



Guide to a Successful Rental Housing Inspection

Single-Family



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To schedule an inspection or for additional information, please call 515-239-5153.

1 - KITCHEN

Rental Inspection Preparation

- GFCI
 - **All** receptacles serving the kitchen countertop surfaces must be ground-fault protected (GFCI). Replace any painted or non-functioning GFCI's.
- 2-A: 10-BC Fire Extinguisher
 - All dwelling units must have one charged and operable 2-A: 10-BC rated fire extinguisher. Two types of extinguishers are available:

Non-Rechargeable

- Replace after 12 years from the date on the extinguisher
- Typically has a plastic handle
- One time use

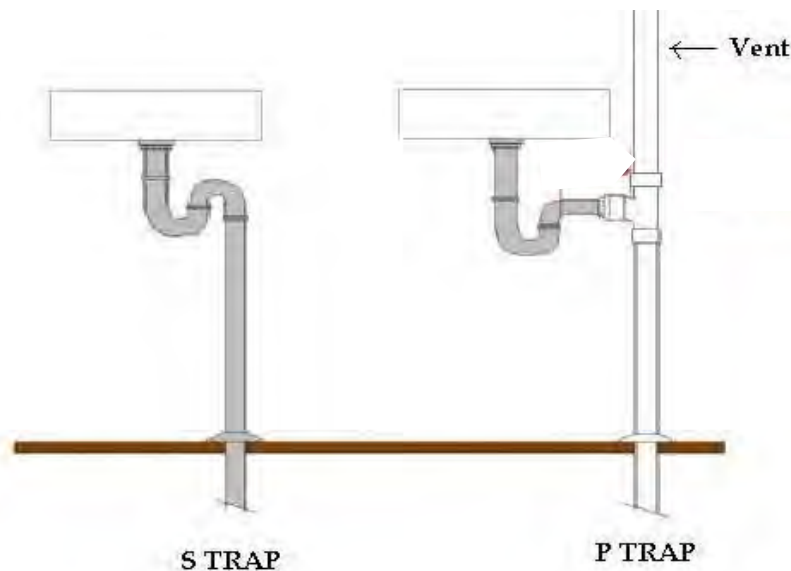


Re-chargeable

- Annual certification required by trained person
- Date is on label - must be tagged for the current year
- Typically has a metal handle and pin



- Plumbing
 - Sink - Faucet
 - All plumbing fixtures must be properly installed and maintained in working order. Check for leaks and defects and make sure the fixtures are in a safe, sanitary and functional condition.
 - Drain – Vent
 - All existing s-traps must be replaced by a compliant trap and vent system.



2 – Bathroom/Toilet Room

Rental Inspection Preparation

- ☐ GFCI
 - Ground-fault protected receptacles are required in the bathroom (all 125-volt receptacles). Each bathroom must have at least one duplex electrical outlet for use.
- ☐ Impervious Floor Covering –Toilet Rooms Only (contains toilet but not a shower or bathtub)
 - All toilet room floors must have a nonabsorbent surface to maintain sanitary conditions. Existing sanitary carpeting will be treated as a “noted” item which means that it will need to be replaced prior to the next inspection. Unsanitary carpeting will be “cited” and must be removed within 30 days of notice.
- ☐ Window – Exhaust Vent Fan
 - All bathrooms must have either an openable window or an exhaust vent fan that works.
- ☐ Plumbing
 - Sink - Faucet
 - Check for leaks and defects and make sure the fixtures are in a safe, sanitary and functional condition.
 - Drain – Vent
 - All existing s-traps must be replaced by a compliant trap and vent system.
 - Faucet Below Flood Rim
 - Water inlets (faucets) for plumbing fixtures must be located above the flood level rim of a fixture.



- ☐ Seal Bathtub/Shower
- ☐ Gas Water Heater in Bathroom
 - A gas-fired water heater cannot be located in a bedroom or a room that opens directly into a bedroom or a bathroom. This does not include direct vent appliances.



