

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES FOR RENTAL HOUSING

Note: Additional information and details are available in the current edition of the International Property Maintenance code.

1.0 STRUCTURE EXTERIOR AND MAINTENANCE

1.1 Exterior Foundations, Chimneys, Walls, Roof, Windows, and

Doors: shall be structurally sound, tight and free of defects which admit rodents, vermin, and rain or allow dampness in the walls or interior portion of the building.

- a. **Chimney:** check for deteriorating or crumbling caps, missing or deteriorated mortar joints, and screen cover (1/2" galvanized mesh to extend at least 6" above flue liner.
- b. **Roof and Flashing:** Check for leaks, missing shingles and/or small holes that allow the wood to rot underneath causing a structural hazard.
- c. **Gutters:** Check that gutter is not sagging or pulling away from fascia board; galvanized type must be painted to retard rust; and that gutters and downspouts do not contain holes or leaking joints. Downspouts require 5' extensions directed toward front or rear of dwelling.
- d. **Grading:** All premises shall be graded to prevent erosion and accumulation of stagnant water.

1.2 Stairs, Porches, Railings and Overhangs

- a. **Stairs, Porch, Attachments, Overhang and Railing:** shall be securely attached, safe and capable of supporting the loads as required by the current Building Code. Guardrails - **open railings shall be constructed such that a sphere four (4) inches in diameter cannot pass between them.** There should not be any missing or loose treads, decking or rails on stairways. Three or more risers require a handrail and railing.
- b. **Steps:** Maximum rise – 8¼", tread: minimum width 9½", equal rise from walk to porch cap. Check for rotted wood or inadequate structural conditions which could render stairs unsafe under heavy loads. Also check for any loose stair covering, i.e. carpeting, etc
- c. **Handrails:** Every flight of stairs more than (3) risers high shall have handrails. The top of handrails shall not be placed less than thirty four (34) inches nor more than thirty-eight (38) inches above landing and the nosing of treads. Handrails shall continue the full

length of the stairs. The handgrip portion of the handrails shall not be less than one and one-quarter (1 ¼) inches nor more than two (2) inches in cross-sectional dimension. Handrails projecting from a wall surface shall have a space of not less than 1 ½ inches between the handrail and the wall. Check handrails to ensure they are adequately secured and structurally safe.

- d. **Guardrails:** Surfaces located more than thirty (30) inches above the floor or grade below shall have guardrails not less than thirty-six (36) inches in height. The top of guardrails for stairways, exclusive of their landings, may have a height of thirty-four (34) inches to match handrails. Guardrails - **open railings shall be constructed such that a sphere four (4) inches in diameter cannot pass between them.** Exception: Properties in actual or proposed historic districts or with historic architectural significance are exempt from handrail requirements and spacing, and railing height requirements to match the original historic construction.
- e. **Wood:** Check for any structural problems, deteriorated decking, ceiling panels, deteriorated or missing railing, unpainted wood steps which would permit rot or heaving.
- f. **Siding:** Must be free of defects, missing pieces, etc.
- g. **Concrete and/or Brickwork:** Check for any structural or other significant cracks requiring tuck pointing or repair, excessive settlement, spalling or tipping affecting safety.

1.3 Paint: Check for peeling, blistering or flaking. These areas will require scraping and painting. Base wood (beams, door, etc.) if deteriorating, requires replacement.

1.4 Debris: Check for debris in walkways, basement, attic, garages and yards, and particularly fire hazards adjacent to furnaces, water heaters and under stairwells. Rubbish and garbage must be kept in **approved containers with closeable lids.**

1.5 Weeds: All premises shall be kept free of weeds in excess of 5 inches.

1.6 Vermin: Check garage, accessory buildings for rat/rodent evidence. Check house foundation, if no basement. Rat proofing required for all structures.

1.7 Exterior Doors: All exterior doors shall be weather tight, provided with a properly installed locking device in good condition that can be operated from the inside without a key and from the outside only with a key. Exterior doors must open and close and latch easily. Storm doors are required on all exterior entrances/exits and must be in good repair, free from tears and missing panels. Check for loose hardware,

broken doors, cracked glass and peeling paint. The garage door shall be in a safe and satisfactory working condition. Check that exposed wood doors are properly preserved. Double keyed deadbolt locks are not permitted.

