two outlets. Diverters are used with hand-held showers, shower risers, tub-and-shower combinations, and kitchen faucet sprayers.

diverter valve: A device that changes the direction of water flow from one faucet to another.

Dolly Varden siding: Beveled wood siding that is rabbeted on the bottom edge.

door jamb (interior): The surrounding case into and out of which a door closes and opens, consisting of two upright pieces, called side jambs, and a horizontal head jamb.

dormer: A converted attic with windows projecting through a sloping roof.

double coverage: The application of asphalt roofing so that the lapped portion is at least 2 inches wider than the exposed portion, resulting in two layers of roofing material over the roof deck.

double glazing: Two lites of glass in a window that are separated by an air space within an opening to improve insulation against heat transfer and/or sound transmission. In insulated glass units (IGUs), the air between the glass sheets is

thoroughly dried and the space is sealed, eliminating the potential for condensation and providing superior insulating properties.

double plate: Two layers of 2x4s that are placed on top of the studs in a wall framing.

double tree: Refers to a precast roof deck panel poured with two fins in its underside to impart flexural rigidity.

double-hung window: A window with sashes that slide vertically and allow opening from the top and bottom.

double-strength glass: Float glass that is approximately 1/8-inch thick.

downspout: The pipe that carries water down from the gutter or scupper. Also called a **leader**.

draw: The amount of progress billings/payments that are available to a contractor under a construction contract with a fixed payment schedule.

drawing detail: A top-view scale drawing of a building or roof showing the roof's perimeter and indicating the projections and roof-mounted equipment.

drawing outline: A top-view scale drawing of a building or roof showing only the perimeter.

dressed-and-matched (D&M): Boards or planks machined in such a manner that there is a groove on one edge and a corresponding tongue on the other. Also called **tongue-and-groove (T&G)**.

dressed-size lumber: The dimension of lumber after shrinking from its green dimension and machining it to size or pattern.

drier paint: Oil-soluble soaps of lead manganese or cobalt that, in small proportions, hasten the oxidation and hardening (drying) of the drying oils in paints.

drip: A member of a cornice or other horizontal exterior finish course that has a projection beyond the other parts for the purpose of throwing off water. Also, a groove in the underside of a sill or drip cap to cause water to drop off on the outer edge instead of drawing back and running down the face of a building.

drip cap: A molding placed on the exterior topside of a door or window frame to cause water to drip beyond the outside of the frame.

drip edge: A component designed to prevent water from running back or under an overhang.

drippage: Bitumen material that drips through roof deck joints or over the edge of a roof deck.

drop siding: Siding that is usually 3/4-inch thick and 6 or 8 inches wide with tongue-and-groove or shiplap edges, often used as siding without sheathing in secondary buildings.

dropping a stringer: In carpentry, this term refers to cutting short on the bottom of a stair to allow for thickness of the first tread.

dry glazing: A term used to describe various means of sealing monolithic and insulated glass in the supporting framing system with synthetic rubber and other elastomeric gasket materials. Also called**compression glazing**.

dry rot: See **fungal wood rot**.

dry seal: A weather seal between a window's glass and sash by use of strips or gaskets of neoprene, EPDM, silicone or other flexible material. A dry seal may not be completely watertight.

dry sheet: A ply that is mechanically attached to wood or gypsum decks to prevent asphalt or pitch from penetrating the deck and leaking into the building below.

dry-in: To make a building waterproof.

drywall: A gypsum-board material used for interior walls and ceilings.

drywall construction: A type of construction whereby the interior wall finish is applied in a dry condition, generally in the form of sheet materials or wood paneling, as opposed to plaster. The edges should be smooth and the corners rounded off.

drywall hammer: A special hammer with a convex round and checked head used for nailing up gypsum board. Also called an **axe** and a**hatchet**.

drywall nail: Nails used for hanging drywall (to be taped and finished later) that have adequate holding power and a head design that does not cut the face paper. They must also be of the proper depth to provide exactly 1 inch of penetration into the framing member. Nails commonly used are chemically-etched and are designed with a cupped head.

duct: A cylindrical or rectangular tube, usually constructed of sheet metal, used as an exhaust/intake channel to distribute warm air from a furnace or cooled air from an air conditioner, or as cold-air returns. The installation is referred to as ductwork.

ductwork: A system of distribution channels used to transmit heated or cooled air from a central HVAC system throughout a home.

due diligence: A level of care in the inspection process that varies, depending on the scope of work agreed to by the inspector and his/her client.

due-on-sale: A clause in a mortgage contract that requires the borrower to pay the entire outstanding balance upon sale or transfer of the property.

dumbwaiter: An elevator with a maximum footage of not more than 9 square feet, not more than 4 inches of headroom, and a maximum capacity of 500 pounds used for carrying materials only.

DuraBoard®, Durock®: A panel made of concrete and fiberglass and used as a ceramic tile backing material on bathtub decks. Also known as **WonderBoard®**.

durometer: A gauge used to measure the hardness of an elastomeric material.

dwelling unit: Sometimes used interchangeably with **residential unit**, a single unit of a multi-unit housing structure (of more than four individual units) that provides complete, independent living facilities, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

DWV (drain, waste & vent; drain-waste-vent): The pipes in a plumbing system that remove wastewater.

E&O (errors and omissions) insurance: A professional liability insurance that protects companies and individuals against claims made by clients for inadequate work or negligent actions.

earnest money: A sum paid to a seller in good faith to demonstrate that a potential purchaser is serious about buying.

earthquake strap: A metal strap used to secure gas-fired hot water heaters to the framing or foundation of a house, intended to reduce the chances of having the water heater fall over in an earthquake and cause a gas leak.

easement: A formal contract that allows a party to use a limited portion of another party's property for a specific purpose. For example, a sewer easement would allow one party to run his sewer line through a neighbor's property.

easily visible: Describes systems, items and components that are both conspicuous and in plain sight, absent of the need for intrusive inspection techniques, probing, disassembly or the use of special equipment.

eave: The part of a roof that extends beyond the side wall.

eaves flashing: An additional layer of roofing material applied at the eaves to help prevent damage from water backup.

edge clearance: Nominal spacing between the edge of a glass product (such as a window) and the bottom of the glazing pocket or channel.

edge grain (vertical): Edge-grain lumber has been sawed parallel to the pith of the log and approximately at right angles to the growth rings (the rings form an angle of 45 degrees or more with the surface of the piece).

edge metal: A term related to brake or extruded metal around the perimeter of a roof.

edging strips: Boards nailed along eaves and rakes to provide secure edges for re-roofing with asphalt shingles after cutting back the existing wood shingles.

EER (energy-efficiency ratio): A measure of the instantaneous energy efficiency of cooling equipment. EER is the steady-state rate of heat-energy removal (or cooling capacity) by the equipment in BTU/h divided by the steady-state rate of energy input to the equipment in watts. This ratio is expressed in BTU/h per watt (BTU/h/watt). EER is based on tests performed in accordance with AHRI 210/240 (AHRI 2003).

efflorescence: A white powder that forms on the surface of concrete/masonry walls as a result of water evaporation.

egress: To exit or a means of exiting a building.

EIFS (exterior insulating and finish system): An exterior wall cladding system consisting primarily of polystyrene foamboard with a textured acrylic finish that resembles plaster or stucco.

elastomer: An elastic, rubber-like substance, such as natural or synthetic rubber.

elastomeric: Of or pertaining to any of the numerous flexible membranes that contain rubber or plastic.

elbow: An angled fitting that alters the direction of a water line.

electric lateral: The trench or area in a home's yard where the electrical service line from a transformer or pedestal is located, or the work of installing the electrical service to a home.

electric resistance coils: Metal wires that heat up when electrical current passes through them; used in baseboard heaters and electric water heaters.

electrical entrance package: The entry point of the electrical power, including: the strike or location where the overhead electrical lines connect to the house; the meter, which measures how much power is used; and the panel, circuit breaker box or fuse box where the power can be shut off and overload devices, such as fuses or circuit breakers, are located.

electrical rough: The work performed by the electrical contractor after the plumbing and heating contractors have completed their phases of work. Normally, all electrical wires, receptacles/outlets, switches and fixture boxes are installed before the insulation.

electrical trim: The work performed by the electrical contractor when a new-construction house is nearing completion. The electrician installs all plugs, switches, light fixtures, smoke detectors, appliance pigtails, and bathroom ventilation fans, wires the furnace, and makes up the electrical house panel. The electrician does all work necessary to get the home ready to pass the municipal electrical final inspection.

electrolytic coupling: A fitting required to join copper to galvanized pipe, which is gasketed to prevent galvanic action, as connecting pipes of different materials may result in electrolysis.

elevation: A side of a building.

elevation sheet: The page of blueprints that depicts the house or room as if a vertical plane were passed through the structure.

ell (L): See **elbow**.

emergency escape and rescue opening: A window allowing for easy escape in an emergency and having minimum dimensions as defined by code and as

determined by its location in the home, and required in every bedroom and basement of a home. Also called an **emergency egress and rescue opening/window**.

emergency shutoff valve: A valve designed to shut off the flow of gases or liquids.

emissivity: The measure of a surface's ability to emit long-wave infrared radiation; important factor in infrared thermography and energy-saving windows.

EMT (electrical metallic tubing): Electrical pipe, also called thin-wall conduit, that may be used for both concealed and exposed areas. It is the most common type of raceway used in single-family and low-rise residential and commercial buildings.

emulsion: In roofing, a coating consisting of asphalt and fillers suspended in water.

end dam: Internal flashing (or dam) that prevents water from moving laterally within a curtain wall or window wall system.

end lap: The amount or location of overlap at the end of a roll of roofing felts in the application.

energy analysis: A method for estimating the annual energy use of a building.

energy-efficiency ratio: See EER.

energy-recovery ventilation (ERV) system: A system that uses air-to-air heat exchangers to recover energy from exhaust air for the purpose of preheating or precooling outdoor air prior to supplying the air to a living space.

engineering service: Any professional service or creative work requiring engineering education, training and experience, and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical and engineering sciences to relevant professional services or creative work, such as engineering consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design and/or supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with the specifications and design, in conjunction with structures, buildings, machines, equipment, works or processes.

enter: To go into an area.

EPA: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which sets acceptable standards for exposure to radon, mold, disturbed lead-based paint and friable insulation, among other standards and duties.

EPDM (ethylene propylene diene monomer): A single-ply membrane consisting of synthetic rubber, usually in 45 or 60 mils. Application can be ballasted, fully adhered or mechanically attached.

equity: The value of a property less any outstanding mortgage loan.

escrow: The handling of funds or documents by a third party on behalf of the buyer and/or seller.

escutcheon: A trim piece or decorative flange that fits beneath a faucet handle to conceal the faucet stem and the hole in the fixture or wall.

estimate: The anticipated cost of materials, labor and associated costs for a proposed construction, repair or remodeling project.

estimating: The process of calculating the cost of a project. This can be a formal and exact process or a quick and imprecise process.

evaluate: Pertaining to an inspection, to assess the structures, systems and components of a property.

evidence: Plainly visible and conspicuous material objects or other items presented to the senses that would tend to produce conviction in the mind of an ordinary person as to the existence or non-existence of a fact.

examine: To look at and evaluate. Also see **inspect**.

excavate: To dig the basement and/or all areas that will need footings/foundations below ground.

exhaust fan: A fan that extracts air or excess heat from the interior of a home.

existing: Refers to buildings, facilities and/or conditions that are already present/built.

exit discharge: The portion of a means of egress between its termination and a public way.

expansion coefficient: The amount that a specific material will vary in any one dimension with a change of temperature.

expansion joint: A device used to permit a structure to expand or contract without breakage. In residential construction, a bituminous fiber strip is used to separate blocks, units or slabs of concrete to prevent cracking due to expansion as a result of temperature changes.

expansive soils: Earth that swells and contracts depending on the amount of water present.

exposed: Capable of being inadvertently touched by a person because it is not suitably guarded, isolated or insulated.

exposed aggregate (finish): A method of finishing concrete that washes the cement/sand mixture of the top layer of the aggregate (usually gravel). Often used in driveways, patios and other exterior surfaces.

exposed-nail method: Application of roll roofing by which all nails are driven into the cemented, overlapping course of roofing, leaving the nails exposed to weather.

exposure: The portion of roofing exposed to the elements after installation.

Exposure I-grade plywood: Type of plywood approved for exterior use by the American Plywood Association.

exterior property: The open space on a property.

exterior stop: The exterior-side molding or bead that holds a window lite or panel in place.

exterior wall: An outside wall of a building, either above or below grade.

exterior-glazed: Glazing infills set from the exterior of the building.

extermination: The control or elimination of insects, vermin and other pests.

extras: Additional work requested of a contractor that is not included in the original plan and is billed separately. While extras do not alter the original contract amount, they increase the final cost of building the home.

extrusion: An item formed by forcing a base metal (typically, aluminum) or plastic at a malleable temperature through a die to achieve a desired shape.

eyebrow: A flat concrete projection that protrudes horizontally from a building wall, generally located above a window.

façade: The front of a building; in architectural terms, an artificial or decorative effort.

face brick: Brick made especially for exterior use with special consideration for color, texture and size, and used as a facing on a building.

face glazing: A system having a triangular bead of compound applied with a putty knife, after bedding, setting, and clipping the glazing infill in place on a rabetted sash.

faced concrete: The broom-finished front and vertical sides of a concrete porch, step(s) and/or patio.

facing brick: The brick used and exposed on the outside of a wall having a finished texture.

Factory Mutual (FM): Insurance agency that has established stringent guidelines for maximum construction integrity as it relates to fire and environmental hazards. Its specifications have become industry standards.

fall: The proper slope or pitch of a pipe for adequate drainage. Also called **flow**.

fascia: The band running horizontally and positioned vertically under a roof edge, or that which forms the outer surface of a cornice. Fascia board caps the rafter ends of a roof structure and may be used to hold a gutter. The area below the fascia may be referred to as the eave.

fasteners: A general term covering a wide variety of screws and nails, which may be used for mechanically securing various components of a building.

faucet: A device for regulating the flow of a liquid from a reservoir, such as a pipe or drum.

feathering strips: Tapered wood filler strips placed along the butt edges of old wood shingles to create a level surface when re-roofing over existing wood shingle roofs. Also called **horsefeathers**.

Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standard: A reasonable standard for the construction, design and performance of a manufactured home that meets the needs of the public, including the need for quality, durability and safety.

felt: A general term used to describe composition of roofing ply sheets, consisting of a mat of organic or inorganic fibers, either unsaturated, impregnated with asphalt or coal tar pitch, or impregnated and coated with asphalt.

female IPS: Pipe connection where the threads are on the inside of the fitting. See **FIP**.

female threads: See **FIP**.

fenestration: Any glass panel, window, door, curtain wall, or skylight unit on the exterior of a building.

ferrous: Refers to objects completely or partially made of iron, such as ferrous pipe.

ferrule: Metal tubes used to keep roof gutters open. Long nails called ferrule spikes are driven through these tubes and hold the gutters in place along the fascia.

FHA strap: Metal straps that are used to repair a bearing wall cut-out, and to tie together wall corners, splices, and bearing headers. Also used to hang stairs and landings to bearing headers.

fibered aluminum roof coating: High-performance metallic reflective barrier used for prepared roofing, metal surfaces and exterior masonry. It reflects the sun's harmful rays and reduces energy costs in summer and winter, while prolonging the roof surface's service life.

fibered roof and foundation coating: Combined application for a special medium viscosity-grade fibered material and used as a roof and foundation coating.

fibered roof coating: Optimal protection for low-sloped roofs. This thick, high-quality coating seals fine cracks and openings. Renews and rejuvenates old composition roofing and prolongs roof life. Also performs well on metal and concrete surfaces.

fiberglass mat: An asphalt roofing base material manufactured from glass fibers.

field-measure: To take measurements (of cabinets, countertops, stairs, shower doors, etc.) in the home instead of using the blueprints.

fillet bead: Caulking or sealant placed in a manner such that it forms an angle between the materials being caulked.

FindAnInspector.US: Foremost home inspector search engine.

finger joint: A manufacturing process of interlocking two shorter pieces of wood end to end to create a longer piece of dimensional lumber or molding. Often used in jambs and casings, and normally painted instead of stained.

finish: In hardware, metal fastenings on cabinets that are usually exposed, such as hinges and locks.

finish carpentry: The hanging of all interior doors, installation of door molding, base molding, chair rail, built-in shelves, etc.

finish coat: The last coat applied in plastering, intended as a base for further decorating or as a final decorative surface. Finish coat usually consists of calcified gypsum, lime and sometimes an aggregate. Some may require the addition of lime or sand on the job. The three basic methods of applying it are trowel, flat and spray.

finish grade: Any surface that has been cut or built to the elevation indicated for that point. The surface elevation of lawn, driveway, or other improved surfaces after completion of grading operations.