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3 - Bedroom

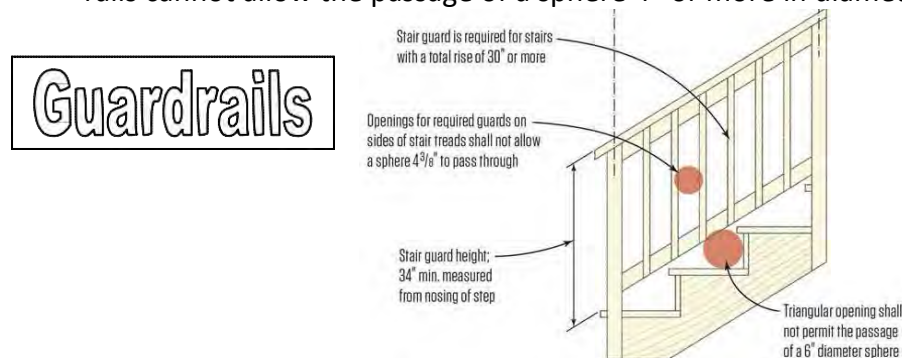
Rental Inspection Preparation

- Closet Lights
 - All clothes closets must have fully enclosed globed fixtures or the existing fixture can be completely removed. If the fixture is removed, the wiring must be properly terminated and covered with a plate. Wire cages are not considered to be fully enclosed.
- Definition of a clothes closet: A non-habitable room or space intended primarily for storage of garments and apparel.
- Smoke Detectors
 - Operable smoke detectors must be in place in each bedroom, in the hallway immediately outside of each bedroom, and on every level. This does not include crawl spaces or uninhabitable attics. Smoke detectors should be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - All new or replaced smoke detectors must be Dual-Sensor Smoke Detectors. In order to meet the definition of a dual sensor, the detector must:
 - Have both a photoelectric and ionization sensor installed, OR
 - Have two sensors installed, at least one of which detects smoke and one of which detects other hazards such as heat or carbon monoxide.
 - Gas Water Heater in Bedroom
 - A gas-fired water heater cannot be located in a bedroom or a room that opens directly into a bedroom or bathroom. This would not include direct vent appliance.

4 – Interior (General)

Rental Inspection Preparation

- Fireplace (Wood Burning Only)
 - A written safety certification from a professional (licensed chimney sweep or certified individual) is required to verify that the fireplace is being maintained in a safe manner. As an alternative, the fireplace can be closed off from tenant use.
- Stairs
 - Every interior stairway and all parts attached including treads, risers, stringers, and handrails must be properly anchored and capable of supporting the normally imposed loads. Stairs should not have broken steps and steps must be securely fastened. Stairs/steps should not lean or sag.
- Handrails - Guardrails
 - Every flight of stairs having four or more risers must have a handrail on one side of the stair.
 - Existing handrails must not be less than 30" high or more than 42" high measured vertically above the nosing of the tread or above the finished floor of the landing or walking features.
 - Every open portion of a stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface which is more than 30" above the floor or grade below must have guards.
 - Guardrails must not be less than 34" in height and spacing between slats or intermediate rails cannot allow the passage of a sphere 4" or more in diameter.



