

The Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) reports that a new industry standard for chimney and venting inspections has been adopted to help homeowners better understand the level of work required by a certified chimney sweep to adequately examine a system. Until now, the scope of work during an inspection has been at the professional discretion of the certified chimney sweep.

"Providing accurate and complete information to homeowners is one of the primary missions of a certified chimney sweep," says Mark McSweeney, executive director of the CSIA. "It's their goal to give homeowners piece of mind. This new standard helps define for homeowners the type of inspection their certified chimney sweep needs to complete." This new standard now classifies chimney and venting system inspections into three levels -- Level I, Level II or Level III. Each level of inspection has a specific scope of work and specific criteria.

On January 13, 2000, the National Fire Protection Association adopted these levels of inspection into code NFPA 211 (Standard for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents and Solid Fuel Burning Appliances). NFPA 211 is the standard upon which certified chimney sweeps base their services.

Once the inspection level is determined, the certified chimney sweep explains the scope of work to the homeowner as follows:

**Level I Inspection:** This inspection is recommended when the chimney and venting system is easily accessible and when the homeowner is planning to maintain its current use. In general, this is the level of inspection performed in most homes. In a Level I inspection a certified chimney sweep verifies that the chimney structure is sound and that the chimney is free of obstructions and combustible deposits, such as creosote.

**Level II Inspection:** The addition of a new home heating appliance or a change in the type of fuel a homeowner is burning requires a Level II inspection. This inspection level is also required upon the sale or transfer of a property or after an operating malfunction or external event that is likely to have caused damage to the chimney. The scope of a Level II inspection includes that of the Level I inspection plus the inspection of accessible portions of the attics, crawl spaces and basements. It may also include a performance test such as a smoke test or a pressure test and possibly an interior chimney video inspection if recommended by the certified chimney sweep.

**Level III Inspection:** When a Level I or Level II inspection suggests a hidden hazard and the evaluation cannot be performed without access to concealed areas, a Level III inspection is recommended. This type of inspection confirms the proper construction and condition of concealed

portions of the chimney structure and the flue. Level III inspections are generally necessary when investigating an incident that has caused damage to a chimney or building, or where a hazard is detected and suspected.

Read more:

<http://www.doityourself.com/stry/chimneyinspections#ixzz0yZibPrac>