FIP (female iron pipe): Standard threads that are on the inside of a pipe fitting.

fire apparatus access road: A road, fire lane, public street, private street, or parking lot lane that provides access from a fire station to a facility.

fire block: Short horizontal members nailed between studs, usually about halfway up a wall. See also **fire stop**.

fire brick: Brick made of refractory ceramic material for use in fireplaces and boilers that resists high temperatures.

fire code official: The fire chief or other authority charged with the enforcement of the local fire code.

fire department master key: A special key carried by fire department officials that will open key boxes at commercial properties.

fire stop: A solid, tight closure of a concealed space that is placed to prevent the spread of fire and smoke through the space. In a frame wall, this typically consists of 2x4 cross-blocking between studs.

fire-rated: Descriptive of materials that have been tested for use in firewalls.

fire-resistance rating: A rating based on the period of time that materials and assemblies can withstand fire exposure.

fire-resistive: In the absence of a specific ruling by the authority having jurisdiction, applies to materials for construction that are not combustible in temperatures of ordinary fires and will withstand such fires without serious impairment of their usefulness for at least one hour.

fire-retardant chemical: A chemical or preparation of chemicals used to reduce flammability or retard the spread of flame.

fireplace chase flashing pan: A large sheet of metal that is installed around and perpendicular to the fireplace flue pipe that is used to confine and limit the spread of fire and smoke to a small area.

fireplace lintel: A horizontal, noncombustible member that spans the top of the fireplace opening.

firewall: Any wall built for the purpose of restricting or preventing the spread of fire in a building. Such walls of solid masonry or concrete generally subdivide a building from the foundations to 2 feet or more above the plane of the roof.

fish tape: Material used to advance wire through a conduit. Also called **fish wire**.

fishplate: A wood or plywood piece used to fasten the ends of two members together at a butt joint with nails or bolts. Sometimes used at the junction of opposite rafters near the ridge line. Also called a**gang-nail plate** and a **gusset**.

fitting: A general term that usually refers to a faucet, shower valve, tub filler, and various piping parts, such as tees and elbows.

fixed-price contract: A contract with a set price for the work. See**time and materials contract**.

fixture: In plumbing, a device that provides a supply of water and/or its disposal, such as a sink, tub and toilet.

flagstone (flagging, flags): Flat stones from 1 to 4 inches thick used for rustic walks, steps, floors, etc.

flake: (1) A small, scale-like particle. (2) To lose bond from a surface in small thin pieces, such as paint film that flakes.

flakeboard: A manufactured wood panel made of 1- to 2-inch wood chips and glue and used as a substitute for plywood in the exterior wall and roof sheathing. Also called **chipboard**, **OSB (oriented strand board)** and **waferboard**.

flame-retention burner: An oil burner designed to hold the flame near the nozzle surface. Generally, the most efficient type for residential use.

flapper valve: In plumbing, a valve that replaces a tank stopper in a toilet that creates a seal between the tank and the bowl.

flash point (flashpoint): The critical temperature at which a material ignites.

flashing: A material (typically, metal) that is shaped or molded for the location and used at an angle in a roof or wall to prevent rainwater/moisture leakage into the structure.

flat glass: A general term that describes float glass, sheet glass, plate glass, and rolled glass.

flat grain: Lumber that has been sawed parallel to the pith of the log and approximately tangent to the growth rings, i.e., the rings form an angle of less than 45 degrees with the surface of the piece.

flat mold: Thin wood strips installed over the butt seam of cabinet skins.

flat paint: An interior paint that contains a high proportion of pigment and dries to a flat or lusterless finish.

flat seam: The seam at the junction of sheet metal roof components that has been bent at the plane of the roof.

flatwork: Common term describing concrete floors, driveways, basements and sidewalks.

fleet averaging: By using a point system, builders can show compliance with energy building requirements by using average figures for all air-conditioning units in the same subdivision.

flex hose: A flexible pipe or tube made of braided stainless steel and commonly used with widespread or Roman tub faucets to provide variable centers.

flexible metal conduit: Conduit similar to armored cable in appearance but without the pre-inserted conductors.

float glass: Glass formed on a bath of molten tin. The surface in contact with the tin is known as the tin surface or tin side. The top surface is known as the atmosphere surface or air side.

floating: The next-to-last stage in concrete work, when it is smoothed and water is brought to the surface by using a hand float or bull float.

floating wall: A non-bearing wall built on a concrete floor constructed so that the bottom two horizontal plates can compress or pull apart if the concrete floor moves up or down, and normally built on basements and garage slabs.

flood-level rim: The edge of a fixture from which water overflows.

floor area, gross: The floor area within the inside perimeter of the exterior walls.

floor area, net: The actual occupied area not including accessory areas, such as corridors, stairways, restrooms, mechanical rooms and closets.

floor plan: The basic layout of building or addition, which includes the placement of walls, windows and doors, as well as dimensions.

floor plate: See **floor plan**.

flow rate: The rate at which water is discharged from an outlet. For example, the standard flow rate of a showerhead is 2.5 gallons per minute.

flue: A pipe used to exhaust smoke, gas or air.

flue collar: A round metal ring that fits around the heat flue pipe after the pipe passes out through the roof.

flue damper: An automatic door located in the flue that closes it off when the burner turns off; its purpose is to reduce heat loss up the flue from the still-warm furnace or boiler.

flue lining: A round or square fire clay or terracotta pipe, usually made in all ordinary flue sizes and in 2-foot lengths, and used as the inner lining of a chimney, with the brick or masonry work around the outside. The flue lining in a chimney runs from about 1 foot below the flue connection to the top of the chimney.

fluorescent lighting: A fluorescent lamp is a gas-filled glass tube with a phosphor coating on the inside, normally with two pins that extend from each end. Gas inside the tube is ionized by electricity, which causes the phosphor coating to glow.

flush glazing: The setting of a lite of glass or panel into a four-sided sash or frame opening containing a recessed U-shaped channel, without removable stops on three sides of the sash or frame, and having one channel with a removable stop along the fourth side. Also called **pocket glazing**.

flush valve: The valve separating the water in the toilet tank from the bowl.

flux: A material applied to the surface of copper pipes and fittings to assist in the cleaning and bonding process.

fly rafters: End rafters of a gable overhang that is supported by roof sheathing and lookouts.

folded seam: In sheet metal work, a joint created between the sheets of metal when the edges are crimped together and folded flat.

footing: The underground support for a foundation or support post.

footings: Wide pours of cement reinforced with rebar (reinforcing bar) that support foundation walls, pillars and posts. Footings are part of the foundation and are typically poured before the foundation walls.

footprint: See **floor plan**.

forced-air heating: A common form of heating using natural gas, propane, oil or electricity as the fuel. Air is heated in the furnace and distributed through a set of metal plastic ducts to various areas of the house.

form: A temporary structure erected to contain concrete during placing and initial hardening.

foundation: The supporting portion of a structure below the first floor construction, below grade or partially below grade, including the footings, upon which the structure or wall rests, and usually made of masonry, concrete and/or stone, but can be made of alternative building materials.

foundation coating: High-quality, below-grade moisture protection used for below-grade exterior concrete and masonry wall damp-proofing to seal out moisture and prevent corrosion.

frame inspection: An inspection of the home's structural integrity and its compliance with local municipal codes.

framer: The carpenter contractor who installs the lumber and erects the frame, flooring system, interior walls, backing, trusses, rafters and decking, and installs

all beams, stairs, soffits and other work related to the wood structure of the home. The framer builds the home according to the blueprints and must comply with local building codes and regulations.

framing: The structural wood and/or metal elements of most homes. The floor and ceiling framing is called the joist work. Wall framing is usually made of 2x4 or 2x6 studs. See rafters, posts and beams.

free-tab shingles: Shingles that do not contain factory-applied strips or spots of self-sealing adhesive. See also **self-sealing shingles**.

frieze: In house construction, a horizontal member connecting the top of the siding with the soffit of the cornice.

frost line: The depth of frost penetration in local soil. Footings should be placed below this depth to prevent movement.

frost-protected shallow foundation (FPSF) system: Offers a design option that allows for shallower footing depths by raising the frost depth around the building through the use of insulation.

fully-adhered: A completely attached (adhered) roof membrane.

fully-tempered glass: Flat or bent glass that has been heat-treated to a high surface and/or edge compression to meet the requirements of ASTM-C-1048 type FT. Fully tempered glass, if broken, will fracture into many small pieces (dice), which are more or less cubical. Fully tempered glass is approximately four times stronger than annealed glass of the same thickness when exposed to uniform static pressure loads.

function: The action for which an item, component or system is specially fitted or used, or for which an item, component or system exists; to be in action or performing a task.

functional: Performing or able to perform a function.

functional drainage: The emptying of a plumbing fixture in a reasonable amount of time without overflow when another fixture is drained simultaneously.

functional flow: A reasonable flow of water supply at the highest and farthest fixture from the main when another fixture is operated simultaneously.

fungal wood rot: A common wood-destroying organism that develops when a wood-containing material is exposed to moisture and poor air circulation for six months or more. Often and incorrectly referred to as dry rot.

fungi: Microscopic organisms that live in damp wood (among other places) and cause mold growth, staining and decay.

fungicide: A chemical that is poisonous to fungi.

furnace: A heating system that uses the principle of thermal convection. When air is heated, it rises, and as the air cools, it settles. Ducts are installed to carry the hot air from the top of the furnace to the rooms in a home. Other ducts, called cold-air returns, return the cooler air back to the furnace.

furring: Strips of wood or metal applied to a wall or other surface to provide a level fastening base for finish material.

further evaluation: A degree of examination beyond that of a typical and customary non-intrusive, visual examination.

fusible link: A form of fixed-temperature, heat-detecting device sometimes used to restrain the operation of an electrical or mechanical control until a certain temperature is reached, usually signifying a fire; a component of a fire door.

FVIR (flammable vapor-ignition resistance): (1) A device designed to prevent ignited vapors from passing out of the combustion chamber. (2) A one-way intake system used to control the movement of make-up air into the combustion chamber. (3) An inner door and burner assembly used to create a sealed junction with the combustion chamber, preventing combustion air and flammable vapors from entering the chamber through the front of a water heater.

gable: The end of a building, as distinguished from the front or rear. The triangular end of an exterior wall from the level of the eaves to the ridge of a double-sloped roof. In house construction, the portion of the roof above the eave line of a double-sloped roof.

gable end: An end wall having a gable.

gable roof: A type of roof with sloping planes of the same pitch on each side of the ridge; having a gable at each end.

galvanize: To coat a metal with zinc by dipping it in molten zinc after cleaning.

gambrel roof: A type of roof whose slope is broken by an obtuse angle so that the lower slope is steeper than the upper slope; a double-sloped roof having two pitches.

gang-nail plate: A steel plate attached to both sides at each joint of a truss. Also called a **fishplate** and a **gusset**.

garbage: The animal and/or vegetable waste resulting from the preparation and/or consumption of food.

gas lateral: The trench or area in the yard where the gas line service is located, or the work of installing the gas service to a home.

gaskets: Pre-formed shapes, such as strips, grommets, etc., of rubber or rubber-like composition used to fill and seal a joint or opening either alone or in conjunction with a supplemental application of a sealant.

gate valve: A valve that allows the complete stopping of flow of liquid within a pipe without the ability to modulate the flow.

gauge: The thickness of sheet metal, wire, etc.

gauge board: Board used to carry grout needed to patch small jobs. Also called a **spot board**.

general contractor: A contractor responsible for all facets of construction of a building or renovation project. Also called a **prime contractor**.

general home inspection: A non-invasive, visual examination of the accessible areas of a residential property, performed for a fee, which is designed to identify defects within specific systems and components (as delineated by applicable standards) that are both observed and deemed material by the inspector. The scope of work for such inspection may be modified by the client and inspector prior to the inspection process to exclude certain items normally inspected and/or to expand the inspection to include items not normally inspected. Also called a **home inspection** and a **standard home inspection**.

general home inspection report: Identifies, in written/electronic format, defects within specific systems and components (as delineated by applicable standards) that are both observed and deemed material by the inspector. Such inspection reports may include photos, and additional comments and recommendations.

GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter; GFI): A special device that is intended for the protection of personnel by de-energizing a circuit, capable of opening the circuit when even a small amount of current is flowing through the grounding system.

GFRC (glass fiber-reinforced concrete): A thin, cementitious material that is laminated to plywood or other lightweight backing for use in wall systems that resembles concrete but generally does not perform as well.

girder: A main horizontal beam made of steel, reinforced steel or wood upon which floor joists rest and used to support other structural members or concentrated loads at isolated points along its length.

glass: A hard, brittle and typically transparent substance made by fusing silicates under high temperatures with soda, lime, etc., and used as panes in windows, lites in French doors and transoms, skylights, etc.

Glass-Base®: A roll-roofing product built on a fiberglass base sheet, constructed with a heavyweight TAMKO® fiberglass mat and coated with weathering-grade asphalt. Used as a base sheet in select TAMKO®-modified asphalt and fiberglass roofing systems and as an alternative to TAMKO® Type 43 Coated Base Sheet in any TAMKO® specification. Generically, hot asphalt applied or mechanically fastened.

Glass-Seal®: A three-tab, self-sealing TAMKO® fiberglass shingle roofing product with a traditional square-tab design. A thick layer of weathering-grade asphalt gives it extra waterproofing protection. These shingles are UL Class A fire-rated and backed by a 20-year limited warranty. Algae-resistant granules are optional.

glaze coat: In roofing, a light, uniform mopping of bitumen on exposed felts to protect them from the weather, pending completion of the job.

glazing: (1) A generic term used to describe an infill material, such as glass, panels, etc. (2) The process of installing an infill material into a prepared opening in windows, door panels, partitions, etc.

glazing bead: A strip surrounding the edge of the glass in a window or door that holds the glass in place.

glazing channel: A three-sided, U-shaped sash detail into which a glass product is installed and held in place.

globe valve: A valve in a pipe that allows the adjustment of the flow of liquid to any rate between fully on and fully off.

gloss: A paint or enamel that contains a relatively low proportion of pigment and dries to a sheen or luster.

gloss enamel: A finishing material made of varnish and pigments sufficient to provide opacity and color, but little or no pigment of low opacity. Such an enamel forms a hard coating with maximum smoothness of surface and a high degree of gloss.

glue-laminated beam: A structural beam composed of wood laminations (or lams) that are pressure-bonded with adhesives to attain a typical thickness of 1-1/2 inches, and looks like five or more 2x4s glued together. Also called **glue-laminated lumber**, **Boise GLULAM®**, and (generically) **glulam**.

GPF (gallons per flush): The unit of measurement by which the flow rate of toilets is measured and regulated. Current U.S. regulations permit a maximum of 1.6 GPF.

GPM (gallons per minute): The unit of measurement by which the flow rate of faucets and showerheads is measured and regulated.

grade: (1) An accepted level or standard, or a position in a scale of size, quality, etc., such as a grade of lumber. (2) The degree of inclination of a slope, road, or other surface. (3) The level at which the ground surface meets the foundation of a building.

grade beam: A foundation wall that is poured level with or just below the grade of the earth. An example is the area where an 8- or 16-foot overhead garage door block-out is located, or where a lower walk-out basement foundation wall is poured.

Grade MW: Moderate-weather grade of brick used for moderate resistance to freezing, such as that used for outdoor planters, etc.

Grade NW: No-weather grade of brick intended for use as a back-up or for interior masonry.

Grade SW: Severe-weather grade of brick intended for use where high resistance to freezing is desired.

graduated payment mortgage (GPM): A fixed-rate, fixed-schedule loan. It starts with lower payments than a level payment loan; payments rise annually, with the entire increase being used to reduce the outstanding balance. The increase in payments may enable the borrower to pay off a 30-year loan in 20 years or less.

grain: The direction, size, arrangement, appearance or quality of the fibers in wood.

granules: Mineral particles of a graded size that are embedded in the asphalt coating of shingles and roofing.

gravel: Loose fragments of rock in sizes varying from 1/8-inch to 1-3/4 inches used for surfacing built-up roofs.

grease: Animal fat, vegetable shortening and/or oil used in preparing food or resulting from cooking.

grid: The completed assembly of main and cross tees in a suspended ceiling system before the ceiling panels are installed. Also, the decorative slats or muntins installed between glass panels.

ground: Refers to electricity's habit of seeking the shortest route to earth. Neutral wires carry it there in all circuits. An additional grounding wire or the sheathing of a metal-clad cable or conduit protects against shock if the neutral leg is interrupted.

ground iron: The plumbing drain and waste lines that are installed beneath the basement floor. Cast iron is used in older homes and buildings, and black plastic pipe (ABS) is now widely used in new construction.

ground system: The connection of current-carrying neutral wire to the grounding terminal in the main switch which in turn is connected to a water pipe. The neutral wire is called the ground wire.

ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI; GFI): A special device that is intended for the protection of personnel by de-energizing a circuit, capable of opening the circuit when even a small amount of current is flowing through the grounding system.

grounded: Connected to earth or to some conducting body that serves in place of the earth.

grounded, effectively: Intentionally connected to earth through a ground connection or connections of sufficiently low impedance, and having sufficient current-carrying capacity to prevent the buildup of voltages that might otherwise result in undue hazards to connected equipment or personnel.

grounding electrode: A device that establishes an electrical connection to earth.

grounding rod: A conductive rod used to ground an electrical panel.

grounds: Guides consisting of narrow strips of wood or of wide sub-jambs at interior doorways used around openings and at the floor line to strike off plaster. They provide a level plaster line for installation of casing and other trim.

groundwater: Water from an aquifer or sub-surface water source.

grout, grouting: A hydrous, cement mortar whose consistency allows it to be placed or pumped into small joints and cavities between pieces of ceramic clay, slate, tile, etc., and various mortar mixes used in masonry work to fill them in order to make them solid, as well as in foundation work to fill voids in soils, usually injected through drilled holes.

gun consistency: Sealant formulated in a degree of viscosity suitable for application through the nozzle of a caulking gun.

gunnite: A construction material composed of cement, sand and/or crushed slag and water mixed together and forced through a cement gun by pneumatic pressure, used in the construction of swimming pools.

gusset: A flat wood, plywood or similar type of member that is fastened by nails, screws, bolts or adhesive to provide a connection at the intersection of wood members, commonly at the joints of wood trusses. Also called a **gang-nail plate** and a **fishplate**.

gutter: A trough made of metal, wood or other material installed at the eaves of a roof that is used to carry rainwater from the roof to the downspout.

gutter strap: A metal band used to support the gutter.

guy wire: A strong steel wire or cable strung from an anchor on the roof to any tall, slender projection for the purpose of support.

gypsum board: Drywall or wallboard used at the interior.

gypsum Keene's cement: Material used to obtain a smooth finish coat of plaster, for use over gypsum plastic base coats only in areas not subject to moisture. It is the hardest type of plaster.

gypsum plaster: Gypsum formulated with the addition of sand and water for use as a base coat plaster.

