

Chimney Inspections

All chimneys need annual inspections. Inspections cover not only whether a chimney needs cleaning, but also safety and fire code compliance.

The National Fire Protection Agency has created a nationwide standard for inspections (The NFPA 211), which has been adopted as part of the Fire Code for New Hampshire, which means that it must be followed by contractors, real estate agents, insurance providers, as well as homeowners. There have been updates to the code effective 9/2019 but still includes the NFPA 211 ([new list of codes](#)). The NFPA 211 has been part of the State Fire Codes for years.

The NFPA 211 code recognizes 3 levels of inspection and the times that each inspection is appropriate. A Level I inspection is part of every cleaning that we do. **A Level II inspection is required for Real Estate transactions or when changing appliances.** We have the video scanning equipment for Level II inspections (and some photos at the bottom of the page from actual inspections). A Level III inspection is the most thorough, and extreme, used to discover things like completely hidden combustibles. Most problems can be determined with a Level I or II. The NFPA 211 is below, if you have any questions as to what each type is, or what you need, please call us.

The NFPA Inspections Codes, directly quoted, with permission, NFPA 211 Table 14.3.1 "Selection of inspection type":

Level I

Scope: Inspect readily accessible areas of the chimney, structure, and flue; lack of obstruction or combustible deposits in flue; basic appliance installation and connection.

Degree of Access Required: Readily accessible portions of chimney exterior and interior, accessible portions of appliance and chimney connection.

Circumstances: Annual inspection as required by Section 13.2; during routine cleaning of chimney flue, upon direct replacement of connected appliance with one of a similar type, input rating and efficiency.

Indications: For verification of suitability of the chimney for continued service, under the same conditions and with the same appliance or appliances

Level II

Scope: All subjects of a Level I inspection; proper construction and condition of accessible portions of the chimney structure and all enclosed flues; proper clearances from combustibles in accessible locations; size and suitability of flues for connected appliances.

Degree of Access Required: All accessible portions of the chimney exterior and interior, including areas within accessible attics, crawl spaces, and basements, and accessible portions of the appliance and chimney connection; includes inspection by video scanning or other means.

Circumstances: Upon addition or removal of one or more connected appliances or replacement of appliance with one of dissimilar type, input rating, or efficiency; prior to relining or replacement of flue lining; upon sale or transfer of the property; after operating malfunction or external event likely to have caused damage to the chimney.

Indications: For verification of suitability of the chimney for new or changed service; Level I inspection not sufficient to determine serviceability of the chimney

Level III

Scope: All subjects of Level I and Level II inspections, proper construction and condition of concealed portions of chimney structure and enclosed flues, proper clearances from combustibles.

Degree of Access Required: External and internal portions of chimney structure, including concealed areas of the building or chimney; includes the removal of components of building or chimney were necessary, but only as necessary to gain access to the areas that are the subject of the inspection.

Circumstances: Where necessary for the investigation of an incident that has caused damage to the chimney or building; where a hazard detected or suspected as the result of a Level I or Level II inspection cannot be fully evaluated without access to concealed areas.

Indications: When construction of all or part of chimney is deemed critical to its renewed or continued use; required only for those areas that cannot be properly evaluated by a Level I or Level II inspection.

The following pictures are from actual scans, which illustrates what can be found during a scan.