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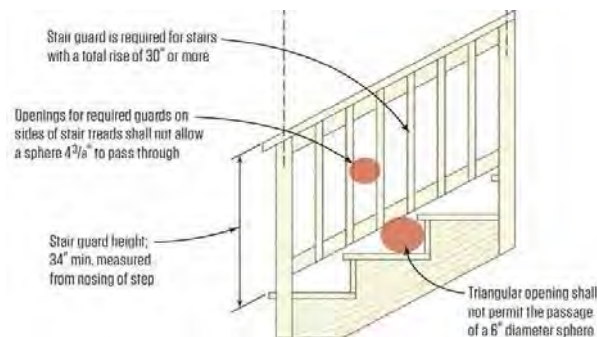
- All new or replaced smoke detectors must be Dual-Sensor Smoke Detectors. In order to meet the definition of a dual sensor, the detector must:
 - Have both a photoelectric and ionization sensor installed, OR
 - Have two sensors installed, at least one of which detects smoke and one of which detects other hazards such as heat or carbon monoxide.
- Doors
 - Close and Latch
 - Every interior door must fit reasonably well within its frame and must be capable of being opened and closed by being properly and securely attached to jambs, headers or tracks. Doors are required at sleeping rooms that open into interior hallways or corridors and the doors must be equipped with operable latching devices and hardware.
 - Entry Door Locks
 - Locks at all entrance doors to dwelling units and sleeping units must secure such doors. All means of egress doors must be readily openable from the side from which egress is to be made without the need for keys, special knowledge or effort.
- Walls
 - All peeling, blistered, or flaking paint must be removed or effectively covered to create a smooth, easily cleaned surface.
- Ceilings
 - All peeling, blistered, or flaking paint must be removed or effectively covered to create a smooth, easily cleaned surface.
 - Habitable spaces, hallways, corridors, laundry areas, bathrooms, toilet rooms and habitable basement areas are required to have a clear ceiling height of not less than 7 ft. There are 3 exceptions:
 - beams or girders;
 - basement rooms occupied exclusively for laundry, study or recreational purposes; or
 - rooms occupied exclusively for sleeping, study, or similar purposes that have a sloped ceiling over all or part of the room.
- Floors
 - Floors must be maintained in good repair. Floor covering should be firmly attached and have no loose or missing area.

5 - BASEMENT

Rental Inspection Preparation

- Stairs
 - Every interior stairway and all parts attached including treads, risers, stringers, and handrails must be properly anchored and capable of supporting the normally imposed loads. Stairways must not have broken steps and steps must be securely fastened. Stairways including steps should not lean or sag.
- Handrails - Guardrails
 - Every flight of stairs having four or more risers must have a handrail on one side of the stair.
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 - Every open portion of a stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface which is more than 30" above the floor or grade below must have guards.
 - Guardrails must not be less than 34" in height and spacing between slats or intermediate rails cannot allow the passage of a sphere 4" or more in diameter.

Guardrails



- Basement Hatchway
 - Every basement hatchway must be maintained to prevent the entrance of rodents, rain and surface drainage water. The hatchway must also be equipped with a lock that prevents unauthorized entry.

- Smoke Detectors
 - Operable smoke detectors must be in place in each bedroom, in the hallway immediately outside of each bedroom, and on every level. This does not include crawl spaces or uninhabitable attics.
 - All new or replaced smoke detectors must be Dual-Sensor Smoke Detectors. In order to meet the definition of a dual sensor, the detector must:
 - Have both a photoelectric and ionization sensor installed, OR
 - Have two sensors installed, at least one of which detects smoke and one of which detects other hazards such as heat or carbon monoxide.

- Plumbing
 - Sink - Faucet
 - Check for leaks and defects and make sure the fixtures are in a safe, sanitary and functional condition.
 - Drain – Vent
 - All existing s-traps must be replaced by a compliant trap and vent system. (An additional handout is available with more detailed information).

- Sump Pump
 - Sump pumps cannot be connected to the sanitary sewer. If the sump pump is connected to the sanitary sewer, it must be disconnected and re-routed to the storm sewer system. A plumbing permit is required to connect the sump pump to the storm sewer. (There are instances when the sump pump may be directed to “back of curb” if there is no storm sewer opening nearby (your inspector will help you obtain this information). If the sump pump currently discharges to grade, no change is required.)

- Egress Window (Emergency Escape Opening)
 - Every bedroom is required to have at least one operable emergency escape opening. This opening must open directly into a public street, public alley, yard or court. Where emergency escape and rescue openings are provided they shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches above the floor.

Exception: Grade floor openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 sq. ft.

What is a “grade floor opening”?