H-clip: A small metal clip in the shape of the letter H that fits at the joint of two plywood or waferboard sheets used to stiffen the joint at roof sheeting.

habitable space: The space in a structure used for living, sleeping, eating and cooking. Bathrooms, closets, hallways, storage areas and utility rooms are not considered habitable spaces.

hardware: Metal accessories, such as hinges, door knobs, drawer pulls, towel bars, toilet paper holders, etc.

hatch: An opening in a deck, floor or roof whose purpose is to provide access from inside the home or building.

haunch: A knee-like protrusion or extension of a foundation wall upon which a concrete porch or patio rests for support.

hawk: A flat wood or metal tool that is 10 inches to 14 inches square and having a handle that is used by workers to carry plaster, mortar or mud. Also called a **mortarboard**.

hazard insurance: Insurance for a building used to cover losses while it is under construction.

header: The framing members over windows, doors and other openings. A beam placed perpendicular to joists and to which joists are nailed in framing for a chimney, stairway, or other opening. Also called a **wood lintel**.

hearth: The inner and outer floor of a fireplace, usually made of brick, tile or stone.

hearth extension: The non-combustible material in front of and at the sides of a fireplace opening.

heartwood: The wood extending from the pith to the sapwood, the cells of which no longer participate in the life processes of the tree.

heat meter: A device that measures the temperature at a domestic heat panel and used for estimating the heat energy being consumed by more than two

households served by the same central heater. Also called a **heat-allocation meter**.

heat pump: A device that uses compression and decompression of gas to heat and/or cool a house.

heat rough: The work performed by the heating or HVAC contractor after the stairs and interior walls are built, and includes installing all ductwork and flue pipes. The furnace and fireplace are sometimes installed at this stage of construction.

heat trim: The work performed by the heating or HVAC contractor to prepare a new-construction home for the final municipal heat inspection. This work includes venting the hot water heater and range, and installing all vent grilles, registers, thermostats, vent hoods, air-conditioning services, turning on the furnace, and all other heat-related work.

heat-strengthened glass: Flat or bent glass that has been heat-treated to a specific surface and/or edge-compression range to meet the requirements of ASTM C 1048, Type HS. Heat-strengthened glass is approximately two times as strong as annealed glass of the same thickness when exposed to uniform static pressure loads. Heat-strengthened glass is not considered safety glass and will not completely dice in the manner that fully tempered glass will.

heated slab: Slab-on-grade construction in which the heating elements are placed within or under the slab.

heating load: The amount of heating required to keep a home or building at a specified temperature during the winter (usually, 65° F), regardless of the outside temperature.

heating seasonal-performance factor (HSPF): A measure of a heat pump's energy efficiency over one heating season, representing the total heating output of a heat pump (including supplementary electric heat) during the normal heating season (in BTUs), as compared to the total electricity consumed (in watt-hours) during the same period. HSPF is based on tests performed in accordance with AHRI 210/240 (AHRI 2003).

heel bead: Sealant applied at the base of a channel after setting a glass lite or panel and before installing the removable stop in order to prevent air leakage and moisture intrusion past the stop.

heel cut: A notch cut into the end of a rafter that permits it to fit flat on a wall and on the top doubled exterior wall plate.

hermetic seal: A vacuum seal between the panes of a double-paned window or insulated glass unit (IGU). A hermetic seal that fails causes permanent fogging between the panels of the IGU.

high-early cement: A Portland cement sold as Type III that sets up to its full strength faster than other types. Also called **high early-strength cement**.

highlight: A light spot, streak or area on a painted surface.

hinge: A jointed or flexible component that allows the turning or pivoting of a part, such as a door or lid, on a stationary frame.

hip: The external angle formed by the meeting of two sloping sides of a roof.

hip rafter: A rafter that forms the intersection of an external angle at a roof.

hip roof: A roof that rises by inclined planes from all four sides of the building.

hip shingles: Shingles used to cover the inclined external angle formed by the intersection of two sloping roof planes.

hoistway: A shaft used for the travel of one or more elevators.

home inspection: See **general home inspection**.

home run (electrical): The electrical cable that carries power from the main circuit breaker panel or panelboard to the first electrical box, plug or switch in the circuit.

honeycomb: Areas in a foundation wall where the aggregate (gravel) is visible. Honeycombs can usually be remedied by applying a thin layer of grout or other cement product over the affected area. Also, a method by which concrete is poured and not puddled or vibrated, allowing the edges to have voids or holes after the forms are removed.

hood: A device installed over a range or cooktop that directs and captures grease-laden vapors and gases into an exhaust system, which then are vented to the exterior.

horizontal: Parallel to or in the plane of the horizon.

hose bibb (hose bib): An outdoor faucet with hose threads on its spout for the attachment of a garden hose, lawn sprinkler device, etc. Also installed at the interior for the attachment of a washing machine, wash basin, utility sink, etc.

hot wire: The typically black wire that carries electrical energy to a receptacle or other deviceóin contrast to a neutral, which carries electricity away again.

household appliances: Portable or semi-portable appliances, such as refrigerators, microwave ovens, portable dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, window air-conditioners, and similar items.

hub: In plumbing, the enlarged end of a pipe that is made to provide a connection into which the end of a joining pipe will fit.

humidifier: A device designed to increase the humidity within a room or a house by means of the discharge of water vapor. It may consist of an individual room-size unit or a larger unit connected to the heating plant to condition the entire house.

humidistat: A device used to automatically control relative humidity indoors.

hurricane clips: Metal straps that are nailed to secure the roof rafters and trusses to the top horizontal wall plate in structures that are subject to hurricane winds. Sometimes called **TECO clips** based on the U.K. brand TECO.

hurricane ties: Metal fasteners that are used to secure rafters in structures that are subject to hurricane winds.

HVAC: Acronym for **heating, ventilation and air conditioning**; refers to the system, work, and type of contractor.

hydro-electric elevator: An elevator where liquid is pumped under pressure directly into a cylinder by a pump driven by an electric motor without an accumulator between the pump and cylinder.

I-beam: A steel beam with a cross-section resembling the letter I, it is used in residential construction for long spans, such as a basement beam, and when wall and roof loads are imposed on an opening, such as over wide wall openings and double garage doors.

I-joist: A manufactured structural building component resembling the letter I, it is used as a floor joist and rafter. I-joists include two key parts: flanges and webs. The flange of the I joist may be made of laminated veneer lumber or dimensional

lumber, usually formed into a width of 1-1/2 inches. The web or center of the I-joist is commonly made of plywood or oriented strand board (OSB). Large holes can be cut in the web to accommodate ductwork and plumbing waste lines. I-joists are available in lengths of up to 60 feet long.

IAC2: The International Association of Certified Indoor Air Consultants.

IAQ: Acronym for **indoor air quality**.

ID (inside diameter): The diameter measurement taken from the inside of a pipe, and a common method for sizing pipe.

identify: To notice or observe and report upon.

IIC: In the United States, a system of criteria recommended by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) for rating the effectiveness of impact sound isolation.

immediate cost: Estimated cost of remedying an existing safety hazard or repairing a system or component that will likely fail within a year.

imminent danger: A condition that could cause serious or life-threatening injury or death.

incandescent lamp: A lamp employing an electrically-charged metal filament that glows at white heat; a typical light bulb.

incompatibility: Descriptive of two or more materials that are not suitable for use together.

indemnification clause: A provision in a contract in which one party agrees to be financially responsible for specified types of damages, claims and/or losses.

index: The interest rate or adjustment standard that determines the changes in monthly payments for an adjustable-rate loan.

infestation: The presence of insects, vermin or other pests.

infill: The area of a railing system bounded by the railing posts, cap, rail and deck or floor surface. For safety reasons, typical infill spacing (U.S.) should prevent the passage of a 4-inch sphere.

infiltration: The process by which air leaks into a building. To find the infiltration heating load factor (HLF), the formula to account for the extra BTUs needed to

heat the infiltrated air is BTU/HR = building volume x air changes x BTU/cu.ft./hr. x TD (temperature difference).

inlet: An opening that provides a means of entrance or intake.

INR (impact noise rating): A single-figure rating that provides an estimate of the impact sound-insulating performance of a floor-ceiling assembly.

inside corner: The point at which two walls form an internal angle, as in the corner of a room.

inside drain: In roofing, a drain positioned on a roof at some location other than the perimeter. It drains surface water inside the building through closed pipes to a drainage system.

inspect: To examine readily accessible areas, systems and components safely, using normal operating controls, according to applicable standards of practice.

inspected property: The readily accessible areas of the structure(s), site, items, components and systems included in an inspection.

inspection: The process by which an inspector collects information through visual observation during a walk-through survey of a subject property and then generates a meaningful report about the condition of the property based on his/her observations made on the date of the inspection. A general home inspection is a non-invasive, visual examination of the accessible areas of a residential property, as delineated by InterNACHI's Residential Standards of Practice, performed for a fee, which is designed to identify defects within specific systems and components defined by the Standards that are both observed and deemed material by the inspector. The scope of work may be modified by the client and inspector prior to the inspection process. A commercial inspection is defined as the process of an inspector collecting information through visual observation during a walk-through survey of the subject property, conducting research about the property, and then generating a meaningful report of his/her findings about the condition of the property based on his/her observations and research.

inspection report: A written report that identifies defects within specific systems and components, as defined by InterNACHI's Residential Standards of Practice, that are both observed and deemed material by the inspector. Inspection reports may include additional comments and recommendations. A commercial inspection report is defined as a written communication describing the issues

discovered from observations made and research conducted by the inspector that are, in the inspector's opinion, likely to be of interest to his/her client. Such report may contain photos of observations made during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection and/or copies of documents reviewed during the research portion of the inspection.

inspector: One who performs a property inspection.

installed: Attached or connected such that the installed item requires a tool for removal.

insulating glass: Window or door in which two panes or lites of glass are used with a sealed air space between; also known as double glass.

insulating glass unit (IGU): Two or more lites of glass spaced apart with an air space between them and hermetically sealed to form a single glazed unit.

insulation: Generally, any material that slows down or retards the flow or transfer of heat. Building insulation types are classified according to form as loose-fill, flexible, rigid, reflective, and foamed-in-place. All types are rated according to their ability to resist heat flow, known as R-value. In electrical contracting, rubber, thermoplastic, or asbestos wire covering. The thickness of insulation varies with wire size and type of material, application or other code limitations.

insulation board: A rigid structural building board made of coarse wood or cane fiber in 1/2-inch and 25/32-inch thickness. It can be obtained in various sizes of sheets, in various densities, and with several treatments.

insulation fasteners: Any of several specialized mechanical fasteners designed to hold insulation down to a steel or a nailable deck.

interest: The cost paid to a lender for borrowed money.

interior finish: Material used to cover the interior framed areas, or materials of walls and ceilings.

interior glazed: Glazing infills set from the interior of the building.

interlayer: In glazing, any material used to bond two lites of glass and/or plastic together to form a laminate.

interlocking shingles: Individual shingles that mechanically fasten to each other to provide wind resistance.

InterNACHI: The International Association of Certified Home Inspectors, the world's largest residential and commercial property inspectors' association, providing certification, training, benefits and support.

International Association of Certified Home Inspectors (InterNACHI): The world's largest residential and commercial property inspectors' association, providing certification, training, benefits and support.

International Energy Conservation Code (IECC): The IECC 2012 was published in June 2011.

interply: Between two layers of roofing felts that have been laminated together.

interview: To conduct research by talking to personnel who have information and knowledge about a subject property, typically performed as part of a commercial (as opposed to residential) property inspection.

intrusive: Destructive.

IPS (iron pipe size): A pipe thread sizing system; also, a measurement of the outside diameter of a pipe.

IRMA (insulated/inverted roof membrane assembly): A roof system whose membrane is laid directly on the roof deck, covered with extruded foam insulation, and ballasted with stone at a minimum of 1,000 pounds per square.

irrigation: A lawn sprinkler system.

J-channel: Metal edging used on drywall to give the edge a better finished appearance when the wall is not wrapped. Generally, basement stairway walls have drywall only on the stair side. J-channel is used on the vertical edge of the last drywall sheet.

jack post: A type of metal structural support used as a replacement for an old/defective supporting member that can be raised or lowered through a series of pins and a screw to meet the height required. See also **monopost**.

jack rafter: A rafter that spans the distance from the wall plate to a hip, or from a valley to a ridge.

jalousie window: A type of window consisting of parallel glass, acrylic, or wooden louvers set in a frame, which are locked together onto a track and controlled by a crank mechanism so that they may be tilted open and shut in

unison to control air flow through the window. Jalousie windows are popular in hot-humid climates.

jamb: The side and head lining of a doorway, window or other opening.

joint: The space between the adjacent surfaces of two members or components joined and held together by nails, glue, cement, mortar, or other means.

joint cement: A powder that is usually mixed with water and used for joint treatment in gypsum-wallboard finish. Also called **spackle**.

joint compound: In plumbing, a material applied to threaded connections to help prevent leaks in plumbing. In carpentry, a wet gypsum material applied to sheetrock joints.

joint tenancy: A form of property ownership in which multiple tenants own a property equally. If one dies, the survivor(s) automatically inherits the property in whole.

joint trench: A trench that is shared by the electric company and telephone company; one trench dug that the electric and phone utilities drop both of their service lines in.

joist hanger: A metal U-shaped item used to support the end of a floor joist and attached with hardened nails to another bearing joist or beam.

jumpers: Water pipe installed in a water meter pit (before the water meter is installed), or electrical wire that is installed in the electrical house panel meter socket before the meter is installed. This installation may be illegal.

Keene's cement: A white finish plaster that produces an extremely durable wall. Because of its density, it excels for use in bathrooms and kitchens, and is also used extensively for the finish coat in auditoriums, public buildings, and other places where walls may be subjected to unusually hard wear or abuse.

keeper: The metal latch plate in a door frame into which a doorknob plunger latches.

Kelvin (kelvin): A unit of measurement on an absolute thermodynamic temperature scale having the same magnitude as the Celsius degree.

key box: A lockable device that permits the fire department to access a building in an emergency. Other types of key boxes may be used at commercial properties to store multiple keys for locked areas.

keyless: A plastic or porcelain light fixture that operates by a pull string, typically found in a basement, crawlspace and attic.

keyway: A slot formed and poured on a footer or in a foundation wall when another wall will be installed at the slot location, giving additional strength to the joint/meeting point.

kick hole: A defect frequently found in perimeter flashings caused by being stepped on or kicked; a small fracture of the base flashing in the area of the cant.

kickout flashing: Also known as diverter flashing, kickout flashing is a special type of flashing that diverts rainwater away from the cladding and into the gutter. If missing, it often results in concentrated areas of water accumulation and potentially severe damage to exterior walls.

kiln-dried lumber: Lumber that has been kiln-dried to a moisture content of 6 to 12%. Common varieties of softwood lumber, such as framing lumber, are dried to a slightly higher moisture content.

kilowatt (kw, KW): One kilowatt is equal to 1,000 watts. A kilowatt hour is the base unit used in measuring electrical consumption.

king stud: The vertical 2x4 frame lumber (left and right) of a window or door opening running continuously from the bottom sole plate to the top plate.

knife consistency: Compound formulated to a degree of firmness suitable for application with a putty knife, such as that used for face glazing and other sealant applications.

knot: In lumber, the portion of a branch or limb of a tree that appears on the edge or face of the piece.

kraft paper: A low-cost, heavy, water-resistant paper of high tensile strength used for wrapping particleboard and other building materials.

Kynar coating: A resin-based architectural coating that is UV-stable and suitable for exterior use on aluminum and other metal surfaces.

labeled: Devices, equipment and materials to which have been affixed a label, seal, symbol or other identifying mark of product evaluation.

labor hour: A standard in which one person's labor is performed in one hour.

ladder: A portable or fixed (permanently attached) structure consisting of two long sides crossed by parallel rungs and used to climb up and down.

laminate: A laminated product, such as plywood.

laminated glass: Two or more lites of glass permanently bonded together with one or more inter-layers.

laminated shingles: Shingles that have added dimensionality because of extra layers or tabs, giving them a shake-like appearance. Also called **architectural shingles** and **three-dimensional shingles**.

laminating: Bonding together two or more layers of materials.

landing: A platform between flights of stairs or at the termination of a flight of stairs.

lap: To extend one material partially over another; also, the distance so extended.

lap cement: An asphalt-based cement used to adhere overlapping plies of roll roofing.

lateral: The underground trench and related services or utilities (electric, gas, telephone, sewer and water lines) that are buried within the trench.

lath: A building material of wood, metal, gypsum or insulating board that is fastened to the frame of a building that acts as a plaster base.

lath and plaster: The most common wall finish prior to the introduction of drywall. Thin wood strips (lath) were nailed onto the framing as a base for the sand/lime plaster.

lattice: A framework of crossed wooden or metal strips.

lavatory: Bathroom or washroom sink.

leach field: A septic drainfield; a method by which sewage is permitted to be filtered and discharged into the ground near a home, typical in rural areas not accessible to a municipal sewer system.

lead: A malleable metal once extensively used for flashings.

lead-based paint: Lead is a highly toxic heavy metal that was used in exterior and interior household paint before it was outlawed in the U.S. in 1978. Exposure or ingestion to disturbed lead-based paint can cause a range of short- and long-term health problems, from behavioral issues and learning disabilities, to seizures and death. Children under 7 are at greatest risk.

leader: Downspout.

lean-to roof: The sloping roof of a building addition having its rafters or supports pitched against and supported by the adjoining wall of a building.

ledger: Dimensional lumber attached to a building framing and used for supporting the section of a deck adjacent to the building.

ledger strip: A strip of lumber nailed along the bottom of the side of a girder on which joists rest.

let-in brace: Nominal 1 inch-thick boards applied diagonally into notched studs.

level: (1) Term used to describe any horizontal surface whereby all sides are at the same elevation. (2) A carpenter's level is a tool used to check for level.

level-payment mortgage: A mortgage with identical monthly payments over the life of the loan.

leveling rod: A rod with graduated marks for measuring heights or vertical distances between given points and the line of sight of a leveling instrument. It is longer than a yardstick and held by a surveyor in a vertical position to mark elevations.

lien: An encumbrance secured by real or personal property for repayment of a debt or discharge of an obligation.

life expectancy: Average service life or functional period in years, assuming regular maintenance.

light: (1) A source of light, especially a lamp, lantern, or an electric lighting fixture, either permanently installed or portable; the illumination emitted by a source of light. (2) The space in a window sash for a single pane of glass; a pane of window glass (variation of**lite**).

limit switch: A safety control that automatically shuts off a furnace if it gets too hot; must also control blower cycles.

linear foot: A unit of measure for lumber equal to 1 inch thick by 12 inches wide by 12 inches long. Examples: 1 inch x 12 inches x 16 feet = 16 board feet; 2 inches x 12 inches x 16 feet = 32 board feet.

lintel: A horizontal structural member that supports the load over an opening, such as a door or window.

liquid-applied membrane: Generally applied to cast-in-place concrete surfaces in one or more coats to provide fully-adhered, waterproof membranes that conform to all contours.

liquidated damages: A monetary amount agreed upon by two parties to a contract prior to performance under the contract that specifies the amount either party owes the other if that party defaults.

listed: Equipment, materials or services included in a list published by an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with the evaluation of products or services that maintains periodic inspection of the production of listed equipment or materials, or periodic evaluation of services, and whose listing states that the equipment, material or service meets appropriate designated standards, or has been tested and found suitable for a specified purpose.

lite: A pane of window glass (variation of **light**).

live load: Loads produced by use and occupancy of a building or other structure, not including construction or environmental loads, such as wind load, snow load, ice load, rain load, seismic load, or dead load.

load-bearing wall: A wall that supports its own weight and some other structural elements of a house or building, such as the roof and ceiling structures.

loan: A sum of money lent at interest.

