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Saber Saw: A saw that cuts on the upstroke, good side of wood faces down.

Sack Mix: The amount of Portland cement in a cubic yard of concrete mix. Generally, 5 or 6 sack is required in a foundation wall.

Saddle: Two sloping surfaces meeting in a horizontal ridge, used between the back side of a chimney, or other vertical surface, and a sloping roof.

Sales Contract: A contract between a buyer and seller which should explain: (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 at the agreed upon time.

Sand Float Finish: Lime mixed with sand, resulting in a textured finish.

Sanitary Sewer: A sewer system designed for the collection of waste water from the bathroom, kitchen and laundry drains, and is usually not designed to handle storm water.

Sanitary T: Used on the waste side of plumbing to keep effluent flowing the correct direction.

Sapwood: The outer zone of wood, next to the bark. In the living tree it contains some living cells (the heartwood contains none), as well as dead and dying cells. In most species, it is lighter colored than the heartwood. In all species, it is lacking in decay resistance.

Sash: A single light frame containing one or more lights of glass.

Sash Balance: A device, usually operated by a spring or tensioned weatherstripping designed to counterbalance double-hung window sash.

Saturant: Asphalt used to impregnate a felt-base material.

Saturated Felt: A felt which is impregnated with tar or asphalt.

SBS-Modified: Asphalt that has been combined with SBS (styrene-butadiene-styrene) polymers to increase its elasticity.

Scale: The relationship between actual measurements on a page of plans or blue prints and the actual measurements of the building represented by the plans or blue prints.

Schedule (Window, Door, Mirror): A table on the blueprints that list the sizes, quantities and locations of the windows, doors and mirrors.

Scope of Work: Work that deviates from this standard depending on budget, time constraints, purpose of the inspection, age of the subject property, and risk tolerance of the client which the inspector and client have agreed to.

Scrap Out: The removal of all drywall material and debris after the home is "hung out" (installed) with drywall.

Scratch Coat: The first coat of plaster, which is scratched to form a bond for the second coat.

Screed or Screeding: The wood or metal straightedge used to strike off or level newly placed concrete when doing cement work. Screeds can be the leveling device used or the form work used to level or establish the level of the concrete. Screeds can be hand used or mechanical.

Screw Lamp Holder: A lamp base that requires a screw-in-type lamp such as a compact florescent, 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 the other 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 used for dressing and trimming brick to a special shape. It resembles a small pick.

Sealant: An elastomeric material with adhesive qualities applied between components of a similar or dissimilar nature to provide an effective barrier against the passage of the elements.

Sealer: A finishing material, either clear or pigmented, that is usually applied directly over uncoated wood for the purpose of sealing the surface.

Seasoning: Removing moisture from green wood in order to improve its serviceability.

Seat: The fixed part of a valve. The stem assembly will move up and down against the seat to open and close the valve.

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.

Self-Healing: A term used to describe to a material which 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.

Selvage: The unsurfaced strip along a sheet of roll roofing which forms the under portion at the lap in the application of the roof covering.

Semigloss (Paint or Enamel): A paint or enamel made with a slight insufficiency of nonvolatile vehicle so that its coating, when dry, has some luster but is not very glossy.

Separation: In concrete application, when 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 from the 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 which can be programmed to various temperatures at different times of the day/week. Usually used as the heating or cooling system thermostat.

Setting Blocks: Generally rectangular cured extrusions of neoprene, EPDM, silicone, rubber or other suitable material on which the glass product bottom edge is placed to effectively support the weight of the glass.

Settlement: Shifts in a structure, usually caused by freeze-thaw cycles underground.

Sewage Ejector: A pump used to 'lift' waste water to a gravity sanitary sewer line. Usually used in basements and other locations which are situated below the level of the side sewer.

Sewer Lateral: The portion of the sanitary sewer which connects the interior waste water 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, must be maintained by the owner and may only be serviced by utility approved contractors. Sometimes called 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" (3mm) clear glass.

Shake: A thick handsplit shingle, resawed 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 outer wall covering nailed to the studs or rafters.

Sheathing Paper: A building material, generally paper or felt, used in wall and roof construction as a protection against the passage of air and sometimes moisture.

Shed Roof: A roof having only one slope or pitch, with only one set of rafters which fall from a higher to a lower wall.

Sheet Metal Duct Work: The heating system. Usually round or rectangular metal pipes and sheet metal (for return Aar) and installed for distributing warm (or cold) air from the furnace to rooms in the home.

Sheet Metal Work: All components of a house employing sheet metal, such as flashing, gutters, and downspouts.

Sheetrock: Panels made primarily from gypsum installed over the framing to form the interior walls and ceilings. Sheetrock is often called gypsum board.

Shelf-Life: Used in the glazing and sealant business to refer to the length of time a product may be stored before beginning to lose its effectiveness. Manufacturers usually state the shelf life and the necessary storage conditions on the package.

Shellac: A transparent coating made by dissolving lac, a resinous secretion of the lac bug (a scale insect that thrives in tropical countries, especially India), in alcohol.