1.8 Windows: Every window sash shall be supplied with glass window panes or an approved substitute, properly sealed within each frame. Sharp or jagged edges or missing panes shall not be allowed. Check for rotted wood, broken or cracked glass and proper operation with window lifts and locks.

One window in every habitable room, other than fixed windows, shall be capable of being easily opened. All operable windows on the first floor and basement shall be secured with a locking device. Screens must be in good repair, free from tears or large holes.

1.9 Fences: All fences should be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.

1.10 Concrete Walks and Driveways. Must be smooth solid surface. Cracked, raised, heaved slabs or concrete must be leveled or replaced to eliminate tripping hazards.

1.11 Accessory Structures: All accessory structures shall be Maintained in good condition.

1.12 Storage: See Ordinance for details

- a. No motor vehicle shall be parked or stored that is in a major state of **disassembly or disrepair**.
- b. **Recreation vehicles, boats** etc. must be stored within an enclosed garage or an approved and regulated storage area registered to the owner or tenant, adjacent to a dwelling. Year round storage is permitted only if registered to the property owner.
- c. Building materials: Stored on property only with a valid permit
- d. Fire Wood: In a rear yard or side yard behind the building line, eighteen (18) inches off the ground and not higher than 4 ft

1.13 Street Numbers: Shall be readable from the street. (min. 4" high)

2.0 STRUCTURE INTERIOR: Shall be kept in good repair, safe and sanitary

2.1 Structural Members: The supporting structural members of every building shall be structurally sound and capable of supporting loads as required by the current Building Code. Material is not deteriorated, free from defect and rotted wood.

- 2.2 Water Seepage/Standing Water:** Every building, cellar, basement and crawlspace shall be maintained free from water seepage and/or standing water which is conducive to decay or deterioration of the structure.
- 2.3 Interior Stairs and Railings:** Requirements are the same as exterior. Exception: Properties in actual or proposed historic districts or with historic architectural significance is exempt from handrail requirements, and spacing, and railing height requirements to match the original historic construction.
- 2.4 Interior surfaces:** Shall be maintained clean, free from peeling, flaking, cracked or deteriorated plaster or drywall, holes. Cabinets/countertops/sinks must be in good condition with appropriate hardware. Carpets/linoleum/tiles to be clean, free of tears, etc.
- 2.5 Interior Doors:** Every room intended to be used as a bedroom shall be supplied with a properly installed door with hardware and latch.
- 2.6 Windows:** Same as exterior requirements. Every habitable space shall have at least one window and 8% window area. Every habitable space shall have at least one openable window equal to at least 45% of the minimum required glazing.
- 2.7 Common halls and stairs:** Shall be lit at all times. Minimum 60 watt bulb for each floor area. All other space shall be provided with natural or artificial light.
- 2.8 Bathroom, Lavatory and Kitchen Floors:** Every bathroom, lavatory and kitchen floor shall be substantially impervious to water.
- 2.9 Sanitation:** The occupant shall maintain the interior of his dwelling in a sanitary condition free from an accumulation of rubbish or garbage so as not to breed insects and rodents or produce dangerous or offensive gases or odors.
- 2.10 Insect and Rodent Harborage:** Buildings shall be kept free from Insect and rodent infestations. Where insects or rodents are found, they shall be promptly exterminated by a safe and acceptable process; and necessary precautions shall be taken to prevent reinfestation.

3.0 FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY

- 3.1 Smoke Detectors:** A smoke detector, either wired or battery operated, shall be placed in **each** bedroom, on **each floor/story** of every unit and one (1) in the **basement**. If battery operated a five year lithium battery is recommended.
- 3.2 Egress:** Unobstructed means of egress from interior to public way shall be maintained at all times.
- 3.3 Exits:** Number of exits, capacity and locations as required. Exits shall not lead through other units, toilet rooms or bathrooms.