loan-to-value ratio: The ratio of a loan amount to the property valuation expressed as a percentage. For example, if a borrower is seeking a loan of $200,000 on a property worth $400,000, it has a 50% loan-to-value rate. If the loan were $300,000, the LTV would be 75%. The higher the loan to value, the greater the lender's perceived risk. Loans above normal lending LTV ratios may require additional security.

lookout: A short wooden bracket or cantilever, usually concealed from view, that supports an overhanging portion of a roof or similar structure.

loose-laid: In roofing, a membrane laid loosely and not adhered over a roof deck or berm.

lot: A parcel of ground with boundaries determined by the county.

louver: A horizontal slat. A louvered window is constructed of a series of horizontal slats in a window space arranged so as to permit ventilation but prevent the entry rain or sunlight. Louvers are also used in attic ventilators, which are mechanical fans that move large amounts of air at a low velocity.

low-slope application: A method of installing asphalt shingles on roof slopes between 2 and 4 inches per foot.

lumber: The product of a sawmill and planing mill not further manufactured other than by sawing, re-sawing, and passing lengthwise through a standard planing machine, cross-cutting to length, and matching.

lumens: Unit of measure for total light output; the amount of light falling on a surface of 1 square foot.

main vent: Principal vent to which branch vents may be connected. Also called a **main stack**.

male IPS: Pipe connection whose threads are on the outside of the fitting. See also **MIP**.

male threads: Standard threads that are on the outside of a pipe or fitting. See also **MIP**.

mansard roof: A roof that rises by inclined planes from all four sides of a building. The sloping roofs on all four sides have two pitches, with the lower pitch usually very steep and the upper pitch less steep.

mantel: The shelf above a fireplace; also refers to the decorative trim around a fireplace opening.

manual: (1) A manufacturer's book of operating directions. (2) Capable of being operated by hand.

manufactured (mobile) home: A structure, transportable in one or more sections, which, in the traveling mode, is 8 body-feet or more in width or 40 body-feet or more in length, or which, when erected on site, is 320 or more square feet, and which is built on a permanent chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities, and includes the plumbing, heating, air-conditioning and electrical systems contained in the structure. This term includes all structures that meet the above requirements except the size requirements and with respect to which the manufacturer voluntarily files a certification and complies with the construction

and safety standards. The term does not include any self-propelled recreational vehicle. Calculations used to determine the number of square feet in a structure include the total of square feet for each transportable section comprising the completed structure and based on the structure's exterior dimensions measured at the largest horizontal projections when erected on site. These dimensions include all expandable rooms, cabinets, and other projections containing interior space, but do not include bay windows.

manufactured wood: A building component, such as a truss, beam or joist, that is manufactured using small pieces of wood that are glued or mechanically fastened to form a larger piece (such as GLULAM®, which is glued laminated timber). Often used to create a stronger member that may use less wood. See also oriented strand board (OSB).

manufacturer's specifications: The written installation and/or maintenance instructions that are developed by a product's manufacturer which may have to be followed in order to maintain the product's warranty.

mason's hammer: Tool shaped like a chisel that is used to trim brick and stone. Also called a **bricklayer's hammer**.

masonry: Stone, brick, concrete, hollow-tile, concrete block, gypsum block, and other similar building units and materials, or a combination of the same, bonded together with mortar to form a wall, pier, buttress or similar mass.

masonry primer: An asphalt-based primer used to prepare masonry surfaces for bonding with other asphalt products.

mastic: A heavy-consistency, waterproof compound that is applied to exterior walls and roof surfaces that may remain adhesive and pliable with age.

matched lumber: Lumber that is dressed and shaped in a grooved pattern on one edge and in a tongued pattern on the other.

material: Being both relevant and consequential; crucial.

material defect: A specific issue with a system or component of a property that may have a significant, adverse impact on the value of the property, or that poses an unreasonable risk to people. The fact that a system or component is near, at or beyond the end of its normal useful life is not, in itself, a material defect.

maximum occupancy load: The maximum number of people permitted in a room measured per foot for each width of exit door. The maximum is 50 per foot of exit.

means of egress: A continuous and unobstructed path out of a building to a public way.

mechanic's lien: A lien placed on real property in favor of persons supplying labor and/or materials for a building or structure for the value of their labor and/or materials. In some jurisdictions, a mechanic's lien also exists for the value of professional services. Clear title to the property cannot be obtained until the claim for the labor, materials and/or professional services is settled. Timely filing is essential to support the encumbrance, and prescribed filing dates vary by jurisdiction.

melt point: The temperature at which solid asphalt becomes a liquid.

membrane: A generic term relating to a variety of sheet goods used for certain built-up roofing repairs and applications.

metal edge: Brake metal or a metal extrusion that is secured at the perimeter of a roof to form a weathertight seal.

metal lath: Sheets of metal that are slit and drawn out to form openings and used as a plaster base for walls and ceilings, and as reinforcement over other forms of plaster base.

mezzanine: A semi-permanent, freestanding stair-and-deck system, typically constructed of fiberglass grating, heavy-duty steel and/or aluminum, and installed between two permanent/original floors within an industrial or commercial building in order to provide an open space on and under which can be created informal office areas, storage for inventory, tools and industrial equipment, etc.

MICB (Master Inspector Certification Board): Certifying body that awards the Certified Master Inspector® (CMI) designation.

Microllam®: Brand name for laminated veneer lumber or LVL (and frequently misspelled as Microlam); a manufactured structural wood beam or other engineered wood product that uses multiple layers or strands of thin wood assembled with adhesives and pressure-treated, giving it a higher strength rating than solid-sawn or milled lumber, and making it less likely to twist, warp, bow or

shrink because of its composite nature. Normally comes in l-1/2-inch thickness and 9-inch, 11-1/2-inch and 14-inch widths.

migration: Spreading or creeping of a constituent of a compound onto or into adjacent surfaces. See also **bleeding**.

mil thickness: Measurement used to determine the thickness of a coating; 1 mil = 0.001 or 1/1000-inch.

millwork: Includes building materials made of finished wood and manufactured in millwork plants and planing mills; examples include interior and exterior doors, doorframes, windows, blinds, porchwork, mantels, panelwork, stairways, moldings, and interior trim. It normally does not include flooring, ceilings or siding.

mineral spirits: A byproduct of petroleum, clear in color, and used as a solvent for asphalt coatings.

mineral stabilizers: Finely-ground limestone, slate, traprock and/or other inert material(s) added to asphalt coatings for durability and increased resistance to fire and weathering.

mineral-surfaced roofing: Asphalt shingles and roll roofing that are covered with granules.

minispread: A smaller variation of a widespread faucet with separate spout and handles designed small enough to fit 4-inch center-to-center faucet holes.

MIP (male iron pipe): Standard threads that are on the outside of a pipe or fitting.

miter (mitre) joint: The joint of two pieces at an angle that bisects the joining angle. For example, the miter joint at the side and head casing at a door opening is made at a 45-degree angle.

mixing valve: A valve that mixes hot and cold water in the valve to obtain a set temperature prior to delivery.

mobile home aluminum roof coating: A durable one-coat application that prolongs the life of mobile home roofs while reflecting the sun's rays and providing a decorative surface; also reduces energy costs.

mock-up testing: Controlled air, water and structural performance testing of existing or new glazing systems.

modified-bitumen roof: A roof covering that is typically composed of a factory-fabricated composite sheet consisting of a copolymer-modified bitumen, often reinforced with polyester and/or fiberglass, and installed in one or more plies. The membrane is commonly surfaced with field-applied coatings, factory-applied granules, or metal foil. The roofing system may incorporate rigid insulation.

modulus: The stress at a given strain; also, tensile strength at a given elongation.

moisture content (of wood): Weight of the water contained in wood, usually expressed as a percentage of the weight of the oven-dried wood.

mold (mould): A form of fungus. Some molds can cause disease in humans.

molding (moulding): A wood strip having a coned or projecting surface used for decorative purposes, such as door and window trim.

monitor: A large structure rising above the surrounding roof planes, designed to give light and/or ventilation to the building's interior.

monopost: An adjustable metal column used to support a beam or bearing point, normally made of 11-gauge or Schedule 40 metal, as determined by the structural engineer.

mopping: In roofing, a layer of hot bitumen that is mopped between plies of roofing felt. Full mopping is the application of bitumen in a manner such that the surface is entirely coated with a reasonably uniform coating. Spot-mopping is the procedure of applying hot bitumen in a random fashion of small daubs, as compared to full mopping. Sprinkle mopping is a special application of installing insulation to the decks by dipping a roof mop into hot bitumen and sprinkling the material onto the deck. Strip-mopping is the application of bitumen in parallel bands.

mortar types: Type M, the strongest type, is suitable for general use and is recommended specifically for masonry below grade and in contact with earth, such as foundations, retaining walls and walks. Type S is suitable for general use and is recommended where high resistance to lateral forces is required. Type N is suitable for general use in exposed masonry above grade and is recommended specifically for exterior walls subject to exposure to the elements. Type O is recommended for load-bearing walls of solid units where the compressive stresses do not exceed 100 pounds per square inch, and the

masonry wall will not be subjected to freezing and thawing in the presence of excessive moisture.

mortgage: A loan secured by real property/real estate.

mortgage broker: A person who represents numerous lenders and helps consumers find affordable mortgages; the broker charges a fee only if the consumer qualifies for a suitable loan.

mortgage company: A company that borrows money from a bank, lends it to consumers to buy homes, then sells the loans to investors.

mortgage deed: A legal document establishing a loan for property.

mortgage origination fee: A charge for work involved in preparing and servicing a mortgage application (usually, 1% of the loan amount).

mortgagee: The lender who makes the mortgage loan.

mortise: An edgewise slot cut into a board, plank or timber to receive the tenon of another board, plank or timber in order to form a joint.

mud cracks: Cracks that develop from the normal shrinkage of an emulsion coating that has been applied too heavily.

mudsill: A wood foundation member, usually a pressure-treated 2x4 or 2x6, bolted to the foundation and on which other framing members can be attached.

mullion: A vertical bar or divider in the frame between windows, doors and other openings that supports and holds items such as panels, glass, sashes, and sections of a curtain wall.

muntins: Horizontal or vertical bars that divide a sash frame into smaller lites of glass. Muntins are smaller in dimensions and weight than mullions.

muriatic acid: Commonly used as a brick cleaner after masonry work is completed.

mushroom: An unacceptable occurrence when the top of a caisson concrete pier spreads out and hardens to become wider than the foundation wall's thickness.

Mylar®: Brand name for a transparent or reflective polyester film or plastic sheeting with a high tensile strength that is used for a variety of products. Field copies of blueprints and plans are frequently manufactured from Mylar.

nailer: A piece of lumber secured to non-nailable decks and walls by bolts or other means, providing a suitable backing onto which roof components may be mechanically fastened.

natural finish: A transparent finish that does not significantly alter the original color or grain of the natural wood. A natural finish is typically achieved using sealers, oils, varnishes, water-repellent preservatives, and other similar materials.

neat plaster: A base coat plaster that does not contain aggregates and is used where the addition of aggregates on the job is desired.

NEC (National Electrical Code): A set of rules governing safe wiring methods. Local codes that are backed by law may differ from some codes in the NEC.

neoprene: A synthetic rubber having physical properties that closely resemble those of natural rubber, and used in weather-resistant products, such as paints, adhesives, gaskets, etc. It is made by polymerizing chloroprenes, which are produced from acetylene and hydrogen chloride.

nesting: A method of re-roofing with new asphalt shingles over old shingles in which the top edge of the new shingles is butted against the bottom edge of the existing shingle tab.

neutral wire: Carries electricity from an outlet back to the service panel; usually color-coded white. See also **hot wire** and **ground**.

newel: Any post to which the end of a stair railing or balustrade is fastened.

NFPA: National Fire Protection Association, which sets standards for fire-rated building products.

nipple: A short pipe coupling that is threaded on both ends and installed between fittings.

NM (non-metallic): A flame-retardant type of Romex cable, which is a non-metallic sheathed cable that contains several conductors. Its use is limited to dry locations.

NMC (non-metallic conduit): A type of Romex® cable, which is a non-metallic sheathed cable that contains several conductors. NMC may be used in damp or corrosive locations, as well as dry areas.

no-cutout shingles: Shingles consisting of a single solid tab with no cutouts.

nominal size: Size used for identification only; not literal dimensions.

non-bearing wall: A wall supporting no load other than its own weight.

non-combustible: A substance that does not burn when subjected to fire.

non-destructive: Describes a method of examining the interior of a component whereby no damage is done to the component itself.

non-drying: A sealant that does not set up or cure. See also **butyl**. Also called **non-curing**.

non-fibered aluminum roof coating: Thin but efficient barrier that reflects the sun's harmful rays and prolongs a roof surface's service life. Also used on other metal surfaces.

non-fibered roof and foundation coating: Dual-purpose, thin-viscosity material that doubles as a non-fibered roof and foundation coating.

non-sag: A sealant formulation having a consistency that permits application in vertical joints without appreciable sagging or slumping.

non-skinning: Descriptive of a product that does not form a surface skin.

non-staining: Characteristic of a compound that will not stain a surface.

non-veneer panel: Any wood-based panel that does not contain veneer and carries an APA span rating, such as waferboard and oriented strand board.

normal operating controls: The operating controls for devices that can be operated by ordinary occupants, such as thermostats, as they require no specialized skill, knowledge or tools.

normal slope application: Method of installing asphalt shingles on roof slopes between 4 inches and 21 inches per foot.

nosing: The projecting edge of a molding or drip usually applied to the projecting molding on the edge of a stair tread.

notch: A crosswise rabbet at the end of a board.

note: A formal document showing the existence of a debt and stating the terms of repayment.

nozzle: The tubular tip of a caulking gun through which the compound is extruded.

nuclear meter: A device used to detect moisture by measuring slowed, deflected neutrons.

O-ring: Round rubber washer or gasket that is compressed to create a watertight seal, typically in a compression fitting.

oakum: Loose hemp or jute fiber that is impregnated with tar or pitch and used to caulk large seams and for packing plumbing pipe joints.

observations: Those items of interest noted by an inspector during the walk-through survey portion of an inspection.

observe: To visually notice.

obvious: A condition or fact not likely to be ignored or overlooked.

occupancy load: The number of people permitted in a building based on square footage and the means of egress.

occupant: Any individual living in, sleeping in and/or having possession of a space within a building.

OD (outside diameter): A measurement of the diameter of a pipe as taken from the outside edge. A common method for sizing pipe.

offset: A tubular component that permits the offsetting of a drainage run in the same direction.

OG: A molding with a profile in the form of a letter S; having the outline of a reversed curve.

ohm meter (ohmmeter): In electrical contracting, a device that measures the resistance across a load and used to track down broken wires. Never used on a live circuit.

Ohm's Law: States that, in a given electrical circuit, the amount of current in amps is equal to the pressure in volts divided by the resistance in ohms. The formula is: I (current) = V (voltage), or V = I x R (resistance), or R = V ÷ I.

oil-canning: A term that describes the distortion of thin-gauge metal panels that are fastened in a manner that restricts normal thermal movement.

on center (OC): A term describing the measurement of the distance center to center between like materials, such as studs, rafters, joists, etc. For example,

studs placed 16 inches OC are laid out so that there are 16 inches from the center of one stud to the center of the next stud.

open valley: Method of construction by which shingles on both sides of a valley are trimmed along a chalk line snapped on each side of the valley. Shingles do not extend across the valley, leaving the valley flashing exposed.

open-hole inspection: Describes an inspection performed by an engineer or municipal inspector to evaluate an open excavation and examine the earth to determine the type of foundation that should be installed in the hole (caisson, footer, wall on ground, etc.).

operate: To cause systems to function or turn on with normal operating controls.

operational: Systems or components capable of being safely operated.

optimum value engineering (OVE): Framing techniques that reduce unnecessary lumber use and improve the R-value of the wall by reducing thermal bridging and maximizing the wall area that is insulated.

oral consultation: A limited visual inspection of specific systems, structures and/or components of a property after which no written report is prepared by the inspector and s/he communicates his/her findings, opinions, conclusions and recommendations verbally to the client.

organic: A designation for any chemical compound that contains carbon and hydrogen.

organic felt: An asphalt roofing base material manufactured from cellulose fibers.

oriented strand board (OSB): A manufactured wood panel made of 1- to 2-inch wood chips and glue, often used as a substitute for plywood in exterior walls and roof sheathing. Also called **chipboard**,**flakeboard** and **waferboard**.

outrigger: An extension of a rafter beyond the wall line. Usually, a smaller member is nailed to a larger rafter to form a cornice or roof overhang.

overhang: The part of a roof structure that extends horizontally beyond the vertical plane of the building's exterior walls.

owner: Any person, agent, operator, firm or corporation having a legal or equitable interest in a property.

oxidize: The process of something combining with or being exposed to oxygen in the air; rust.

