



RENTAL HOUSING SAFETY CHECKLIST

This checklist is meant to be used by current or potential renters, as well as landlords, to determine the safety and habitability of rental units. When performing an inspection, this checklist can inform you whether the rental unit is in violation of building, fire, and life-safety codes. If any **RED** item is checked, the unit **CANNOT** be rented. If items are checked that are not red, the unit may be rented. However, these maintenance issues must still be repaired in a timely manner. Click [here](#) for information about requesting repairs from your landlord. To report a violation, please contact the City's Code Enforcement by clicking [here](#) or by calling (360)473-5213.

1: Exterior: Structure and Maintenance

Roof must be maintained and be in a safe and sound condition based on a visual inspection. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you attempt to climb on to the roof! If you're in doubt, contact the

- Roof has holes and/or structural component is broken or decayed
 - Evidence of leaking water inside; roof appears to sag when viewed from exterior

Chimney must be in a safe and sound condition and must not pose any imminent danger.

- Chimney is at risk of falling
 - Pulling away from structure; bricks missing
- Loose or missing bricks are present in the masonry that do not destabilize chimney structure

Exterior Stairs and Decks must be safe, structurally sound, and be in good repair.

- Exit stairs are dilapidated or unsafe
 - Wood is rotten; covered in moss/slippery; no handrails.
- Porch, deck, or balcony is dilapidated or unsafe
 - No or damaged guardrail; rotten wood; cracked concrete

Foundation must be weather-proof, maintained, and structurally sound.

- Foundation is failing
 - Home is leaning; foundation is crumbling, or pieces are missing or broken
- Standing water in crawl space

Window and Door components and assemblies must be weatherproof, safe, secure, and maintained.

- Any openable window within 10 feet of grade or above any deck, balcony, or porch has missing or defective latches
- Windows or doors are cracked or have missing pieces
 - Water or air is seeping through cracks or holes
- Sills or frames have mildly decayed wood
- Weather stripping is missing, or air is allowed to enter when the window is closed

Exterior Walls: All exterior walls should be free from decay and should be weather and water-tight, rodent-proof, and structurally sound.

- Exterior walls allow water or weather to penetrate the home
- Exterior walls are failing, crumbling, missing pieces, have holes, or are deflected or leaning

2: Interior: Structure and Maintenance

Ventilation: all habitable rooms and bathrooms and laundry rooms must have openable windows, or passive or mechanical ventilation in good working order.

- Missing openable windows or fan
 - In ANY habitable room, bathroom, or laundry room
- Kitchen fan does not work (if the kitchen does not have an openable window)
- Bathroom or laundry room fan does not work (if that room does not have an openable window)
- Clothes dryer ducts are detached, leaking, damaged, or not venting to the exterior

Structural Components, like walls, floors, and ceilings, are in good repair. They must be dry and free of moisture.

- Holes or cracks in floors, walls, or ceilings resulting in dangerous conditions
 - Exposed framing members, electrical equipment, or plumbing, or any access for rodents
- Any wall, floor, or ceiling is soft, wet, or spongy to the touch
- Interior structural walls are not maintained
 - Leaning, cracked, or removed
- Floors or floor support system is not maintained
 - Bowing of floor, sinking when stepped on, floor is at an angle
- Joists or posts are leaning, decayed, and/or detached

Potentially hazardous materials cannot be present. This includes but is not limited to lead and asbestos.

- If any room constructed prior to 1978 has peeling, chipped, or deteriorated paint exceeding 2 square feet or 10% of any component like a window assembly

Interior Stairs and Landings must be safe and sound and in good

- Landings or platforms have broken, are decayed, or are missing pieces
- Stairs have loose, broken, decayed, or missing pieces
- Handrails or guards are broken, loose, or missing
- Handrails or guardrails are not graspable
 - Too large or small to grab (typically, a handrail must be between 1.25 to 2 inches in diameter)

3: Security and Safety

Emergency Escape Windows and Doors: Every sleeping room below the fourth floor built or permitted after August 10, 1972 must have an emergency escape window or door opening to the exterior directly from the sleeping room. After November 10, 2004 in a fully sprinklered building bedrooms are not required to have escape windows. Emergency escape windows, when required, are approximately 2 by 3 feet and no more than 44 inches from the floor. Sleeping rooms that were built under permit prior to August 10, 1972 are exempted from this requirement but need to meet ventilation requirements in Section 2 of this checklist.

- Emergency escape window or door is missing or inaccessible, or security bars on emergency windows are unopenable
- Emergency escape windows do not meet the above size requirements

Entrance Doors must be operable and safe.