- a. All means of egress shall be marked with "EXIT" signs when providing egress for 50 or more people.
 - b. All egress doors shall be readily openable from inside. **No double keyed dead-bolt locks.**
 - c. Minimum clear aisle 36" Accumulation of garbage, rubbish, stored items or combustibles not permitted.
 - d. Exterior stairs, porches, balconies, decks, etc. over 30" in height shall have guardrails (30" high minimum and handrails (minimum 30" and maximum 42" above tread nosing or walking surface.
 - e. Bars, grills or screens placed over emergency escape windows shall be releasable from inside without the use of a key.
 - f. All fire resistance ratings, doors and frames shall be maintained.
 - g. All portable fire extinguishers are to be visible and in proper working condition.
 - h. Bars, grills or screens placed over emergency escape windows shall be releasable from the inside without the use of a key.
- 3.4 Dead end corridor:** is to be 35 feet max. (70 feet if sprinkled)

4.0 ELECTRICAL: See Ordinance for additional details

- 4.1 Entrances and Exits:** At least two (2) entrances and/or exits shall be illuminated by an exterior light controlled by a readily accessible interior wall switch or external automatic controls.
- 4.2 Living Room:** Requires two conveniently located receptacles on each wall and a conveniently located wall-switch controlled light or receptacle.
- 4.3 Kitchen:** The kitchen shall be provided with a separate appliance circuit supplying three (3) **grounding type** duplex receptacles and one (1) permanent light fixture controlled by a wall switch.
- 4.4 Bathrooms:** Shall be provided with one (1) duplex receptacle and one (1) permanent light fixture controlled by a conveniently located switch. All bathroom receptacles must be **GFCI** protected and cannot be a part of the light fixture.
- 4.5 Other Habitable Rooms:** All other habitable rooms shall be provided with two separate and remote receptacle outlets.
- 4.6 Basement:** The basement shall have a minimum of one permanent light fixture and one light fixture in all enclosed areas that may be walked into. The furnace room/area must have an operable light.
- 4.7 Laundry Area:** Laundry areas shall be illuminated with at least one electric lighting fixture. A grounding type duplex receptacle shall be provided adjacent to the laundry equipment on a **separate 20 amp GFI circuit.**
- 4.8 Stairwells and Landings:** Stairwells shall be provided with one permanent lighting fixture which adequately illuminates each tread. Lighting fixtures shall be controlled by wall switches or a permanently

illuminated system. Switches shall not be located where it is necessary to use darkened stair sections for their operation. Stairwells connecting finished portions of dwellings shall be provided multiple-switch control: One at the head, the other at the foot of the stairwell.

- 4.9 Circuits:** Check for improper splices and overfusing.
- 4.10 Service:** Check condition of main service cables and equipment.
Check for proper clearance above driveways, pools, etc. proper Distance from openable windows.
- 4.11 Extension Cords:** Any and all extension cords attached to walls, used instead of permanent wiring shall not be permitted. Extension cords run under carpeting and from one room to another through walls or ceilings shall be eliminated.
- 4.12 Pendant cord fixtures:** Shall be replaced with permanent or pull chain type.
- 4.13 Shower Room Fixtures:** Shall be approved for wet locations.
- 4.14 System Wiring:** Check for illegal extensions to the wiring system in order to provide light, heat or power. Exposed wiring not allowed i.e. fastened to underside of floor joists. All splices shall be in junction boxes. Open splices are not allowed.
- 4.15 Receptacle outlets:** Replace any missing receptacle covers, switch covers and box covers. Make sure the ground wires are connected in grounded receptacles. **All bathroom outlets and kitchen outlets within 6' of a faucet must be GFCI protected.**
- 4.16 Heating Equipment:** Any heating equipment requiring electricity shall be provided on a separate circuit. A disconnect switch shall be provided on or adjacent to the equipment.
- 4.17 Service or feeder:** Service or feeder to an existing dwelling unit shall be a minimum of three-wire, one hundred ampere capacity. Service equipment shall be dead front, having no live parts exposed whereby accidental contact could be made.
- 4.18 All plug type fuses shall be type "S".**
- 4.19 All new work shall conform to the Michigan Residential Code.**
- 4.20 Inadequate Service must be upgraded.**
Any of the following shall be considered evidence of inadequacy:
 - a. Use of cords in lieu of permanent wiring.
 - b. Oversizing of overcurrent protection for circuits
 - c. Unapproved extensions to the wiring system
 - d. Electrical overload
 - e. Misuse of electrical equipment
 - f. Lack of lighting fixtures in bathrooms, laundry rooms, furnace rooms, stairway or basement.
- 4.21 GFCI Protection:** All of the following receptacle outlets shall have ground fault protection.
 - a. Bathrooms
 - b. Outdoors with grade level access