Shingles: Roof covering of asphalt, wood, tile, slate, or other material cut to stock lengths, widths, and thicknesses, which are laid 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: Measure of firmness of a compound by means of a Durometer Hardness Gauge. A hardness range of 20-25 is about the firmness of an art gum eraser. A hardness of about 90 is about the firmness of a rubber heel.

Shoring: A temporary support erected in a trench or other excavation to support 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: Estimated cost of repairs which may not require immediate attention, but which should not be delayed for more than 2 years.

Shut Down: Turned off, unplugged, inactive, not in service, or not operational.

Shutoff Valve: The valve that allows water supply to be cut off to one fixture without affecting the water supply to the entire house or building. Common for use with clawfoot tubs, sinks, and toilets.

Shutter: Usually lightweight louvered or flush wood or nonwood frames in the form of doors located at each side of a window. Some are made to close over the window for protection; others are fastened to the wall as a decorative device.

Side Sewer: The portion of the sanitary sewer which connects the interior waste water 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, must be maintained by the owner and may only be serviced by utility approved contractors. Sometimes called sewer lateral.

Siding: The finish covering of the outside wall of a frame building, whether made of horizontal weatherboards, vertical boards with battens, shingles, or other material.

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 sealant having as its chemical compound a backbone consisting of alternating silicon-oxygen atoms.

Sill: The lowest member of the frame of a structure, resting on the foundation and supporting the floor joists or the uprights of the wall. The member forming the lower side of an opening, as in a door sill, window sill, etc.

Sill Cock: An exterior water faucet (hose bib).

Sill Plate: The framing member anchored to the foundation wall upon which studs and other framing members will be attached. It is 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 or gaps.

Sill Sealer: A material placed between the top of the foundation wall and the sill plate. Usually a foam strip, the sill sealer helps make a better fit and eliminate water problems.

Sill Step: The first step coming directly off a building at the door openings.

Single Coverage: Asphalt roofing that provides one layer of roofing material over the deck.

Single Family Dwelling (SFD): A house built for the purpose of a single family as opposed to multi 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 Tee: The name given to a type of precast concrete deck which has one stiffening rib integrally cast into slab.

Single-wall, metal chimney: A typically field-constructed chimney not permitted in 1- and 2-family dwellings.

Skip Sheathing: The normal base for shake, shingle and some tile roofs. 1"x4" or similar sized boards are nailed at 90 degree angles to the rafters leaving a space of about 4" between each row and allowing 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 somewhat above the plane of the roof surface.

Slab on Grade: A type of construction in which footings are needed but little or no foundation wall is poured.

Slab, Concrete: Concrete pavement, i.e. driveways, garages, and basement floors.

Slab, Door: A rectangular door without hinges or frame.

Slag: A by-product of smelting ore such as iron, lead or copper. Also overburden/dropping from welding which 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: Usually, a wood member embedded in concrete, as in a floor, that serves to support and to fasten subfloor or flooring.

Sleeping Unit: A room or space in which people sleep.

Sleeve(s): Pipe installed under the concrete driveway or sidewalk, and that will be used later to run sprinkler pipe or low voltage wire.

Slope: Incline or pitch of roof surface.

Sloped Glazing: Any installation of glass that is at a slope of 15 degrees or more from vertical.

Sludge: Term for the waste material found in sump pump pits, septic systems and gutters.

Slump: The "wetness" of concrete. A 3 inch slump is dryer and stiffer than a 5 inch slump.

Slump-Test: Measures the consistency of a concrete mix or its stiffness. If the tests results are high, one likely cause would be too much water. Low slump test results mean not enough water. The test is measured in inches.

Smoke Alarm: A single or multiple alarm responsive to smoke and not connected to a sprinkler system.

Smoke Detector: A device that senses particles of combustion.

Smooth-Surfaced Roofing: Roll roofing that is covered with ground talc or mica instead of 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 (Ground Cover): A light covering of plastic film, roll roofing, or similar material used over the soil in crawl spaces of buildings to minimize moisture permeation of the area.

Soil Stack: A general term for the vertical main of a system of soil, waste, or vent piping.

Sole Plate: 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 joists from twisting.

Solid-fuel: Wood, coal, pellets, and other materials that can be burned for heat.

Sonotube: Round, large cardboard tubes designed to hold wet concrete in place until it hardens.

Sound Attenuation: Sound proofing a wall or subfloor, generally with fiberglass insulation.

Space Heat: Heat supplied to the living space, for example, to a room or the living area of a building.

Spacers (Shims): Small blocks of neoprene, EPDM, silicone or other suitable material placed on each side of the glass product to provide glass centering, maintain uniform width of sealant bead and prevent excessive sealant distortion.

Spalling: The chipping or flaking of concrete, bricks, or other masonry where improper drainage or venting and freeze/thaw cycling exists.

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, which conceal structural columns, floors, and shear walls.