P-trap: A P-shaped section of drainpipe that traps water, which prevents sewer odors from escaping through the drain and into the home.

pad out: To shim out or add strips of wood to a wall or ceiling so that the finished wall or ceiling will appear level. Also called **pack out**.

padding: Material installed under carpeting to add depth and plushness, minimize sound, and prolong the carpet's life.

paint: A combination of pigments with suitable thinners or oils to provide a decorative and protective coating.

pallet: A wooden platform used for shipping bulk items, such as shingles and lumber, and for providing a base to store such items off the floor or bare ground.

panel: A thin, flat piece of wood, plywood, or similar material framed by stiles and rails, as in a door, or fitted into grooves of thicker material with molded edges for a decorative wall treatment.

panelboard: A component of the electricity-supply system that divides the electrical power feed into subsidiary circuits, with buss bars and automatic over-current devices, in a common enclosure accessible only from the front. Also called a **distribution board**.

parapet wall: A low wall around the perimeter of a roof deck.

parge coat: A thin coat of cementitious or polymeric mortar applied to concrete for refinement of the surface.

parking strip: The area in front of a building between the sidewalk and the street, usually landscaped with grass, that serves as a buffer between the road and pedestrians walking on the sidewalk.

parting stop: A small wood piece used in the side and head jambs of double-hung windows to separate the upper and lower sashes. Also called a **parting strip**.

partition: A wall that subdivides spaces within any story of a building.

patterned glass: A type of rolled glass having a pattern impressed on one or both sides and commonly used for light control, bath enclosures, and decorative glazing. Also called **rolled glass**, **figured glass** and **obscure glass**.

paver stones: Pre-cast concrete slabs used to create a traffic surface.

payment schedule: An agreed-upon schedule of incremental payments to a contractor based upon the amount of work completed. Such a schedule may include a deposit prior to the start of work. Payments are often scheduled for the beginning of the month and allow the contractor to pay subcontractors and suppliers by the 10th of the month. There may also be a temporary holdout or payment withholding at the end of the contract for any small items that have not been completed.

pedestal lavatory: A sink whose washbasin is supported by a single pedestal leg.

penalty clause: A clause in a contract that provides for a reduction in the amount otherwise payable under the contract to a contractor as a penalty for his/her failure to meet deadlines or the project's contracted specifications.

penny: As applied to nails, it originally indicated the price per hundred. The term now serves as a measure of nail length and is abbreviated by the letter D.

penthouse: A relatively small structure built above the plane of the roof; the topmost residential unit of a high-rise building.

percolation test (perc test): A test that a soil engineer performs on soil to determine the feasibility of installing a leach field-type sewer system on a proposed building lot, evaluating whether the soil is capable of absorbing the liquid effluent from a septic system.

performance and payment bond: Guaranty of a project's completion by a surety company if the contractor fails to perform under the contract.

performance bond: An amount of money (usually 10% of the total price of a project) that a contractor must put on deposit with a governmental agency as an insurance policy that guarantees his proper and timely completion of the project.

perimeter drain: Perforated plastic pipe (3 to 4 inches) that goes around the inside or outside perimeter of a foundation wall before backfilling, and collects and diverts groundwater away from the foundation. Generally, it is daylighted into a sump pit inside the home, and a sump pump is sometimes inserted into the pit to discharge any accumulation of water.

perlite: A natural volcanic glass with a high water content that is heated-expanded to create a lightweight aggregate used in fire-resistant insulation.

perm: A measure of water vapor movement through a material in grains per square foot per hour per inch of mercury difference in vapor pressure.

permanent set: The amount by which a material fails to return to its original dimensions after being deformed by an applied force or load.

permanently installed: Fixed in place by screws, bolts, nails, etc., as distinct from components, systems and appliances considered portable or freestanding.

permit: A governmental authorization to perform a building process. A zoninguse permit is an authorization to use a property for a specific use, such as a factory, a single-family residence etc. A grading permit is an authorization to change the contour of the land. A septic permit is a health department authorization to build or modify a septic system. A building permit is an authorization to build or modify a structure. An electrical permit is a permit required for most electrical work. A plumbing permit is a permit required for new plumbing and extensive modification of existing plumbing systems.

Phase I: A type of fireplace and chimney inspection that exceeds the standards required by a general home inspection.

photo-oxidation: Oxidation caused by exposure to ultraviolet rays from the sun.

physical deficiency: A major defect, a significant deferred-maintenance item, a component or system that has exhausted most or all of its remaining useful life (regardless of its actual life expectancy), a safety concern, or anything that could potentially cause the need for an expensive repair.

pier: A column of masonry, usually rectangular in horizontal cross-section, used to support other structural members.

pier block: A concrete block used to support foundation members, such as posts, beams, girders and joists.

pigment: A powdered solid in suitable degree of subdivision for use in paint or enamel.

pigtail (electrical): The electric cord that the electrician provides and installs on an appliance, such as a garbage disposal, dishwasher, or range hood.

pilot hole: A small-diameter, pre-drilled hole that guides a nail or screw.

pilot light: A small, continuous flame in a hot water heater, boiler or furnace that ignites gas or oil burners when needed.

pitch: (1) The incline slope of a roof, or the ratio of the total rise to the total width of a house. For example, an 8-foot rise and 24-foot width is a 1/3-pitch roof. Roof slope is expressed in the inches of rise per foot of run. (2) Coal tar pitch.

pitch pan: A container formed of sheet metal installed around supporting connections for roof-mounted equipment and machinery. Filling the container with pitch or plastic roof cement helps seal out rainwater even under conditions of vibration caused by the machinery's operation or other factors.

pitch pocket: An opening in a tree's interior that extends parallel to the annual rings of growth that typically contains (or has contained) either solid or liquid pitch.

pith: The small, soft core at the original center of a tree around which wood formation takes place.

PITI: Acronym for **principal, interest, taxes and insurance**, which are the four major components of monthly mortgage payments.

plan submittal: Submission of construction plans to the city or county in order to obtain a building permit.

plans: See **blueprints**.

plaster grounds: Strips of wood used as guides or strike-off edges around window and door openings and at the base of walls.

plastic roof cement: Used as a waterproofing medium to quickly stop roof and other leaks in new construction and for general-purpose exterior repair and maintenance. Available in both summer and winter grades.

plat: A map of a geographical area as recorded by the county.

plate: Sill plate: a horizontal member anchored to a masonry wall. Sole plate: the bottom horizontal member of a frame wall. Top plate: the top horizontal member of a frame wall that supports ceiling joists, rafters, and/or other members.

plate line: The top horizontal line of a building wall upon which the roof rests.

platform framing: A system of framing a building by which the floor joists of each story rest on the top plates of the story below or on the foundation sill for the first story, and the bearing walls and partitions rest on the subfloor of each story. One story usually constitutes a platform. Also called **platform construction**.

plenum: An air compartment or chamber that connects one or more ducts and forms part of an air-distribution system for moving air under a slight positive pressure.

plot plan: A bird's-eye view showing the positioning of a building on a lot, along with the setbacks (how far the building must sit from the road), easements, rights of way, and drainage.

plough: To cut a lengthwise groove in a board or plank.

plumb: Exactly perpendicular; vertical.

plumb bob: A conical lead weight attached to a string used in determining plumb and elevations.

plumbing boots: Metal saddles used to strengthen a bearing wall/vertical stud(s) where a plumbing drain line has been cut through and installed.

plumbing ground: The plumbing drain and waste lines that are installed beneath a basement floor.

plumbing jacks: Sleeves that fit around drain and waste vent pipes and nailed to the roof sheeting.

plumbing rough: Work performed by the plumbing contractor after the rough heat is installed. This work includes installing all plastic ABS drain and waste lines, copper water lines, bath tubs, shower pans, and gas piping to furnaces and fireplaces.

plumbing stack: A plumbing vent pipe that penetrates the roof.

plumbing trim: Work performed by the plumbing contractor to get the home ready for the final plumbing inspection, including installing all toilets (water closets), hot water heater and sinks, and connecting all gas pipe to appliances, the disposal, dishwasher, and all other plumbing items.

plumbing waste line: Plastic pipe used to collect and drain sewage waste.

ply: Denotes the number of thicknesses or layers of roofing felt, veneer in plywood, and any finished piece of similar materials.

ply sheet: A layer in built-up roofing.

plywood: A piece of wood made of three or more layers of veneer joined with glue, and usually laid with the grain of adjoining plies at right angles. An odd number of plies is typically used to provide balanced construction.

pocket: A three-sided, U-shaped opening in a sash or frame to receive glazing infill (differing from a rabbet, which is a two-sided, L-shaped section used with a face-glazed window sash). Also called a**channel**.

point load: A point where a bearing/structural weight is concentrated and transferred to the foundation.

pointing: The process of filling joints between masonry units, bricks, etc., with mortar.

polished wired glass: Wired glass that has been ground and polished on both surfaces.

polymer: Natural and synthetic compounds consisting of large molecules that have been formed from smaller molecules of similar make-up and used in the manufacture of plastics, concrete, glass and rubber.

polysulfide sealant: A type of polymer sealant which is mercaptan-terminated, having long-chain aliphatic polymers containing disulfide linkages. It can be converted to rubbers at room temperature without shrinkage upon the addition of a curing agent.

polyurethane sealant: An organic compound formed by the reaction of a glycol with an isocyanate and used as an adhesive and for sealing and waterproofing decks, wood flooring, trim, etc.

polyvinyl chloride (PVC): A polymer formed by the polymerization of vinyl chloride monomer (sometimes called vinyl) and widely used in residential and commercial construction because of its versatility, high strength and low cost.

ponding: The development of a large puddle or area of standing water on a roof for prolonged periods due to poor drainage and/or deflection of the deck.

pop rivets: Fasteners used to join pieces of metal that are installed by either compressed-air-assisted or hand-operated guns; unique in that they are installed from one side of the work.

pop-out: See **stucco pop-out**.

pores: The openings of the vessels on the surface of a piece of wood; wood cells of comparatively large diameter that have open ends and are set one above the other to form continuous tubes.

porosity: The density of a substance and its capacity to pass liquids, such as membranes, housewrap, vapor retarders, etc.

Portland cement: A mixture of certain minerals which, when mixed with water, form a gray-colored paste and cure into a very hard mass.

post: A vertical member of wood, steel, concrete or other material that transfers weight from the top of the post to whatever it is resting on.

post-and-beam construction: The most common type of wall framing; a building method that uses posts that carry horizontal beams on which joists are supported.

pot life: The time interval following the addition of an accelerator before a chemically curing material will become too viscous to apply satisfactorily. See also **shelf life**.

potable: Describes water that is safe to drink.

powder coat: A technique for applying paint to metal surfaces. The metal is covered with a powder of dry paint particles and is baked in an oven. This causes the powder to melt and harden into a tough finish.

power: The energy rate, usually measured in watts. Power equals voltage times amps, or W = E x 1. The heavier the flow of amps at a given supply, the higher the rate at which energy is being supplied and used.

power vent: A vent that includes a fan to speed up air flow, often installed on roofs.

pre-shimmed tape sealant: A sealant having a pre-formed shape containing solids or discrete particles that limit its deformation under compression.

precast concrete: Concrete building components that are formed and cured at a factory and then transported to a work site for erection.

premises: A lot, plot, parcel of land, property or building.

premium: The amount payable on a loan.

preservative: Any substance that, for a reasonable length of time, will prevent the action of wood-destroying fungi, borers of various kinds, and similar destructive agents when the wood has been properly coated or impregnated with it.

pressure drop: The loss in pressure due to friction or obstruction in pipes, valves, fittings, regulators and/or burners, and the length of pipes and the number of elbows.

pressure regulator: A device placed in a gas line for reducing, controlling and maintaining the pressure downstream of the device.

pressure tank: A tank used in conjunction with a well in order to maintain pressure.

pressure-reducing valve: A valve installed in the water service line where it enters the building to reduce the pressure to an acceptable, desirable rate (40-55 psi).

pressure-relief valve: A valve that relieves excess pressure in water storage tanks.

pressure-treated lumber: Lumber that is treated in such a way that sealer is forced into the pores of the wood to add strength and durability.

primary building: A building that an inspector has agreed to inspect, excluding all accessory buildings, with the exception of the primary parking structure.

primary parking structure and surfaces: A building and appurtenant surfaces provided for the purpose of vehicle storage associated with the primary building.

primer: A material of relatively thin consistency that is applied to a surface for the purpose of creating a more secure bonding surface and to form a barrier to prevent the migration of components. Also, the first coat of paint in a paint job that consists of two or more coats.

priming: Sealing of a porous surface so that compounds will not stain, lose elasticity, shrink excessively, etc., because of loss of oil into the surround.

principal: The original amount of a loan; the capital.

projection: In roofing, any object or equipment that pierces the roof membrane.

property survey: A survey conducted to determine the boundaries of a property.

protection board: In roofing, heavy asphalt-impregnated boards that are laid over bituminous coatings to protect against mechanical damage.

public way: A street, alley or yard open to the outside and leading to a public area.

publicly available information: Information that is in the public record and accessible or available to anyone upon request.

pump mix: A special concrete mix that has smaller rock aggregate than regular concrete mix and is used in a concrete pump.

punch list: A list of discrepancies in a construction project that need to be corrected by the contractor, typically at the end of the project.

punch out: To inspect and make a discrepancy or punch list.

purlins: A horizontal structural member spanning between beams or trusses to support a roof deck. In slope glazing, purlins are the horizontal framing members.

push stick: A tool used while cutting a short board on a table saw.

putty: A type of cement made of whiting and boiled linseed oil that is beaten or kneaded into the consistency of dough and used in sealing window glass in sashes, filling small holes and crevices in wood, and similar purposes.

PVC (CPVC): Polyvinyl chloride, which is used in the manufacture of white plastic pipe typically used for water supply lines.

PVD (physical vapor deposition): A durable titanium or zirconium coating used on brass-finish faucets that resists tarnish, scratches and corrosion.

PVDF: An architectural coating. See also **Kynar coating**.

quarry tile: A man-made or machine-made clay tile, generally 6x6x1/4-inch thick, used to finish a floor or wall.

quarter round: A small molding that has cross-section of a quarter circle.

quarter-sawn grain: Another term for edge grain.

quick-setting cement: An asphalt-based cement used to adhere tabs of strip shingles to the course below. Also used to adhere roll-roofing laps applied by the concealed-nail method.

quote (quotation): A price provided by a contractor, sub-contractor or vendor to furnish materials, labor and/or both. Quotes differ from estimates in that an estimate is a best guess of the cost involved.

R-value: The thermal resistance of insulation or a glazing system. The R-value is the reciprocal of the U-value. The higher the R-value, the less heat is transmitted throughout the insulation or glazing material.

rabbet: A rectangular, longitudinal groove cut in the corner edge of a board or plank.

raceway: An enclosed channel or conduit designed expressly for holding wires or cables.

radial saw: A circular saw that hangs from a horizontal arm or beam and slides back and forth. The arm pivots from side to side to allow for angle cuts and bevels. When sawing finish plywood, the good side should face up, as the saw cuts on the downstroke.

radiant barrier: Intended to reduce the summer heat gain and the winter heat loss. In new homes, you may see foil-faced wood components at the roof sheathing system installed with the foil facing down into the attic. There may be other areas where the radiant barrier is integrated into the building components and structure of the home. For older homes, a radiant barrier will typically be found stapled across the bottom of some joists. All proper radiant barriers should have a low emittance of 0.1 or less, and a high reflectance of 0.9 or more. The radiant barrier should not be laid on top of the attic floor insulation, or on the attic floor anywhere, because it will soon be covered with dust and will not work.

radiant heating: A method of heating that consists of a forced hot-water system with pipes placed in the floor, wall or ceiling, or using electrically heated panels.

radiation: Describes one method of heating by which a heated surface loses heat to cooler surrounding space or surfaces. The earth receives its heat from the sun by radiation: the heat rays are turned into heat as they strike an object that absorbs some or all of the heat transmitted.

radiator: A heating unit that is supplied heat through a hot water system.

radon: A naturally-occurring radioactive gas found in soil that is heavier than air. Radon gas exposure in abnormally high levels is associated with lung cancer.

Mitigation measures may involve crawlspace and basement venting and installation of various forms of vapor barriers and fans.

radon mitigation system: A ventilation system installed beneath the floor of a basement and/or structural wood floor designed to exhaust radon gas to the exterior of a home.

rafter: A sloping roof member that supports the roof covering which extends from the ridge or the hip of the roof to the eaves. A common rafter is one that runs square with the plate and extends to the ridge. A hip rafter extends from the outside angle of the plate toward the apex of the roof, and is 2 inches deeper or wider than a common rafter. A valley rafter extends from an inside angle of the plates toward the ridge of the house.

rafter tail: The portion of a rafter that extends past the building to form the eaves.

rafter, hip: A rafter that forms the intersection of an external roof angle.

rafter, valley: A rafter that forms the intersection of an internal roof angle. The valley rafter is normally made of double 2-inch-thick members.

raggle block: A specially-designed masonry block having a slot or opening into which the top edge of the roof flashing is inserted and anchored.

rail: Cross-members of panel doors or a sash. Also, the upper and lower members of a balustrade or staircase extending from one vertical support to another, such as a post.

railroad tie: Black-tar and preservative-impregnated wooden timbers that are 6x8 inches and 6 to 8 feet long that are used to hold railroad track in place. Also used as a member of a retaining wall.

rake: A trim member that runs parallel to the roof slope and forms the finish between the wall and a gable roof extension. The angle of slope of a roof rafter, or the inclined portion of a cornice.

rake edge: The overhang of an inclined roof plane beyond the vertical wall below it.

rake fascia: The vertical face of the sloping end of a roof eave.

rake siding: The practice of installing lap siding diagonally.

ramp: A sloped walking surface used for wheelchair access.

ranch: Describes a single-story, one-level home style of home.

random-tab shingles: Shingles whose tabs vary in size and exposure.

Rankine: A thermodynamic (absolute) temperature scale whose degree is defined as equal to one degree Fahrenheit.

raw linseed oil: A drying oil processed from flaxseed that polymerizes into a solid form and used in resins, solvents, varnish in wood finishing, pigment binder in oil paints, and plasticizer and hardener in putty and in the manufacture of linoleum.

re-glaze: To replace a broken window.

readily accessible: Describes the area of a subject property that has been made available to the inspector at the time of the walk-through survey portion of the inspection, and/or a system or component that, in the judgment of the inspector, is capable of being safely entered and observed without the need of portable ladders, the removal of obstacles, the detachment or disengagement of connecting or securing devices, or other unsafe or difficult procedures to gain access, and/or a document that has been made available to the inspector for use in the research portion of a commercial property inspection.

readily ascertainable: Describes information that is available to the inspector within a reasonable time at a nominal cost so that it can be practically reviewed during the research portion of a commercial property inspection.

readily available: Describes the information, personnel and/or documents that are made immediately available to the inspector for the research portion of a commercial property inspection.

ready-mixed concrete: Concrete mixed at a plant or in trucks en route to a job and delivered ready for placement.

rebar: Nickname for reinforcing bar that is used to increase the tensile strength of concrete.

receptacle: An electrical outlet. A typical household has several 120-volt receptacles for plugging in lamps and appliances, and 240-volt receptacles for the range, clothes dryer, air conditioners, etc.

recording fee: A fee charged for recording the transfer of a property and paid to a city, county, or appropriate branch of government.

recreational facilities: Spas, saunas, steam baths, swimming pools, tennis courts, playground equipment, and other exercise, entertainment or athletic facilities.

redline (red-lined prints): Blueprints that reflect changes that are marked with red pencil; to indicate changes on blueprints using red pencil.

reducer: See **bushing**.

reflective glass: Glass with a metallic coating that reduces solar heat gain.

reflective insulation: Sheet material with one or both faces having comparatively low heat emissivity, such as aluminum foil. When used in building construction, the surface faces an air space, reducing the heat radiating across the air space.

refrigerant: A substance that remains a gas at low temperatures and pressure and can be used to transfer heat. Freon used in air-conditioning systems is a refrigerant.

register: A fixture through which conditioned air flows. In a gravity heating system, it is located near the baseboard. In an air-conditioning system, it is located close to the thermostat.