- c. Garages and sheds where accessible from the floor.
- d. Kitchen countertops within 6 ft. of the sink
- e. Docks with the exception of locking type for shore power.

5.0 MECHANICAL

5.1 Heating System: Every rental unit and residential structure shall have heating facilities that are properly installed and maintained and capable of heating all habitable rooms located therein to a temperature of sixty eight degrees (68°) Fahrenheit, even when the outside temperature is ten degrees (10°) below zero. A disconnect switch shall be provided on or adjacent to the equipment. Boilers or furnaces located in garages or rooms where combustible liquids are stored shall be eighteen inches above the floor.

5.2 Heating System Safety: An approved Carbon Monoxide Alarm shall be installed outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms in dwelling units within which fuel fired appliances are installed and in dwelling units that have attached garages. A single station Carbon Monoxide Alarm shall be listed as complying with UL 2034.

5.3 Wall Furnaces and multiple rental units sharing a single forced air furnace system properly installed prior to June 30, 2001, may continue to do so until replacement is required. Portable heating equipment employing a flame or using gasoline or kerosene as fuel is prohibited. All electric portable heating units must be plugged into an electric wall outlet without the use of an extension cord.

5.4 Mechanical equipment: must be properly installed and maintained.

- a. **Install AGA approved gas shut off valves** on water heater, stove, furnace and clothes dryer, etc.
- b. **Install TPR valve and non-plastic properly sized discharge pipe** down to within 4" of floor on water heater.
- c. **Cap** open gas lines. Gas line saddle taps not allowed and must be removed.
- d. **Flexible gas / water connections** not allowed on water heaters.
- e. **Dampers:** Check to make sure dampers operate and grills are securely attached.
- f. **Cold Air Returns:** Cold air returns where required must be properly installed.
- g. **Plastic dryer vent** piping is not allowed.
- h. **Fuel Burning Equipment:** All fuel burning equipment shall be connected to a chimney or vent with airtight connection.
- i. **Clearance From Combustibles:** Maintain clearance from combustibles around furnace and water heater.
- j. **Chimney clean-out:** Check to see that there is a proper clean-out and satisfactorily cleaned out, tight fitting operable clean-out door, no unplugged openings in chimney.
- k. **Leaks:** Check for leaks in steam and hot water heating systems.

- 5.5 Every rental unit shall be supplied with water heating facilities which are capable of heating water to such a temperature as to permit an adequate amount of water to be drawn at every required fixture, except toilets, at a temperature of not less than one hundred twenty degrees (120°) Fahrenheit as required for the reasonable use by occupants.
- a. Temperature and pressure relief valves shall be piped full size to within four inches
 - b. Water heaters located in garages or rooms where combustible liquids are stored shall be 18" above the floor.