A window or other opening located such that the sill height of the opening is not more than 44 inches above or below the finished ground level adjacent to the opening.

Egress Window Minimums	
Minimum Openable Area	5.7 square feet
Minimum Opening Height	24 inches
Minimum Opening Width	20 inches

- Emergency escape windows are allowed to be installed under decks and porches provided the location of the deck allows the emergency escape window to be fully opened and provides a path not less than 36 inches in height to a yard or court.

- Window Well
 - The minimum horizontal area of the windows well is required to be 9 sq. ft. with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches.
 - Window wells with a depth over 44" must be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully opened position.
 - Ladders or rungs must have an inside width of at least 12" and project at least 3" from the wall and must be spaced not more than 18' on center vertically for the full height of the window well.
 - Any covering on the window well(s) must be removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge or force greater than that which is required for normal operation of the window(s).

- Furnace
 - An Appliance Certification will be required when a furnace reaches approximately 20 years of age or when there are any of the following visual indications or safety concerns:
 - Improper installation;
 - Rust;
 - Scorch marks;
 - Frayed wiring and/or;
 - Leaks.
 - An Appliance Certification will be required for all shared furnaces after they reach five years of age. Certification of shared furnaces less than five years of age can be required due to any of the safety concerns listed above.
 - A carbon monoxide detector must be provided within the vicinity of a shared furnace (as specified by the manufacturer). Approval of this pre-existing condition will not be granted to duplexes that are new rentals.
 - Maintain clearance in front of mechanical equipment. Access must be provided to the equipment for service and inspection.

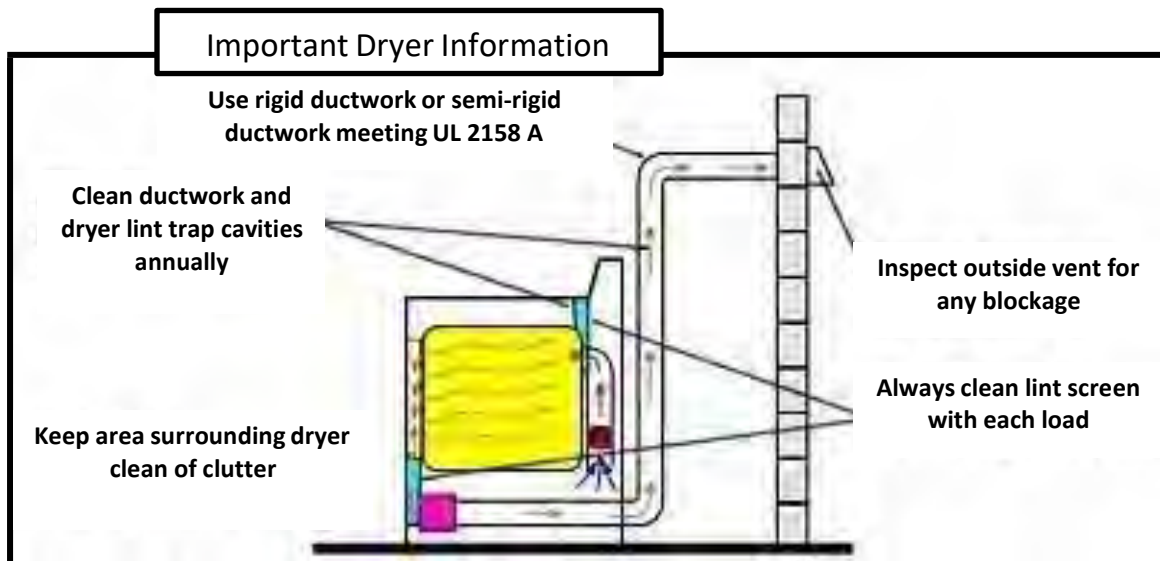
- Water Heater
 - Water heating facilities must be properly installed, maintained and capable of provided an adequate amount of hot water to be drawn at every required sink, lavatory, bathtub, shower, and laundry facility.
 - A gas-fired water heater cannot be located in a bedroom or a room that opens directly into a bedroom or a bathroom. This does not include direct vent appliances.
 - An approved combination temperature and pressure-relief valve and relief valve discharge pipe must be properly installed and maintained on water heaters. The water heater discharge pipe must be within 6 inches above the floor and cannot have a threaded connection at the end of the piping.
 - Maintain clearance in front of mechanical equipment. Access must be provided to the equipment for service and inspection.