Registered Engineer: A person licensed to practice engineering or architecture in a state, and subject to all laws and limitations imposed by the state's Board of Engineering and Architecture Examiners, and who is engaged in the professional practice of rendering services or creative work requiring education, training and experience in engineering sciences and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical and engineering sciences in such professional or creative work as consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning or design, and supervision of construction for the purpose of securing compliance with specifications and design for any such work.

reglet: A horizontal slot, formed or cut in a parapet or other masonry wall, into which the top edge of counter-flashing is inserted and anchored. In glazing, a reglet is a pocket or keyway extruded into the framing for installing the glazing gaskets.

reinforced concrete: A combination of steel and concrete using the best properties of both. The steel consists of rebar from 3/8-inch to 2-1/4 inches in diameter and is placed before the concrete is poured.

reinforced masonry: Masonry units, reinforcing steel, grout and/or mortar combined to act together to strengthen a masonry structure.

reinforcing bar (rebar): Steel rods or metal fabric placed in concrete slabs, beams or columns to increase their strength.

relative heat gain: The amount of heat gain through a glass product, taking into consideration the effects of solar heat gain (shading coefficient) and conductive heat gain (U-value).

relative humidity (RH): The amount of water vapor in the atmosphere expressed as a percentage of the maximum quantity that could be present at a given temperature. The actual amount of water vapor that can be held in space increases with the temperature.

release tape: A plastic or paper strip that is applied to the back of self-sealing shingles designed to prevent them from sticking together in the bundles; need not be removed for application.

remaining useful life: A subjective estimate or educated guess made by the inspector based upon his/her observations and experience as to the number of years that a component will continue to be functional before needing replacement.

remote: Remote digital readouts that are installed near the front of a house that allow utility companies (electrical, gas, water) to easily read the homeowner's usage of the service.

removable: Capable of being opened, dislodged or transferred to another location easily.

repair: The reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing item, component, system or structure.

replacement air: Air deliberately brought into a structure to compensate for the air being consumed or expelled.

repoint (re-point): To repair the mortar of masonry joints, such as between the bricks of a chimney, etc.

report (inspection report): The written communication describing the material defects discovered by the inspector based on his/her observations made during a property inspection and, optionally, research conducted by the inspector, all of

which, in the inspector's opinion, are likely to be of interest to his/her client. A report may include photos and other images of observations made during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection, and/or copies of documents reviewed during the research portion of a commercial inspection.

representative number: A number sufficient to serve as a typical or characteristic example of the item(s) inspected.

representative sampling: A small quantity of components of any system or structure, enough like others in its class or kind, to serve as an example of its class or kind.

research: The process of gathering information, through the review of documents and interviews, to augment the observations made during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection. This research may include reviewing readily available documents, such as previous inspection reports, building permits, code violation notices, and environmental studies. This research may also include interviews with readily available personnel, such as building managers, tenants and owners.

residential property: A home; in multi-unit housing, four or fewer individual housing units.

residential unit: A home; a single unit providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

resilient flooring: A durable floor covering that has the ability to resume its original shape.

resistance: The internal structure of wires in conductors opposes the flow of electric current and converts some current into heat. This internal, friction-like effect is called resistance and is measured in ohms. Resistance equals voltage divided by amperage.

resorcinol glue: A glue that is high in both wet and dry strength and resistant to high temperatures, and used for gluing lumber and assembly joints that must withstand severe service conditions.

retaining wall: A structure that holds back a slope and prevents erosion.

retentions: Amounts withheld from progress billings until final and satisfactory project completion.

return: In heating and cooling systems, a vent that returns cold air to be warmed. In a hot-air furnace system, the return is located near an inside wall.

ribbon: A 1x4-inch board let into the studs horizontally to support ceiling and second-floor joists. Also called a **girt**.

ridge: The horizontal line at the junction of the top edges of two sloping roof surfaces.

ridge board (ridgeboard): The horizontal support board placed on edge at the ridge of a roof into which the upper ends of opposing rafters are fastened.

ridge cut: The end cut on a rafter that fits to the ridgeboard.

rigid metal conduit: Conduit that resembles plumbing pipe and encloses wires to protect them from exposure, weather and damage.

rise: In stairs, the vertical height of a step or flight of stairs.

riser: Each of the vertical boards closing the spaces between the treads of stairways.

road base: An aggregate mixture of sand and stone.

rock 1, 2, 3: Referring to drywall, this means to install drywall to the walls and ceilings (with nails and screws), and before taping is performed.

roll roofing: Refers to asphalt roofing material composed of an organic felt or fiberglass mat, saturated with asphalt, and faced with stone aggregate, and supplied in 36-inch wide rolls with 108 square feet of material. Weights are generally 45 to 90 pounds per roll. Inexpensive and commonly used on sloped roofs in North America.

roll, rolling: To install the floor joists or trusses in their correct place. (To roll the floor means to install the floor joists).

Romex®: Brand name for a cable consisting of two or more insulated conductors having an outer sheath of moisture resistant, non-metallic material. The conductor insulation is rubber, neoprene, thermoplastic or a moisture-resistant, flame-retardant fibrous material. Comes in NM and NMC types.

roof assembly: A system designed to provide weather protection that includes the roof covering, underlayment, roof deck, insulation, vapor retarder and interior finish.

roof deck: See **deck**.

roof sheathing: The boards or sheet material fastened to the roof rafters on which the shingles or other roof covering is laid.

roof system: General term that refers collectively to the waterproof covering, roof insulation, vapor barrier (if used) and roof deck.

roofing tape: An asphalt-saturated tape used with asphalt cements for flashing and patching asphalt roofing.

root cellar: Historically, a food storage area located within a basement or by itself beneath a home, possibly with a dirt floor and separate exterior exit.

rough: In hardware, metal fastenings on cabinets that are usually concealed, such as staples.

rough flooring: Floor sheathing; materials used to form an unfinished floor.

rough opening: The opening in a wall into which a door or window is to be installed.

rough plumbing: All plumbing that is done before the finish trades (sheetrock, painting, etc.), including all waste lines and supply water lines that are in the walls or framing of the building.

RPM: Revolutions per minute.

rubber emulsion paint: Paint having a latex binder.

rubber-tired roller: A roller with rubber tires commonly used for compacting trimmed subgrade, aggregate base and clay-type soils.

rubbish: Waste materials other than garbage, such as discarded and leftover building materials, packaging, etc.

run (roofing): The horizontal distance between the eaves and the ridge of the roof, being half the span for a symmetrical gable roof. Also, the net width of a step or the horizontal distance covered by a flight of stairs.

saber saw: A saw that cuts on the upstroke, with the good side of the wood facing down.

sack mix: The amount of Portland cement in a cubic yard of concrete mix. Generally, a 5- or 6-sack mix is required for a foundation wall.

saddle: Two sloping surfaces meeting in a horizontal ridge, used between the backside of a chimney or other vertical surface, and a sloping roof.

safety glazing: Tempered glass, laminated glass or rigid plastic used in areas and applications such as shower doors in bathrooms, etc.

sales contract: A property contract between a buyer and seller that should stipulate: (1) what the purchase includes; (2) what guarantees there are; (3) when the buyer can move in; (4) what the closing costs are; and (5) what recourse the parties have if the contract is not fulfilled or if the buyer cannot get a mortgage commitment by the agreed-upon time.

sand-float finish: In plastering, lime that is mixed with sand and applied by using a wooden float such that the result is a rough, textured finish.

sanitary sewer: A sewer system designed for the collection of wastewater from the bathroom, kitchen and laundry drains; usually not designed to handle stormwater.

sanitary tee (T): Used on the waste-side of a plumbing system to keep effluent flowing in the proper direction.

sapwood: The outer zone of wood that is next to the bark. In a living tree, sapwood contains some living cells (whereas heartwood contains none), as well as dead and dying cells. In most species, it is lighter in color than the heartwood. In all species, it is lacking in decay resistance.

sash: A single light frame containing one or more lites of glass.

sash balance: A device operated by a spring or tensioned weatherstripping that is designed to counterbalance a double-hung window sash.

saturant: Asphalt used to impregnate a felt-based material.

saturated felt: A felt that is impregnated with tar or asphalt.

SBS-modified asphalt: Asphalt that has been combined with SBS (styrene-butadiene-styrene) polymers to increase its elasticity.

scale: The relationship between the measurements on a page of plans or blueprints and the actual measurements of the building represented by the plans or blueprints.

schedule (window, door, mirror): A table included on blueprints that lists the sizes, quantities and locations of the windows, doors and mirrors.

scope of work: As related to property inspections, the work that deviates from an established standard, depending on budget, time constraints, purpose of the inspection, age of the subject property, and risk tolerance of the client to which the inspector and client have agreed.

scrap out: The removal of all drywall material and debris after the home is hung out (or installed) with drywall.

scratch coat: In stucco work, the first coat of plaster, which is scratched to form a bond for the second coat.

screed (screeding): In cement work, the wood or metal straightedge used to strike off or level newly-placed concrete. Screeds can be the leveling device used or the formwork used to level or establish the level of the concrete. Screeds can be manual or mechanical.

screw-lamp holder: A lamp base that requires a screw-in-type lamp, such as a compact fluorescent, incandescent, or tungsten-halogen bulb.

scribing: Fitting woodwork to an irregular surface. In moldings, cutting the end of one piece to fit the molded face of another at an interior angle to replace a miter joint.

scrim: A woven or mat-type fabric that is used as a membrane sandwich between other material to provide reinforcement and stretch resistance.

scupper: An outlet in the wall of a building or a parapet wall for drainage of water from a flat roof.

scutch: A bricklayer's cutting tool that resembles a small pick that is used for dressing and trimming brick to a special shape.

sealant: An elastomeric material with adhesive qualities that is applied between components of a similar or dissimilar nature to provide an effective barrier against the passage of snow, rainwater, wind, etc.

sealer: A clear or pigmented finishing material that is usually applied directly over uncoated wood for the purpose of sealing the surface.

seasonal energy-efficiency ratio (SEER): A measure of the energy efficiency of equipment over the cooling season, representing the total cooling of a central air conditioner or heat pump (in BTUs) during the normal cooling season, as compared to the total electrical energy input (in watt-hours) consumed during the

same period. SEER is based on tests performed in accordance with AHRI 210/240 (AHRI 2003).

seasoning: Removing moisture from green wood in order to improve its serviceability.

seat: The fixed part of a valve. The stem assembly moves up and down against the seat to open and close the valve.

self-healing: A term used to describe to a material that melts with the heat from the sun's rays and seals over cracks that were earlier formed from other causes. Some waterproof membranes are self-healing.

self-leveling: A term used to describe a viscous material that is applied by pouring. In its uncured state, it spreads out evenly.

self-rimming: A style of bathroom lavatory or kitchen sink with a finished lip or rim that installs on top of a counter without requiring a metal sink rim.

selvage: The unsurfaced strip along a sheet of roll roofing that forms the under-portion at the lap in the application of the roof covering.

semi-gloss: A paint or enamel made with a slight insufficiency of a non-volatile vehicle so that its coating, when dry, has some luster but not a high gloss.

separation: In concrete application, when the concrete is dropped directly with a flat chute, causing the concrete to separate, usually occurring at a 1:2 slope.

service conductor: In electrical contracting, the supply conductors that extend from the street main or transformer to the service equipment.

service drop: In electrical contracting, the overhead service conductors from the last pole or other aerial support to and including the splices, if any, connecting to the service-entrance conductors at the building.

setback thermostat: A thermostat with a clock that can be programmed to various temperatures at different times of the day or week, and usually used as the heating or cooling system thermostat.

setting blocks: Rectangular cured extrusions of neoprene, EPDM, silicone, rubber, or other suitable material on which a glass product's bottom edge is placed to effectively support the weight of the glass.

settlement: Shifting of a structure, usually caused by freeze-thaw cycles underground.

sewage ejector: A pump installed in a basement or other location situated below the level of the side sewer and used to lift wastewater to a gravity sanitary sewer line.

sewer lateral: The portion of the sanitary sewer that connects the interior wastewater lines to the main sewer lines. The side sewer is usually buried in several feet of soil and runs from the house to the sewer line. It is usually owned by the sewer utility but must be maintained by the owner and may be serviced only by utility-approved contractors. Also called a **side sewer**.

sewer stub: The junction at the municipal sewer system where the home's sewer line is connected.

sewer tap: The physical connection point where the home's sewer line connects to the main municipal sewer line.

shading: Slight differences in shingle color that may occur as a result of normal manufacturing operations.

shading coefficient: The ratio of the solar heat gain through a specific glass product to the solar heat gain through a lite of 1/8-inch of clear glass.

shake: A thick, hand-split shingle, re-sawed to form two shakes; usually edge-grained.

sheathing: The structural covering, usually wood boards, plywood, gypsum or wood fiber, used over studs or rafters of framed buildings as the first layer of the outer wall covering nailed to the studs or rafters.

sheathing paper: A paper or felt building material used in wall and roof construction as protection against the passage of air and sometimes moisture.

shed roof: A style of roof having only one slope or pitch, with only one set of rafters that fall from a higher to a lower wall.

sheet metal ductwork: The heating system consisting of round or rectangular metal pipes and sheet metal (for return air) and installed for distributing warm (or cold) air from the furnace to the rooms in the home.

sheet metal work: All components of a house employing sheet metal, such as flashing, gutters and downspouts.

SHEETROCK®: The brand name for panels made primarily from gypsum and installed over a structure's framing to form the interior walls and ceilings. Also called **gypsum board**.

shelf life: Used by manufacturers of glazing and sealants to refer to the length of time their product may be stored before beginning to lose its effectiveness. Shelf life and the necessary storage conditions are typically printed on the product package.

shellac: A transparent coating made by dissolving the resinous secretion of the lac bug in alcohol.

shingles: A roof covering made of asphalt, wood, tile, slate, or other material cut to stock lengths, widths and thicknesses, and laid and attached in a series of overlapping rows as a roof covering on pitched roofs.

shiplap lumber: Lumber that is edge-dressed to make a close rabbeted or lapped joint.

Shore A hardness: A measure of firmness of a compound using a durometer hardness gauge. A hardness range of 20 to 25 is about the firmness of an art gum eraser. A hardness of 90 is about the firmness of a rubber heel.

shoring: A temporary support erected in a trench or other excavation to prevent the walls from caving in.

short circuit: A situation that occurs when hot and neutral wires come in contact with each other. Fuses and circuit breakers protect against fire that could result from a short.

short-term cost: The estimated cost of repairs that may not require immediate attention but which should not be delayed for more than two years.

shut down: Turned off, unplugged, inactive, not in service, or not operational.

shutoff valve: The valve that allows the water supply to be cut off to one fixture without affecting the water supply to the entire house or building. Commonly used with clawfoot tubs, sinks and toilets.

shutter: A lightweight louvered, flush-wood or non-wood frame in the form of doors located at each side of a window. Some are made to close over the window for added protection; others are permanently affixed to the wall as decoration.

side sewer: The portion of the sanitary sewer that connects the interior wastewater lines to the main sewer lines. The side sewer is usually buried in several feet of soil and runs from the house to the sewer line. It is usually owned by the sewer utility and must be maintained by the owner and may be serviced only by utility-approved contractors. Also called **sewer lateral**.

siding: The finish covering of the outside wall of a frame building and made of horizontal weatherboards, vertical boards with battens, shingles, and/or other materials.

sight line: The line along the perimeter of glazing infills corresponding to the top edge of stationary and removable stops. The line to which sealants contacting the glazing infill are sometimes finished off.

silicone sealant: A multi-purpose sealant that typically does not shrink or crack and offers flexibility and adhesion, and a weatherproof, watertight seal.

sill: The lowest member of the frame of a structure that rests on the foundation and supports the floor joists or uprights of the wall; the member forming the lower side of an opening, as in a door sill, window sill, etc.

sill plate: The framing member anchored to the foundation wall upon which studs and other framing members are attached; the bottom plate of exterior walls.

sill seal: Fiberglass or foam insulation installed between the foundation wall and sill (wood) plate, designed to seal any cracks and gaps.

sill sealer: A foam strip placed between the top of the foundation wall and the sill plate to facilitate a better fit and eliminate water problems.

sill step: The first step coming directly off a building at a door opening.

sillcock: An exterior water faucet. Also called a **hose bibb**.

single coverage: Asphalt roofing that provides one layer of roofing material over the deck.

single tee: The name given to a type of precast concrete deck that has one stiffening rib integrally cast into slab.

single-family dwelling: A house built for a single family as opposed to multiple families, such as a duplex or apartment complex.

single-ply: A descriptive term signifying a roof membrane composed of only one layer of material, such as EPDM, Hypalon or PVC.

single-wall metal chimney: A field-constructed chimney not permitted in one- and two-family dwellings.

skip sheathing: The normal base for shake, shingle and some tile roofs; 1x4-inch or similar sized boards are nailed at 90-degree angles to the rafters, leaving a space of about 4 inches between each row, which allows for better ventilation.

sky dome: A type of skylight exhibiting a characteristic translucent, plastic domed top.

skylight: A structure on a roof that is designed to admit light and is slightly above the plane of the roof surface to allow it to shed rainwater.

slab on grade: A type of construction in which footings are needed but little or no foundation wall is poured.

slab, concrete: Concrete pavement, such as that used for driveways, garages and basement floors.

slab, door: A rectangular door without hinges or a frame.

slag: A byproduct of smelting ore, such as iron, lead or copper. Also, overburden or dropping from welding that may burn, melt or discolor adjacent surfaces.

slate: A dark gray, stratified stone cut relatively thin and installed on pitched roofs in a shingle-like fashion.

sleeper: A wood member embedded in concrete, as in a floor, that serves to support and fasten the subfloor or flooring.

sleeping unit: A room or space used for sleeping.

sleeve: Pipe installed under a concrete driveway or sidewalk that is used to run through sprinkler pipe or low-voltage wire.

slope: The incline or pitch of a roof surface, drainage plane, etc.

sloped glazing: Any installation of glass that is at a slope of 15 degrees or more from vertical.

sludge: A term for the waste material found in sump pump pits, septic systems and gutters.

slump: Describes the wetness of concrete. A 3-inch slump is dryer and stiffer than a 5-inch slump.

slump test: A test that measures, in inches, the consistency or stiffness of a concrete mix. If the test results are high, one likely cause is too much water. A low-slump test result indicates not enough water.

smoke alarm: A single or multiple alarm that is responsive to smoke, and not connected to a fire sprinkler system.

smoke detector: A device that senses smoke or particles of combustion.

smooth-surface roofing: Roll roofing that is covered with ground talc or mica instead of aggregate or granules.

soffit: The underside of an overhanging cornice of a building extending out from the plane of the building walls.

softening point: The temperature at which a substance changes from a hard material to a softer and more viscous material.

soil cover: A light covering of plastic film, roll roofing, or similar material used over the soil in the crawlspace of a building that minimizes moisture permeation into the area. Also called**groundcover/ground cover**.

soil stack: A general term for the vertical main of a system of soil, waste, or vent piping.

soil vent: The extension of a soil or waste stack above the highest horizontal drain connected to the stack. Also called a **waste vent** and a **stack vent**.

sole plate: The bottom horizontal member of a frame wall.

solid bridging: A solid member placed between adjacent floor joists near the center of the span to prevent the joists from twisting.

solid fuel: Wood, coal, pellets, and other materials that can be burned for heat.