- Any door that the unit can be entered from is not capable of locking (with a deadbolt) or resisting forcible entry
- The main entrance door does not contain an observation port or window to view the exterior of the unit without opening the door

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors must be functional and installed.

- Smoke alarms are missing, not installed, or not functional in bedrooms and/or a central location outside of bedrooms and/or on each floor
- Carbon monoxide alarms are not installed in a central location outside bedrooms and/or on each floor

4: Room Size and Condition

Room Sizes must meet minimum square footage requirements.

- Any habitable room other than the kitchen measures less than 7 feet in any direction
- Any bedroom is less than 70 square feet
- The unit does not contain at least one room of 120 square feet or more (not including rooming or dorm-like houses)

Room Condition must meet minimum standards.

- Any room that provides living area has a dirt floor

5: Heating System

Heating System must be permanently installed, functioning, and capable of maintaining the required temperature in all habitable rooms and bathrooms.

- Heater is defective or missing
- Heater is not capable of maintaining an interior temperature of at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit in all habitable rooms when the exterior temperature 24 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- A portable fuel burning heater is unvented and present in any bedroom or bathroom
- A fuel or wood burning heater lacks ventilation

6: Electrical Standards

All Electrical Equipment and wiring must be approved and maintained in a safe manner and in good working order.

- Exposed wiring (unprotected) is in ANY room
- Any electrical equipment is improperly installed or connected
- Any habitable room does not contain a working light fixture and electrical outlet, or two outlets
- A kitchen does not contain a working light fixture and three outlets
- A bathroom, laundry room, utility room, common hallway, stair, or porch, does not have a working light fixture
- An electrical extension cord is used in place of proper wiring.

7: Hot Water & Plumbing

All plumbing equipment must be properly installed, functional, sanitary, and in good condition. After running water for two minutes, the water temperature must reach at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Running water temperature cannot reach 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- The plumbing system is not connected to an approved potable water source, or isn't working properly
 - Evidence of this includes: Smells strongly of a sewer in the basement or crawlspace; leaking plumbing pipes; clogged or very slow drains
- The pressure relief valve on the hot water heater is missing, not installed properly, or appears to be leaking
- Gas piping is leaking, kinked, pulling away from a wall, crushed, or not supported
 - **IF A LEAK IS DETECTED, CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY**
- Gas shutoff valve is not located within 3 feet of a gas appliance
- The water heater is set above 120 degrees Fahrenheit

8: Sanitation Standards in Bathrooms

Every unit, except for rooming or dorm-like houses, must contain one directly accessible bathroom that is in safe and sanitary condition.

- Bathroom doesn't have a functional sink, toilet, and tub/shower
- If bathroom is accessible from the Kitchen and the bathroom door is not tightly fitted.
- Toilet is not secure to the floor, doesn't flush, or leaks
- The under-sink or shower/bath plumbing pipes are leaking
- Sink, shower, or bath is not working or does not have hot and cold water
- The only access from a bedroom to the bathroom is through another bedroom
- Sink/shower/bath faucet is dripping, the porcelain is chipped, the drain is slow, or the handles/knobs are broken but functional
- Bathroom counter is missing tile, broken, or pulling away from wall

9: Sanitation Standards in Kitchens

Every unit, except for rooming or dorm-like houses, must contain one directly accessible kitchen that is in safe and sanitary condition.

- Dwelling unit does not have a kitchen that contains at least a sink, counter, cabinets, and a cooking appliance and refrigerator or approved hookups for those appliances.
- If a refrigerator is provided, it is inoperable
- If a cooking appliance is provided, it is not approved for indoor use or is inoperable
- Kitchen sink does not work, is cracked through, or does not have hot and cold water

- Under sink plumbing is leaking
- Kitchen counter is missing tile, broken, or pulling away from wall
- Sink faucet is dripping, the bowl is chipped, the drain is slow, or the handles/knobs are broken but functional

10: Owner Obligations

Property owners must ensure that the property is free from excess trash and insects and rodents must be exterminated. The exterior of the property, including the lawn and landscaping, must be maintained.

- Visible evidence of rodents or insects (rats, mice, bedbugs, ants, cockroaches, or silverfish)
- Garbage is accumulated outside of trash receptables
- Grass or weeds are taller than 12 inches
- The property has shrubs, brush, vines, trees or other vegetation growing or which has grown and died, cut vegetation, blackberry vines, and organic debris, which constitutes a fire hazard, or provides a harborage for rats, rodents or horticultural pests
- The property contains any noxious and poisonous plants, including poison ivy, poison oak, poison hemlock, poison sumac, nettles and nightshade
- The property contains any dead, decayed, diseased or hazardous trees