- Basement Bathroom – Kitchen GFCI
 - Basement bathrooms and kitchens must have the required GFCI's (see 1- Kitchen and 2 – Bathroom/Toilet Room handouts).

6 - Laundry

Rental Inspection Preparation

- Clothes Dryer Exhaust
 - To Exterior
 - Clothes dryer exhaust systems are required to be independent of all other systems and they must be exhausted in accordance with manufacturer's instructions (to the exterior of the structure). Dryer vents should be cleaned periodically and lint build-up should be eliminated from around the dryer.



- Washer Drain Lines
 - Washing machines can continue to drain across the surface of a basement floor to an existing floor drain and stand pipes for washing machines without a visible trap can remain.
- Grounded Receptacle - GFCI
 - Every laundry area must contain at least one grounded-type receptacle or a receptacle with a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Laundry Sink
 - Laundry sinks/tubs can continue to drain across the surface of a basement floor to an existing floor drain. If the laundry sink/tub has an s-trap, it must be replaced by a compliant trap and vent system.

7 - Electrical

Rental Inspection Preparation

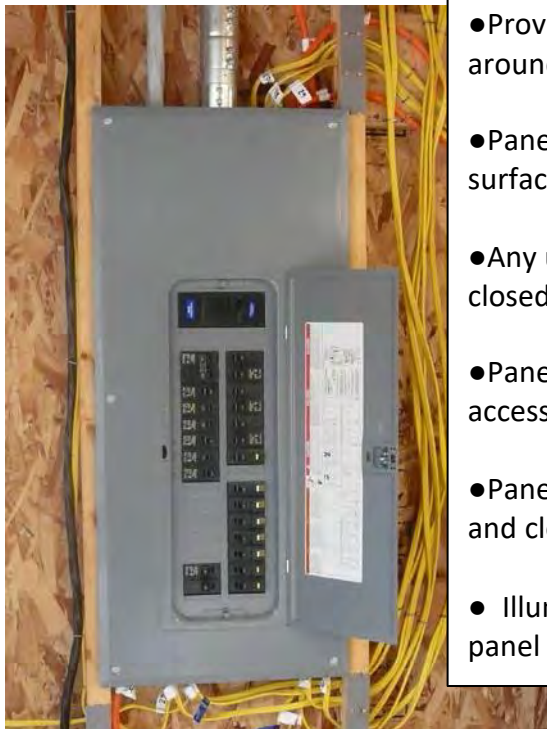
□ Electrical Panel

■ Fusing

- If the electrical system in a structure constitutes a hazard to the occupants or structure because of improper fusing, corrections must be made to eliminate the hazard.
- If the electrical service panel shows evidence of over fusing, it may be necessary to have a licensed electrical contractor evaluate and install appropriate Type “S” fuses. This entails inserting an adapter that limits the size of the fuse to the amperage limitations of the circuit wiring. If this alternative is not desirable, the other option is to replace the existing service panel(s) in order to accommodate the additional circuits and properly sized breakers.

■ Installation

- All electrical equipment, wiring and appliances must be properly installed and maintained in a safe and approved manner. The panel must be properly secured to the wall. Additionally, wiring coming into the panel should be fastened to the wall and there should be no signs of deterioration or damage.



Safety Tips for Electrical Panels

- Provide sufficient access to the panel and a working space around the panel 30 inches wide and 36 inches deep.
- Panel and associated wiring must be firmly secured to the surface on which mounted.
- Any unused openings in the panel must be effectively closed.
- Panel should be properly labeled and visible for quick access.
- Panels should not be located in bathrooms, toilet rooms and clothes closets.
- Illumination should be provided in the area where the panel is located.