Spec Home: A house built before it is sold. The builder speculates that he can sell it at a profit.

Special Consultant: A person with particular expertise in a subject who assists the inspector with portions of the inspection.

Special Equipment: Any tools or devices other than those normally used by an inspector 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 or 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 or wind-driven rain.

Specification: 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 to 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: The removal of gravel or heavy accumulations of bitumen from roof membranes by means of chipping or scraping.

Square: A unit of measure, e.g. 100 square feet, usually applied to roofing material. Sidewall coverings are sometimes packed to cover 100 square feet and are sold on that basis.

Square Foot: Coverage measured by multiplying width by length. An area 5 foot long and 7 foot wide is equal to 35 square foot.

Squeegie: Fine pea gravel used to grade a floor (normally before concrete is placed).

Stack: The vertical pipe of a system of soil, waste or vent piping.

Stack Vent: Also called a waste vent or soil vent, it is the extension of a soil or waste stack above the highest horizontal drain connected to the stack.

Stain: A form of oil paint, very thin in consistency, intended for coloring wood with rough surfaces, such as shingles, without forming a coating of significant thickness or gloss.

Stair Carriage: Supporting member for stair treads. Usually a 2-inch plank notched to receive the treads; sometimes called a "rough horse."

Standard: Often used to mean InterNACHI' Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties.

Standard Practices of the Trade(s): One of the more common basic and minimum construction standards. This is 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 given surface areas.

Static Vent: A vent that does not include a fan.

STC (Sound Transmission Class): A single number rating derived from individual transmission losses at specified test frequencies. It is used for interior walls, ceilings and floors.

Steel Inspection: A municipal and/or engineer's inspection of the concrete foundation wall, conducted before concrete is poured into the foundation panels. Done to insure that the rebar (reinforcing bar), rebar nets, void material, beam pocket plates, and basement window bucks are installed and wrapped with rebar and complies with the foundation plan.

Steel Trowel: Tool used for non-porous smooth finishes of concrete. It is a flat steel tool used to spread and smooth plaster, mortar or concrete. 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 smooth finish, use a trowel when the concrete begins to stiffen.

Stem: A small shaft or rod that projects through the faucet valve and 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 Croack: Hairline, "staircase"-type steps near the corners of the foundation, usually due to normal soil settlement. Larger such cracks may indicate ongoing movement or sinking of the foundation and are much more grave.

Step Flashing: Individual small pieces of metal flashing material used to flash around chimneys, dormers, and such 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. It is related to the specific frequency at which it is measured and it is expressed in decibels. Also called "Transmission Loss."

Stool: A flat molding fitted over the window sill between jambs and contacting the bottom rail of the lower sash.

Stop: See shutoff valve.

Stop Box: Normally a cast iron pipe with a lid (5" in diameter) that is placed vertically into the ground, 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 off/on the water.

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.

Storefront: A nonresidential system of doors and windows typically at floor level of a 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 or Storm Window: An extra window usually placed outside of an existing one, as additional protection against cold weather.

Storm Sewer: A sewer system designed to collect storm water and is separated from the waste water 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 next 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: The operation of smoothing off excess compound or sealant at sight line when applying same around lites or panels.

String (or Stringer): A timber or other support for cross members in floors or ceilings. In stairs, the support on which the stair treads rest; also Stringboard.

String Line: A nylon line usually strung tightly between supports to indicate both direction and elevation, used in checking grades or deviations in slopes or rises. Used in landscaping to level the ground.

Strip Flooring: Wood flooring consisting of narrow, matched strips.

Structural Component: A component which supports the building's dead and live loads.

Structural Floor: A framed lumber floor that is installed as a basement floor instead of concrete. This is done on very expansive soils.

Structural Silicone Glazing: The use of a silicone sealant for the structural transfer of loads from the glass to its perimeter support system and retention of the glass in the opening.

Structure: An assemblage of various systems and components to function as a whole.

Stub: See Rough-In.

Stucco: A type of exterior finish. Most commonly refers to an outside 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.

Stud Shoe: A metal, structural bracket that reinforces a vertical stud. Used on an outside bearing wall where holes are drilled to accommodate a plumbing waste line.

Sub-Rough: That 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 to be laid.

Subject Property: The commercial property that is the subject of the inspection.

Substrate: A part or substance which lies below and supports another.

Suggested Remedy: An opinion offered as to a course of action to repair a deficiency. Suggested remedies are outside the scope of a commercial inspection.

Sump: Pit or large plastic bucket/barrel inside the home designed to collect ground water from a perimeter drain system.

Sump Pump: A submersible pump in a sump pit that pumps any excess ground water to the outside of the home.

Suspended Ceiling: A ceiling system supported by hanging it from the overhead structural framing.

Sway Brace: Metal straps or wood blocks installed diagonally on the inside of a wall from bottom to top plate, to prevent the wall from twisting, racking, or falling over "domino" fashion.

Switch: A device that completes or disconnects an electrical circuit.

System: An assembly of various components which function as a whole.