Sonotube®: The brand name for a large round cardboard tube designed to hold wet concrete in place until it hardens.

sound attenuation: Soundproofing a wall or subfloor using fiberglass insulation or other material.

space heat: Heat supplied to the living space of a building.

space heater: A portable appliance that warms a small area using radiant electric heat.

spacers: Small blocks of neoprene, EPDM, silicone, or other suitable material placed on each side of a glass product that provides centering for the glass and maintains a uniform width of sealant bead to prevent excessive sealant distortion. Also called **shims**.

spalling: The chipping or flaking of concrete, bricks or other masonry when improper drainage or venting and freeze-thaw cycling exist.

span: The horizontal distance between structural supports, such as walls, columns, piers, beams, girders and trusses.

spandrel: The panels of a wall located between vision areas of windows that conceal structural columns, floors and shear walls.

spec home: A new-construction house that is built before it is sold, as the builder speculates that s/he can sell it at a profit.

special consultant: A person with expertise in a particular area who assists an inspector with portions of a commercial inspection.

special equipment: Any tools or devices, other than those normally used by an inspector, that are used to perform a typical and customary, non-invasive, physical examination of the systems, structures and components of a building, including, but not limited to: levels, probes, meters, video and audio devices, and measuring devices.

specialty eaves flashing membrane: A self-adhering, waterproofing shingle underlayment designed to protect against water infiltration due to ice damage and wind-driven rain.

specifications: Detailed, written instructions which, when clear and concise, explain each phase of work to be done.

splash block: A small masonry block laid with the top close to the ground surface to receive roof drainage from downspouts and carry it away from the building.

splitting: The formation of long cracks completely through a membrane. Splits are frequently associated with lack of allowance for expansion stresses. They can also be a result of deck deflection or change in deck direction.

spud: In roofing, the removal of gravel or heavy accumulations of bitumen from roof membranes by means of chipping or scraping. In mechanical applications, a

short section of pipe or a threaded fitting that completes a connection, as between a longer pipe and a nozzle, valve or meter.

square: A unit of measure applied to roofing material (such as 100 square feet). Sidewall coverings are sometimes packed and sold to cover 100 square feet.

square foot: Coverage measured by multiplying width by length. For example, an area 5 feet long and 7 feet wide is equal to 35 square feet.

squeegee: Fine pea gravel used to grade a floor before concrete is placed.

stack: The vertical pipe of a system of soil, waste or vent piping.

stack vent: The extension of a soil or waste stack above the highest horizontal drain connected to the stack. Also called a **waste vent** and a **soil vent**.

stain: A type of thin-consistency oil paint used to color wood that has a rough surface (such as shingles) without forming a coating of significant thickness or gloss.

stair carriage: A supporting member for stair treads; a 2-inch plank notched to receive the treads. Also called a **rough horse**.

Standard (Standards): Often used to mean InterNACHI's Standards of Practice for Performing a General Home Inspection, or the International Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties.

standard practices of the trade(s): One of the more common, basic and minimum construction standards; another way of saying that the work should be done in the way it is normally done by the average professional in the field.

standing seam: A type of joint often used on metal roofs.

static load: The total amount of permanent, non-moving weight that is applied to a given surface area.

static vent: A vent that does not include a fan.

STC (Sound Transmission Class): A single-number rating derived from individual transmission sound losses at specified test frequencies. It is used for rating the soundproofing quality of interior walls, ceilings and floors.

steel inspection: A municipal and/or engineer's inspection of the concrete foundation wall that is conducted before concrete is poured into the foundation panels, and done to ensure that the rebar, rebar nets, void material, beam pocket

plates, and basement window bucks are installed and wrapped with rebar and comply with the foundation plan.

steel trowel: A flat steel tool used to spread and smooth plaster, mortar and concrete for a non-porous, smooth finish. Pointing trowels are small enough to be used in places where larger trowels will not fit. The pointing trowel has a point. The common trowel has a rectangular blade attached to a handle. For a smooth finish, a trowel is used when the concrete begins to harden.

stem: A small shaft or rod that projects through a faucet valve to which the handle is installed.

stem assembly: The moving part of a valve that controls the amount and temperature of water released by moving up and down against the seat to open and close the valve.

step crack: Hairline, staircase-shaped cracks typically found near the corners of a foundation, usually due to normal soil settlement. Larger step cracks may indicate ongoing movement or sinking of the foundation and are a more serious condition.

step flashing: Small, individual pieces of metal flashing material used to flash around chimneys, dormers, and similar projections along the slope of a roof. The individual pieces are overlapped and stepped up the vertical surface.

stick-built: A house built without prefabricated parts. Also called conventional building.

stile: An upright framing member in a panel door.

STL (Sound Transmission Loss): The reduction of the amount of sound energy passing through a wall, floor, roof, etc., related to the specific frequency at which it is measured and expressed in decibels.

stool: A flat molding fitted over a window sill between jambs and contacting the bottom rail of the lower sash.

stop box: A cast-iron pipe with a lid 5 inches in diameter that is placed vertically into the ground and situated near the water tap in the yard, and where a water cut-off valve to the home is located underground. A long pole with a special end is inserted into the curb stop to turn the water on and off.

stop order: A formal, written notification to a contractor to discontinue some or all work on a project for reasons such as safety violations, defective materials or workmanship, or cancellation of the contract.

stop valve: A shutoff valve.

storefront: A system of doors and windows typically at the first-floor level of a non-residential, commercial building.

storm door: A panel or sash door placed on the outside of an existing door to provide additional protection from the elements.

storm sash: An extra window placed outside of an existing one as additional protection against cold weather. Also called a **storm window**.

storm sewer: A sewer system designed to collect storm water and separated from the wastewater system.

storm window: A glazed panel or sash placed on the inside or outside of an existing sash or window as additional protection against the elements.

story: That part of a building between any floor and the floor or roof immediately above.

straight stop: A shutoff valve that is installed on a supply line between the floor and the faucet or toilet. Unlike an angle stop, a straight stop does not change the direction of water flow.

strain: The percentage of elongation or compression of a material or portion of a material caused by an applied force.

striking off: Smoothing off excess compound or sealant at the sight line when applying it around lites or panels.

string: A timber or other support for cross-members in floors and ceilings. Also called a **stringboard**.

string line: A nylon line strung tautly between supports to indicate both direction and elevation and used in checking grades or deviations in slopes or rises, and in landscaping to level the ground.

stringer: In stairs, the support on which the stair treads rest.

strip flooring: Wood flooring consisting of narrow matched strips.

structural component: A component that supports a building's non-variable forces and weights (dead loads) and variable forces and weights (live loads).

structural floor: A framed lumber floor that is installed as a basement floor instead of concrete on very expansive soils.

structural silicone glazing: Silicone sealant used for the structural transfer of loads from glass to its perimeter support system and retention of the glass in the opening.

structure: An assemblage of various systems and components that function as a whole.

stub: Rough-in.

stucco: A type of exterior finish plaster made with Portland cement as its base.

stud: One of a series of wood or metal vertical structural members placed as supporting elements in walls and partitions.

stud framing: A building method that distributes structural loads to each of a series of relatively lightweight studs. Contrasts with post-and-beam construction.

stud shoe: A metal structural bracket that reinforces a vertical stud and used on an outside bearing wall where holes are drilled to accommodate a plumbing waste line.

sub-rough: The part of a building's plumbing system that is done before the cement is poured.

subcontractor: A contractor who specializes in a particular trade, such as waterproofing.

subfloor: Boards or plywood laid on joists over which a finish floor is laid.

subject property: In inspection, the property that is inspected.

substrate: A part or substance that lies beneath and supports another.

suggested remedy: An opinion offered as to a course of action for repairing a deficiency. Offering suggested remedies lies outside the scope of a general home inspection.

sump: A pit or large plastic bucket or barrel inside the home designed to collect groundwater from a perimeter drain system.

sump pit: Dug at the lowest part of the basement floor to capture and contain any flowing water from a sump pump. The sump pump sits at the bottom of or beside this trench and expels excess water through a series of interconnected pipes to a suitable discharge location. The pump can sense water levels through a float that rises and falls with fluctuating water levels in the trench. Also called a **sump trench**.

sump pump: A submersible pump in a sump pit that pumps any excess groundwater to the outside of the home.

suspended ceiling: A ceiling system supported by hanging it from the overhead structural framing.

swale: A shallow drainage ditch used in conditions where one or more sides of a building faces an upward slope. A swale should slope away from the building for 10 to 15 feet, at which point it can empty into another swale that directs water around to the downhill-side of the building, leading it away from the foundation.

sway brace: Metal straps or wood blocks installed diagonally on the inside of a wall from bottom to top plate that prevent the wall from twisting, racking or falling over in a domino fashion.

switch: A device that completes and/or disconnects an electrical circuit.

system: An assembly of various components which function as a whole.

T-bar: A ribbed T-shaped bar with a flat metal plate at the bottom that is driven into the earth and used with chain link fence poles, and to mark the location of a water meter pit.

tab: The exposed portion of strip shingles defined by cutouts.

tail beam: A relatively short beam or joist supported in a wall on one end and by a header at the other.

tailpiece: The tubular part of a lavatory drain that runs from the drain flange to the trap.

takeoff: The material necessary to complete a job. Also called**material takeoff**.

taping: Applying joint tape over embedding compound in the process of joint treatment of drywall.

tear-off: In roofing, a term used to describe the complete removal of a built-up roof membrane and insulation, down to the exposed roof deck.

technically exhaustive: A comprehensive and detailed examination beyond the scope of a property inspection that might involve, but would not be limited to: specialized knowledge or training; special equipment, measurements, calculations, testing, research, and analysis; the use of meters and scaffolding; the dismantling, probing and troubleshooting of systems and components. Also, where the cost of obtaining information or the time required to conduct a portion of the inspection and prepare that portion of the inspection report could outweigh the likely usefulness of the information obtained, or could be detrimental to the orderly and timely completion of the client's transaction.

TECO clip: A metal strap that is nailed to secure roof rafters and trusses to the top horizontal wall plate. TECO stands for Timber Engineering Company, a U.K.-based company whose laboratories conduct physical testing and certification of timbers and similar building materials according to their use as defined by the IRC, IBC and ICC. Also called a **hurricane clip**.

tee (T): A T-shaped fitting with three openings.

tempered: Strengthened. Tempered glass will not shatter or create shards when broken, but will pelletize similar to an automobile window upon impact. Required in tub and shower enclosures, entry door glass and sidelight glass, and in windows where the window sill is less than 16 inches above the floor.

termite shield: A shield made of non-corroding metal that is placed in or on a foundation wall or other mass of masonry or around pipes to prevent the passage of termites.

termites: Insects that superficially resemble ants in size, general appearance, and habit of living in colonies. Subterranean termites establish themselves in buildings by entering from ground nests after a building has been constructed. If left alone, they will eat the woodwork, leaving a shell of sound wood to conceal their activities. Their damage may proceed so far as to cause collapse of parts of a structure before discovery. There are about 56 species of termites known in the United States. The two major ones, classified by the manner by which they attack wood, are ground-inhabiting or subterranean termites (the most common), and dry-wood termites, which are found almost exclusively along the extreme southern border and the Gulf of Mexico in the United States.

terneplate: Sheet iron or steel plated with an alloy of lead and tin and used as a roofing material.

terracotta: A ceramic material molded into masonry units and used for roofing tiles and flooring.

terrazzo tile: Named for the town in Italy, a composite material used for floor and wall treatments consisting of marble, quartz, granite, glass or other suitable chips, and poured in place with a binder or precast. The terrazzo is cured and then ground and polished to a smooth surface or otherwise finished to produce a uniformly textured surface.

texture paint: Paint that may be manipulated by a brush, trowel or other tool to produce various patterns.

thermal bridging: Insulation in between studs in a wall does not restrict the heat flow through those studs, and this heat flow is called thermal bridging. The overall R-value of that wall may be different from the R-value of the insulation itself.

thermal images: The images produced by an infrared camera, which can detect radiation beyond the visible spectrum and record light-gradient images representing varying temperatures in enclosed spaces that may indicate electrical hot spots, moisture intrusion, heat loss, insufficient insulation, etc.

thermal imaging: The practice of recording thermal images using an infrared camera, which can detect radiation beyond the visible spectrum and record light-gradient images representing varying temperatures in enclosed spaces that may indicate electrical hot spots, moisture intrusion, heat loss, insufficient insulation, etc. Also called **infrared thermography**.

thermal insulation: Any material high in resistance to heat transmission that, when placed inside walls, ceilings and floors of a structure, reduce the rate of heat flow.

thermal movement: The measured amount of dimensional change that a material exhibits as it is warmed or cooled.

thermal shock: The stress built up by sudden and measurable temperature changes that results in damage of a structural component or in different parts of the same component due to a thermal gradient.

Thermo-ply®: Exterior laminated sheathing nailed to the exterior side of exterior walls; measures 1/4-inch thick and comes in 4x8 and 4x10 sheets with an aluminumized surface.

thermography: The practice of recording thermal images using an infrared camera, which can detect radiation beyond the visible spectrum and record light-gradient images representing varying temperatures in enclosed spaces that may indicate electrical hot spots, moisture intrusion, heat loss, insufficient insulation, etc. Also called **infrared thermography** and **thermal imaging**.

thermopane window: A window composed of a double layer of glass positioned side by side with a thin strip of foam material that bonds the two layers of window glass together to form a storm-window design.

thermoplastic material: Solid material that becomes softened by increasing temperatures and hardened by decreasing temperatures.

thermostat: A device that relegates the temperature of a room or building by switching heating or cooling equipment on or off.

thermostatic valve: A mixing valve that automatically maintains the temperature setting by regulating fluctuations in water temperature at the water inlets and immediately adjusts the ratio of hot and cold water that is discharged by the valve.

thimble: The tube or lining through a wall that a connector passes through to enter a flue or that a flue passes through to exit a roof.

three-dimensional shingles: Shingles that have added dimensionality because of extra layers or tabs, giving them a shake-like appearance. Also called **architectural shingles** and **laminated shingles**.

three-phase: In electrical work, a wiring system consisting of four wires and used in industrial and commercial applications. This system is suitable for installations requiring large motors. It consists of three hot wires and one ground wire. The voltage in each hot wire is out of phase with the others by one-third of a cycle, as if produced by three different generators.

threshold: A strip of wood or metal with beveled edges used over the finish floor and the sill of exterior doors.

through-wall flashing: Flashing that extends completely through a masonry wall, designed and applied in combination with counter-flashings to prevent water that may enter the wall above from proceeding downward into the wall, the roof deck and the roofing system.

THW: A flame-retardant thermoplastic conductor that is moisture- and heat-resistant and can be used in wet and dry locations. The letters THW stand for **thermoplastic, heat and wire**.

tie-in: In roofing, a term used to describe the joining of a new roof with the old.

tilt-up wall: Pre-formed cast-concrete units that, when cured, are tilted to their vertical position and secured by mechanical fasteners to an erected structural steel.

timber: Yard lumber (including beams, stringers, posts, caps, sills girders and purlins) that is 5 inches or more in its least dimension.

time and materials contract: A contract that specifies prices for different elements of a building project, such as the cost of hourly labor, overhead, profit, etc. Such a contract may or may not state a maximum price for such elements.

timely access: Describes access to a subject property and documentation required by an inspector to perform the inspection within a reasonable timeframe.

tinner: A nickname for the heating/HVAC contractor.

tinted glass: Glass that has colorants added during manufacturing that give it color, as well as light- and heat-reducing capabilities. The color extends throughout the thickness of the glass.

tip-up: The downspout extension that directs water from the home's gutter system away from the foundation. It swings up out of the way to make room when mowing the lawn, etc.

title: An instrument, such as a deed, that demonstrates legal ownership of a property.

Title 24: A set of U.S. federal laws that mandates the construction industry to conserve energy.