- Switched Light/Outlet – See IRC Section 3803
 - The owner must provide, near the entrance to each room, a switched convenience outlet or a light fixture capable of providing sufficient light for each square foot in each habitable room, bathroom, water closet compartment and hallway within the dwelling unit.



- Duplex Outlets – Two (Habitable Space)
 - Each habitable space must have at least two duplex electrical outlets where an electrical cord may be easily and directly plugged in with a minimum of inconvenience. If excessive extension cord use is occurring because there are an insufficient number of receptacles or lighting outlets, additional outlets may be required because outlet overuse may create a hazard.



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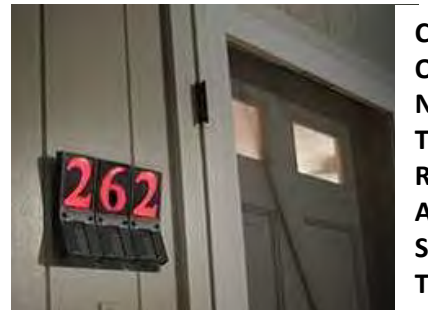
8 - Exterior

Rental Inspection Preparation

- Address Number on Building
 - Visible
 - The structure must have legible address numbers that are visible from the street or road fronting the property.
 - 4-inch
 - Address numbers must be a minimum of 4 inches in height.



- Contrast
 - Address numbers must contrast sharply in color with the background to which they are affixed.



- Yard Condition
 - Outdoor Storage
 - Outdoor storage of any or all of the following is prohibited:

Outdoor Storage

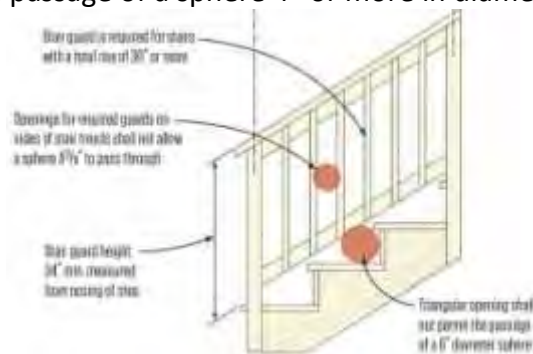
Appliances

refrigerator • icebox • washing machine • dishwasher • kitchen range • clothes dryer • freezer
commode • urinal • bathroom sink • kitchen sink • similar or other large household appliance

Household Furniture/Furnishings

The term "outdoor" includes a porch unless the porch is completely enclosed by fully intact glass or fully intact screens.

- # Guardrails



- Handrails – Guardrails (continued)
 - Every exterior flight of stairs having four or more risers must have a handrail on one side of the stair.
 - Every open portion of a stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface which is more than 30" above the floor or grade below must have guards.
- Deck/Porch
 - Every stair, ramp, landing, balcony, porch, deck or other walking surface must be maintained in sound condition and good repair. Every exterior stairway, deck, porch, balcony and all appurtenances attached to them must be in good repair.
- Stairs
 - Every exterior stairway and all parts of it including treads, risers, stringers, and handrails, must be maintained structurally sound, and in good repair, with proper anchorage and the capability to support the imposed loads.
- Gutters
 - Roof drains, gutters and downspouts must be maintained in good repair and be free from obstructions. Roof water must not be discharged in a manner that creates a nuisance condition upon adjoining properties (public or private).
- Paint
 - Trim – Siding
 - All exterior surfaces must be maintained in good condition. Exterior wood surfaces, other than decay-resistant woods, must be protected from the elements and decay by painting or other protective covering or treatment.
 - Peeling, flaking and chipped paint must be eliminated and surfaces repainted.
 - All exterior walls must be free from holes, breaks, and loose or rotting materials, and the surface must be properly coated to prevent deterioration.
- Roof

The roof and flashing on the dwelling and accessory structures must be sound, tight and not have defects that admit rain. Roof drainage must be adequate to prevent dampness or deterioration in the walls or interior portion of the structure.
- Structural Foundation
 - All foundation walls must be maintained safe and free from open cracks and breaks.