6.0 PLUMBING

- 6.1 **Waste Lines:** Check for evidence of leakage.
- 6.2 **Flexible piping:** not allowed on plumbing system.
- 6.3 **S-trap:** Not allowed on plumbing system – must be removed and properly corrected.
- 6.4 **Fixture Venting:** Check to see that all fixtures requiring venting are properly vented.
- 6.5 **Water Heater:** Check vent pipe for no sag and tight connection to chimney (minimum of three (3) sheet metal screws must be on all joints or vent pipes). Check that temperature pressure relief valve is an approved type and a drip tube is connected and extends to within 4" of floor. A gas shut-off must be located at heater. Dielectric unions must be installed where required by the Plumbing Code.
- 6.6 **Sprinkler System / Hose Connections / Laundry faucets / Hand Held Shower Sprayers:** Check for **vacuum breaker** to prevent backflow into domestic water supply including exterior faucets and laundry faucet.
- 6.7 **Bathroom Facilities:** Bath facilities with its own bathtub or shower and water closet are required in every dwelling unit.
- 6.8 **Plumbing Fixtures:** All plumbing fixtures shall be maintained, sanitary and shall have adequate clearances.
- a. Caulk around bathtub and / or water closet at floor line.
 - b. Repair leaking water lines and / or drain lines.
 - c. Replace cracked / chipped lavatory, sinks, tub and / or water closet.
 - d. Install dielectric unions on hot water heater.
 - e. Securely anchor laundry tub to floor.
 - f. Remove flexible drain pipe and replace with solid pipe.
 - g. Tub / sink spouts: All faucet fixtures must have a 1" clearance above flood level rim.
- 6.7 All plumbing fixtures shall be connected to an approved water system and supply hot and cold water.
- 6.8 All plumbing fixtures, vents, stacks, and sewer lines shall be

connected to an approved sewage disposal system and maintained.

a. Install missing / broken floor drain strainers.

6.9 Storm water shall not be discharged directly into sewer or in a manner that creates a nuisance.

7.0 SPACE AND OCCUPANCY REQUIREMENTS.

7.1 Minimum Ceiling Height. Habitable rooms shall have a ceiling height of not less than seven (7) feet six (6) inches. Kitchens, bathrooms, halls, toilet compartments and basement dwelling units shall have a ceiling height of not less than seven (7) feet. **Exception:** A ceiling height of less than seven (7) feet will be considered a built-in deficiency and shall be exempt from compliance, provided that such built-in deficiency was in compliance with a building code at the time of construction.

7.2 Required Space in Bedrooms. Every bedroom shall have an area of not less than seventy (70) square feet. The required floor area shall be increased at the rate of fifty (50) square feet for each additional occupant.

7.3 Bathroom and Toilet Access. In units with two (2) or more bedrooms, one bathroom or toilet must be accessible without going through a bedroom. (Exception: a unit that was built in compliance with the building code effective at the time of permitted construction.)

7.4 Means of Egress. Each bedroom shall have at least two means of egress that provide a continuous and unobstructed path of travel to a public way, such as one window and one door.

7.5 Minimum Window Size for Bedrooms. All bedrooms must be equipped with one easily operable window with a minimum area of five (5) square feet a minimum height dimension of 24 inches, a minimum width of 20 inches, and a maximum sill height of 44 inches above the floor. (Exception: Windows in existing original bedrooms.)

9.0 EFFICIENCY UNIT. While conforming to all other provisions of these guidelines, each efficiency rental unit shall include:

a. A living area of not less than two hundred twenty (220) square feet with an additional one hundred (100) square feet for each occupant in excess of two (2).

b. A kitchen sink; cooking appliance (not operated by gas), refrigeration facility and space to store, prepare and serve food.

10.0 BASEMENT UNITS: Basement shall be used as a dwelling unit unless:

a. The floor and walls are impervious to leakage or underground and surface run-off water.

b. The ceiling height throughout the unit is at least seven (7) feet.

c. It is separated from heating equipment, incinerators, or other hazardous equipment by an approved partition with a minimum of one (1) hour fire

separation rating.

- d. Two (2) independent means of egress are provided in accordance with the current Building Code, neither going through a furnace room.

11.0. EXCEPTIONS: The City Manager shall have the authority to review and approve exceptions/alterations to housing code requirements based upon unusual hardship or circumstances.

The above guidelines are intended to be a general summary. Specific defects applicable to individual dwellings or other structures on said premises may be enlarged upon by the inspector in his report, which is available to parties involved in the transaction. Some items are impractical to inspect, e.g. interior of furnaces, hot water tanks, footings, etc.

The Certificate/Rental License, the inspection checklist, the inspection report, or any other documents issued by the City, do not constitute any representation or warranty as to the conditions of the dwelling or other structures on said premises described therein (or any aspect of such condition). Interested persons are advised and encouraged to make their own inspection of the premises in order to determine the condition thereof.