TJ (TJI): Manufactured truss joints resembling the letter I that are used as floor joists and rafters. I-joists include two key parts: flanges and webs. The flange may be made of laminated veneer lumber or dimensional lumber, usually formed into a width of 1-1/2 inches. The web is commonly made of plywood or oriented strand board (OSB). Large holes can be cut in the web to accommodate ductwork and plumbing waste lines. I-joists are available in lengths up to 60 inches long.

toe bead: Sealant applied at the intersection of the outboard glazing stop and the bottom of the glazing channel of a window. It must be sized to provide a seal to the edge of the glass.

toe-nailing: To drive a nail at a slant to the initial surface in order to permit it to penetrate into a second member.

toilet room: A room containing a water closet or urinal, but not a bathtub or shower.

tongue and groove (T&G): A type of flooring in which the tongue of one board is joined to the groove of another board.

tooling: Pressing in and striking a sealant in a joint to press the sealant against the sides of a joint and secure total adhesion; the finishing off of the surface of a sealant in a joint so that it is flush with the surface.

top chord: The upper or top member of a truss.

top plate: The top horizontal member of a frame wall.

top-mopping: The finished mopping of hot bitumen on a built-up roof.

top-mount faucet: A faucet that is held in place by nuts located underneath the sink. Also called a **center-set faucet**.

torch-down roof: A roofing material used primarily on flat roofs that comes in rolls and is applied to the roof with an open flame or torch. Also called a **single-ply roof** and **modified-bitumen roof**.

torching: Applying direct flame to a membrane for the purpose of melting, heating and/or adhering.

transit: A surveyor's instrument used by builders to establish points and elevations both vertically and horizontally. It can be used to line up stakes and to plumb walls, as well as to measure the angle of elevation from a horizontal plane.

transmitter (garage door): The small push-button device that causes the garage door to open and close.

trap: A plumbing fitting that holds water and prevents air and gas from backing up into a fixture.

tread: A step; the horizontal board in a stairway on which the foot is placed.

treated lumber: A wood product that has been impregnated with chemicals that reduce damage from wood rot and/or insects. Often used for the portions of a structure that are likely to be in contact with soil and/or water. Such wood may also be treated with a fire retardant.

tree crown: The branches growing out from a tree, including twigs and foliage.

tremie: A tube with removable sections and a funnel at the top used in concrete application. The bottom is kept beneath the surface of the concrete and raised as the form is filled and is used to pour concrete underwater.

trim: (1) Interior trim: The finish materials inside a building, such as moldings applied around openings (window trim, door trim), and at the floors and ceilings of rooms (baseboard, cornice, and other moldings). Also, the physical work of installing interior doors and interior woodwork, to include all handrails, guardrails, stairway balustrades, mantles, light boxes, baseboards, door casings, cabinets, countertops, shelves, windowsills, aprons, etc. (2) Plumbing/Heating/Electrical trim: The work that the mechanical contractors perform to finish their work when the home is nearing completion and occupancy. (3) Exterior trim: The finish materials on the exterior of a building, such as moldings applied around openings (window trim, exterior door trim), siding, attic vents, crawlspace vents, shutters, etc. Also, the physical work of installing these materials.

trim kit: Refers to the outside decorative parts that conceal a faucet rough-in.

trimmer: A beam or joist to which a header is nailed in framing for a chimney, stairway or other opening.

triple-glazed window: The most energy-efficient type of window. Gases are sealed between three panes of glass and low-E coatings are applied on two of the panes. This can bring the energy efficiency up to a value of R-10 at the center area of the glass.

truss: A frame or jointed structure designed to act as a beam of long span, while each member is usually subjected to length-wise stress only (either tension or compression).

tub trap: A curved, U-shaped section of a bathtub drainpipe that holds a water seal to prevent sewer gases from entering the home through the tub's water drain.

tuck-pointing: The re-grouting of defective mortar joints in a masonry or brick wall.

turnkey: A term used when the subcontractor provides all materials and labor for a job. Also describes a commercial property that requires little to no modification in order to operate it following its sale, such as a restaurant that will continue to operate as a restaurant following ownership transfer.

turpentine: A volatile oil used as a thinner in paints and as a solvent in varnishes.

TW: Abbreviation for **thermoplastic wire** or conductor that can be used in dry or wet locations, has no outer covering, and is not heat-resistant but is moisture-resistant.

two-part sealant: A product composed of a base and curing agent or accelerator, necessarily packaged in two separate containers that are uniformly mixed just prior to use.

U-value: A measure of air-to-heat transmission (loss or gain) through a window due to the thermal conductance and the difference in indoor and outdoor temperatures. As the U-value decreases, so does the amount of heat that is transferred through the glazing material. The lower the U-value, the more restrictive the fenestration product is to heat transfer. Reciprocal of R-value.

UL (Underwriters Laboratories): A private research firm located in the United States that tests, classifies and determines the safety of household products, especially electrical appliances and electronic devices.

ultraviolet (UV) degradation: A reduction in certain performance limits caused by exposure to ultraviolet light.

ultraviolet rays (UV rays): The invisible rays of the light spectrum that are at its violet end.

undercoat: A coating applied prior to the finishing or top coats of a paint job. It may be the first of two of three coats. Also called a**priming coat**.

undercounter: A style of lavatory that is positioned under the cutout of the countertop.

underground plumbing: The plumbing drain and waste lines that are installed beneath a basement floor.

underlayment: A material placed under finish coverings, such as flooring or shingles, that provides a smooth, even surface for applying the finish.

union: A plumbing fitting that joins pipes end-to-end so that they can be dismantled.

union nut: A fitting that joins two sections of pipe.

unsafe: A condition of an area, system, component or procedure that is judged to be a significant risk of injury to people during normal use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted construction standards.

Uo Value Zone: The Uo Value Zone is determined from a thermal zone map. The Uo value is the overall coefficient of heat transmission of the manufactured home based on the respective thermal zone location and an indoor design temperature of 70º F, and is defined in units of BTU/(hour)(square foot)(º F). The overall Uo value for the home thermal envelope design must not exceed the values as defined by the thermal zone map. The design Uo value for Thermal Zone 1 is 0.116 BTU/hr x ft2 x º F; for Thermal Zone 2 is 0.096 BTU/hr x ft2 x º F; and for Thermal Zone 3 is 0.079 BTU/hr x ft2 x º F.

uprights: Vertical members that support the sides of a trench to prevent its collapse.

utility easement: The area of the earth that holds electrical, gas or telephone lines. These areas may be owned by the homeowner, but the utility company has the legal right to enter the area as necessary to repair and service the lines.

UV rays: Ultraviolet rays from the sun.

VA loan: A home-loan guaranty for the purchase, building, repair, retention or adaptation of an owner-occupied home, with such benefit being insured by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a federal agency that extends various benefits and services to active service members and honorably discharged veterans (and their families) of the U.S. military.

vacuum breaker: An anti-siphon device that prevents wastewater from being drawn back into supply lines and potentially contaminating the water supply; a type of backflow preventer.

valley: The internal angle formed by the junction of two sloping sides of a roof.

valley flashing: Sheet metal or other material used to line a valley in a roof to direct rainwater down into the gutter system.

valley rafter: A rafter of double 2-inch-thick members that forms the intersection of an internal roof angle.

valley shield: A quality underlayment installed for added protection in the areas of a roof that experience heavy water flow. This self-adhering product has a waterproof asphalt coating that offers excellent elongation and recovery properties for accommodating roof expansion and contraction and structural movement.

valuation: An inspection carried out for the benefit of a mortgage lender to determine whether a property is adequate security for a loan.

valuation fee: The fee paid by a prospective borrower for the lender's required inspection of a property.

valve: A device to stop, start or regulate the flow of liquid or gas through or from piping.

vapor: The gaseous form of a substance.

vapor barrier: A a plastic or foil membrane that is placed between the insulation and the roof deck, as well as the ceiling, wall and floor assemblies, which resists the diffusion of water vapor from the building and into the insulation, where it may subsequently condense into liquid water and cause structural problems.

vapor diffusion retarder (vapor retarder): Any substance, including a treated paper or foil membrane, special paint or film that prevents the transmission of water vapor. Vapor diffusion retarders are effective for controlling moisture in basements, crawlspaces, and slab-on-grade foundations.

variable rate: An interest rate that varies over the term of a loan.

varnish: A thickened preparation of drying oil, with or without resin, that is suitable for spreading on surfaces to form a continuous, transparent coating, or for mixing with pigments to make enamels.

vehicle: The liquid portion of a finishing material that consists of the non-volatile binder and volatile thinners.

veining: In roofing, the characteristic lines that develop during the aging process of soft bitumens. Also, minor cracking that resembles spider veins occurs

naturally during the curing process of cement. These cracks are normal and no cause for alarm, unless they grow, which would indicate a potential problem requiring further investigation.

veneer: A thin surface layer of wood or decorative brick facing that is overlaid and adhered as a façade to a base of inferior materials.

vent: A pipe or duct that permits the flow of air as an inlet or outlet; to create a vent or system of venting.

vent pipe: A vertical pipe of relatively small dimensions that protrudes through a roof to provide for the ventilation of gases or exhaust from various combustion systems or appliances, including a heater/furnace, clothes dryer, water heater, etc., as well as stale or damp air, odors, grease and contaminants, such as from a range, bathroom, attic, etc.

vent stack: A vertical vent pipe installed for the purpose of providing circulation of air to and from any part of a drainage system.

vent system: In plumbing, a system that provides air flow to or from a drain-waste-vent (DWV) system, or the circulation of air within such a system to protect traps and seals from siphonage and back-pressure.

ventilation: The natural or mechanical process of exchanging air in an interior space, and includes both the exchange of air to the outside, as well as the circulation of air within a building. It is one of the most important factors for controlling excessive moisture indoors and for maintaining acceptable indoor air quality.

ventilator: A device installed on a roof for the purpose of ventilating the interior of the building.

venting: The process of installing roof vents in a roof assembly to relieve vapor pressure. Also, the process by which water in the insulation course of the roof assembly evaporates and exits via the roof vents. See also **vent** and **ventilation**.

verify: To confirm or substantiate.

vermiculite: An aggregate similar to perlite that is formed from mica, a hydrous silicate, with the ability to expand upon heating to form a lightweight material with insulative qualities. Used in lightweight roof decks and deck infills, as well as bulk insulation, and as aggregate in acoustical plaster and concrete.

vertical: Upright; being or situated at a right angle to the horizon.

viscosity: The extent to which a fluid resists a tendency to flow.

visible: That which may be easily observed during the walk-through survey portion of an inspection.

visible light transmittance: The percentage of visible light within the solar spectrum (390 to 770 nanometers) that is transmitted through glass.

Visqueen: The brand name for a U.K.-based product of 4-mil to 10-mil plastic sheeting used as a groundcover and vapor barrier in the crawlspace of a home, a damp-proof course in a roof, a damp-proof membrane for exterior walls, a protective tarpaulin over setting concrete, and a waterproof membrane to line decorative ponds.

visual mock-up: A small-scale model of a finished construction product or project.

vitreous China: A non-porous ceramic that is coated with a ceramic glaze to form toilets and lavatories.

void: A rectangular cardboard box that is installed between the earth (between caissons) and a concrete foundation wall in the presence of expansive soils.

volatile thinner: A liquid that evaporates readily and is used to thin or reduce the consistency of finishes without altering the relative volumes of pigment and non-volatile vehicles.

voltage: The driving force behind the flow of electricity, similar to the pressure in a water pipe. Most U.S. homes are wired with 110- and 220-volt lines, with the 110-volt power used for lighting and most of the other circuits, and the 220-volt power used for the refrigerator/freezer, stove, water heater, clothes washing machine and dryer, and similar large household appliances.

voltmeter: A device that measures the voltage flowing through a circuit.

waferboard: Another name for particleboard.

walk-through: A final inspection of a home for sale before its closing and during which the inspector looks for and documents problems that need to be corrected.

walk-through survey: That portion of the inspection during which the inspector makes non-invasive, visual observations of readily accessible areas of the subject property and documents his/her findings.

walkway: An exterior area designated for foot traffic.

wall protector: A non-combustible shield between a wall and anything heat-producing for the purpose of reducing required clearance.

wall-out: To spray-paint the interior of a home.

wane: The defective edge of a wood board caused by remaining bark or a beveled end.

warping: Any distortion in a material.

warranty: An assurance by the seller of goods and/or services that such items and/or services are as represented or will be or will last as promised for a pre-determined period. A builder's warranty on a new-construction home is generally for one year, during which time the builder and his/her subcontractors will repair or replace an item that fails during normal use and under normal conditions. New-home warranties may vary in length for materials, workmanship and labor.

waste and overflow: A bathtub drain assembly that has an outlet near or at the top to remove overflow water when filling the tub and an outlet at the bottom to remove wastewater when the tub is drained.

waste pipe and vent: Plastic plumbing pipe that carries wastewater to the municipal sewage system.

water board: Drywall with an outer layer of water-resistant paper, typically green or blue, that is used in tub and shower locations. Also called **greenboard**.

water closet: Another term for toilet.

water meter pit: The box, cast-iron bonnet and concrete rings that contain the water meter. Also called a **water meter vault**.

water table: The location of naturally occurring underground water, and the vertical distance from the surface of the earth to this underground water. Water tables vary by locality, geography, etc.

water tap: The point at which the home water line connects to the main municipal water system.

water vapor: Moisture in its gas state in air.

water-cement ratio: The ratio of cement to water in a concrete mixture, which ultimately determines the concrete's strength. More water in the mix results in a

weaker concrete. Concrete mixes are identified in ratios of cement to fine aggregate to coarse aggregate. For example, the ratio 1:2:4 refers to a mix consisting of 1 cubic foot of cement, 2 cubic feet of sand, and 4 cubic feet of gravel. Cement and water are the two chemically active elements in concrete which, when combined, form a paste or glue that coats and surrounds the particles of aggregate and, upon hardening, binds the entire mass together.

water-repellent coating: A transparent coating or sealer applied to the surface of concrete and masonry surfaces to repel water.

water-repellent preservative: A liquid designed to penetrate into wood to repel water and provide a moderate level of protection. It is used for millwork, such as sashes and frames, and is usually applied by dipping.

waterproof, waterproofing: Descriptive of a product and the process by which a building component is made totally resistant to the passage or penetration of water and/or water vapor.

wattage: The electrical unit of power. A kilowatt equals 1,000 watts. Customers of an electric utility are billed on a monthly basis according to the number kilowatts of power they have used (or are predicted to use under budget billing plans).

wax ring: A thick, pre-formed wax ring located between a toilet's bowl and the floor flange, which provides a watertight connection to the soil drain (sewer).

wax ring job: The removal of a toilet from the floor so that a blockage can be manually removed; also, the replacement of a degraded wax ring to create a new seal.

WC: Abbreviation for water closet (toilet).

weatherization: The work on a building's exterior features with the goal of reducing its energy consumption (heating and/or cooling), and typically involving adding insulation, installing storm windows and doors, caulking cracks, and adding weatherstripping.

weatherstrip, weatherstripping: Jamb-width or narrower sections of thin metal, rubber or other material that prevent the infiltration of air and moisture around windows and doors. Compression weatherstripping prevents air infiltration, provides tension, and acts as a counter-balance.

weathertight: Sealed against the intrusion of rain, snow, cold air, etc.

weep hole: A hole located near the base of a masonry or glazing structure that allows for the drainage of entrapped water.

weep screed: A type of flashing material installed along the base and at roof-wall transitions of exterior stucco or stone that drains excess moisture.

weld: The joining of components by fusing; also, the resulting joint. To join (metals) by applying heat with pressure or an intermediate or filler metal having a high melting point. In thermoplastics, refers to the bonding together of a membrane using heat or solvents.

well casing: A steel or plastic pipe that serves as the lining of a well, preventing it from caving in, and protecting groundwater from contamination by surface water.

well casing head: A heavy, flanged steel fitting connected to the first string of a casing.

well house: A structure that encloses a private well.

wet or dry surface plastic roof cement: A general-purpose exterior repair and maintenance material that can be used on both damp and dry surfaces, and typically used to stop roof leaks.

wet seal: An elastomeric sealant between window glass and its sash to form a weathertight seal.

whole-house fan: A type of fan or exhaust system installed in a home's attic that is designed to pull air out of the building and force it into the attic space, causing a positive pressure differential in the attic, and forcing the air out through the gable or soffit vents, while simultaneously producing a negative pressure differential inside the living areas, which draws air in through open windows; not to be confused with an attic fan, which removes some hot air from the attic space.

widespread: In plumbing, a style of lavatory faucet whose spout and handles are separate. Flex hoses are used between the spout and handles to allow adjustable centers.

wind bracing: Metal straps or wood blocks installed diagonally on the inside of a wall from bottom to top plate that prevent the wall from twisting, racking or falling over in a domino fashion.

wind uplift: The upward force exerted by wind traveling across a roof.

window: An opening constructed in a wall or roof that functions to admit light or air to an enclosure and is typically framed and spanned with glass mounted to permit opening and closing; a framework enclosing a pane of glass for such an opening; a sash; a pane of glass or similar material enclosed in such a framework.

window buck: A square or rectangular box (buck) that is installed within a concrete foundation or block wall for a window that will eventually be installed during the siding stage of construction.

window frame: The stationary part of a window unit; the window sash fits into the window frame.

window sash: The operating or movable part of a window; the sash is made of window panes and their borders.

wire nut: A plastic cap used to cover and connect bare wires together.

wire size: A system used to determine the resistance of electrical wire. Conductors for building wiring are available in AWG (American Wire Gauge) sizes ranging from No. 14 to 4/0. The larger the number size, the smaller the diameter. For example, 10 wire is smaller than 8. The larger the diameter of a wire, the less its resistance.

WonderBoard®: A panel made of concrete and fiberglass used as a ceramic-tile backing material, typically on bathtub decks.

wood filler: A heavily pigmented preparation used for fining and leveling off the pores in open-pored woods.

wood rays: Strips of wood cells that extend radially within a tree, varying in height from a few cells in some species to 4 inches or more in oak. The rays serve primarily to store food and transport it horizontally in the tree.

wood-fiber plaster: A plaster consisting of calcified gypsum that is integrally mixed with selected coarse cellulose to provide bulk and coverage. It is formulated to produce high-strength base coats for use in highly fire-resistant ceiling assemblies.

work life: The time during which a curing sealant remains suitable for use after being mixed with a catalyst.

workmanlike: Executed in a skilled manner.

woven valley: A method of valley construction by which shingles from both sides of the valley extend across the valley and are woven together by overlapping alternate courses as they are applied. The valley flashing is not exposed.

wrapped drywall: Areas that get complete drywall covering, as in the doorway openings of bifold and bypass closet doors.

wythe: A wythe is a continuous vertical section of masonry one unit in thickness. A wythe may be independent of, or interlocked with, the adjoining wythe(s). A single wythe of brick that is not structural in nature is referred to as a veneer. A multiple-wythe masonry wall may be composed of a single type of masonry unit layered to increase its thickness and structural strength, or different masonry units chosen by function, such as an economical concrete block serving a structural purpose and a more expensive brick chosen for its appearance.

Y: A Y-shaped plumbing fitting used to attach branch lines or to redirect flow. Also called a **Y-fitting**.

yard: An open space on the same lot with a building.

yard lumber: Lumber of grades, sizes and patterns that are generally intended for ordinary construction, such as framework and rough coverage of houses.

yard of concrete: One cubic yard of concrete that is 3x3x3-feet in volume, or 27 cubic feet. One cubic yard of concrete will pour 80 square feet of a sidewalk or basement or garage floor that is 3-1/2 inches thick.

yoke: The location of a home's water meter installed in a pit in the yard between two copper pipes.

Z-bar flashing: Bent, galvanized metal flashing that is installed above a horizontal trim board of an exterior window, door, or brick run that prevents water from getting behind the trim/brick and into the home.

zone: The section of a building that is served by one heating or cooling loop because it has noticeably distinct heating or cooling needs. Also, the section of property that is watered by a lawn sprinkler system.

zone valve: A device placed near the heater or cooler that controls the flow of water or steam to parts of a building and controlled by a zone thermostat.

zoning: A governmental process and specification that limits the use of a property, such as for single-family use, high-rise residential use, commercial use, industrial use, etc. Zoning laws typically limit where a particular structure can be built and are related to the locality's building codes.