- Windows
 - All glazing compound materials must be maintained free from holes. Glazing materials include glass, sash, frame, casing, muntins, glazing compound, i.e., all parts of the window assembly.
 - Every window, skylight, door and frame must be kept in sound condition, good repair, and weather tight. Every window, other than a fixed window, must be easily openable and capable of being held in position by window hardware.
 - Openable windows located in whole or in part within 6 feet above ground level, or a walking surface that provides access must be equipped with devices that secure the units from unauthorized entry.

Screens Required

During the period from May 15 to October 15, every window and other outside opening required for ventilation of habitable rooms and food preparation and service areas such as kitchens and dining rooms, must be supplied with approved tightly fitting screens of not less than 16 mesh per inch, and every screen door used for insect control shall have a self-closing device in good working condition.

- Graffiti (Defacement of Property)

- It is the responsibility of the owner to remove graffiti and restore said surface to an approved state of maintenance and repair.



9 - Other

Rental Inspection Preparation

☐ Visible Signs of Infestation

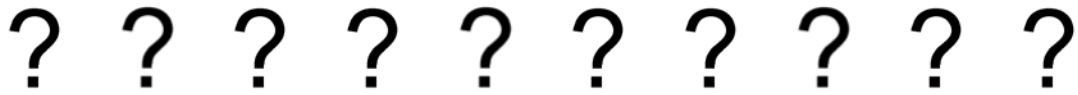
- All structures must be kept free from insect and rodent infestation. All structures in which insects or rodents are found shall be promptly exterminated by approved processes that will not be injurious to human health. After extermination, proper precautions must be taken to prevent re-infestation.

Infestation Responsibilities	Owner	Occupant
Prior to renting or leasing the structure	X	
One-family dwelling		X
Public or shared areas of structure containing two or more dwelling units	X	
Public or shared areas of a multiple occupancy structure and the exterior	X	
Infestation caused by failure of occupant to prevent infestation in the area occupied		X
Maintaining structure in rodent and pest free-condition		X
Infestation caused by defects in the structure	X	

☐ Cleanliness Interior & Exterior

- All exterior property and premises must be maintained in a clean, safe and sanitary condition.
- The interior of a structure and equipment therein must be maintained in good repair, structurally sound, and in a sanitary condition.
- The occupant must keep that part of the exterior property which such occupant occupies or controls in a clean and sanitary condition. Occupants must keep that part of the structure which they occupy or control in a clean and sanitary condition.
- All vacant structures and premises thereof or vacant land must be maintained in a clean, safe, secure and sanitary condition so as not to cause a blighting problem or adversely affect the public health or safety.





Question: What do “noted” and “cited” mean?


Answer: **Noted** code violations are not considered life safety issues and are not of a severity to cause structural deterioration. Noted items do not prevent the issuance of a Letter of Compliance.

Cited code violations must be repaired prior to the issuance of a Letter of Compliance. Cited items may lead to further enforcement actions by the building Official as defined in the City of Ames [Municipal Code](#).

Question: What time frame do I have to correct deficiencies found at the inspection?

Answer:

Imminent Life Safety	Immediate Corrective Action
Routine/Normal Maintenance	Complete Within 30 Days
Seriously Deferred Maintenance (Medium/Large Project)	Complete Within 90 Days
Weather/Seasonally Dependent Item	Complete Within 180 Days/Negotiated

	Rental Inspection Checklist - Single-Family					New Rental: Y / N												
	Address:					Date:												
						Inspector:												
	Total Number of Bedrooms:		Above Grade:		Below Grade:													
Number of Off Street Parking:		Drive: HS / G / D		Spaces: HS / G / D		Detached Garage / Shed												
1 - KITCHEN					OK	Noted	Cited	Check	6 - LAUNDRY					OK	Noted	Cited	Check	
GFCI					OK		C		Clothes Dryer Exhaust:									
2-A: 10-BC Fire Extinguisher					OK		C		Materials - To Exterior					OK		C		
Plumbing:									Washer Drain Lines					OK	N	C		
Sink - Faucet					OK		C		Grounded Receptacle - GFCI					OK		C		
Drain - Vent					OK	N	C		Laundry Sink					OK	N	C		
2 - BATHROOM/TOILET ROOM									7 - ELECTRICAL									
GFCI					OK		C		Electric Panel:									
Impervious Floor Covering (TR Only)					OK	N			Fuse - Breaker					OK		C		
Window - Exhaust Vent Fan					OK		C		Installation					OK		C		
Plumbing:									Switched Light/Outlet					OK		C		
Sink - Faucet					OK		C		Duplex Outlets - 2 (Habitable Space)					OK	N	C		
Drain - Vent					OK	N	C		Extension Cord Use					OK	N	C		
Faucet Below Flood Rim					OK		C		8 - EXTERIOR									
Seal Bathtub/Shower					OK		C		Address Number on Building:					OK		C		
Gas Water Heater					OK	N	C		4-inch - Contrast					OK	N	C		
3 - BEDROOM									Yard Condition:					OK		C		
Closet Lights					OK		C		Outdoor Storage					OK		C		
Smoke Detectors					OK		C		Furniture					OK		C		
Gas Water Heater					OK	N	C		Motor Vehicle					OK		C		
4 - INTERIOR (GENERAL)									Grass Height (under 12")					OK		C		
Fireplace (woodburning) Y or N					OK		C		Weeds					OK		C		
Stairs					OK		C		Trees - Shrubs					OK		C		
Handrails - Guardrails					OK		C		Refuse - Garbage					OK		C		
Smoke Detectors:									Sidewalks - Driveways (gravel)					OK	N	C		
Main Floor - Second Floor					OK		C		Handrails - Guardrails					OK		C		
Doors:									Deck					OK	N	C		
Close & Latch					OK		C		Porch					OK	N	C		
Entry Doors Lock					OK		C		Stairs					OK	N	C		
Walls - Location:									Gutters:									
Repair - Paint					OK	N	C		Need to be Cleaned					OK	N	C		
Ceilings - Location:									Downspouts Missing/Off					OK	N	C		
Repair - Paint					OK	N	C		House Paint:									
Height					OK	N	C		Trim - Siding					OK	N	C		
Floors - Location:									Garage/Shed Paint:									
In Good Repair					OK	N	C		Trim - Siding					OK	N	C		
5 - BASEMENT									Roof:									
Stairways/Steps					OK		C		House					OK	N	C		
Handrails - Guardrails					OK		C		Garage					OK	N	C		
Basement Door - Hatchway					OK	N	C		Shed					OK	N	C		
Smoke Detector					OK		C		Structural Foundation					OK	N	C		
Basement Bathroom - Kitchen GFCI					OK		C		Windows:									
Plumbing:									Broken Glass - Screens					OK		C		
Sink - Faucet					OK	N	C		Operable - Locks					OK		C		
Drain - Vent					OK	N	C		Graffiti					OK	N	C		
Sump Pump					OK	N	C		9 - OTHER									
Egress Window L x W =					OK	N	C		Visible Signs of Infestation					OK		C		
Window Well L x W =					OK	N	C		Cleanliness Interior - Exterior					OK		C		
Furnace (Certify 20+)					OK		C											
Shared Furnace (Certify 5+):					OK		C											
C/O Detector for Shared Furnace					OK		C											
Water Heater					OK		C		Signature of Property Owner / Property Manager									
Noted (N): Correct prior to next rental cycle Cited (C): Required for LOC - correct now Check (✓): Further code research required																		