

City of Newton Rental Inspection Checklist

Rental inspections are made on a rotating basis and prior to a property becoming a rental. Use this checklist prior to an inspection, or between tenants when an inspection is not scheduled.

Note: While it is impossible to list every violation of the Minimum Housing Code that may occur, this list contains violations that are commonly found during routine inspections. If you have a question about a specific situation or concern, please call the Newton Fire Department during business hours at 641-792-3347.

Outside and Yard Area:

- Are the street numbers visible from the road for each unit?
- Are the steps, decks and landings in good condition and safe to use?
- If you have guttering, is it falling off the house?
- Is the garbage properly stored?
- Are there junk cars, car parts or any trash in the yard?
- If you have storm windows, are any of the windowpanes missing? Any torn screens?

Throughout the house

Windows and Doors

- Any broken windowpanes?
- Do the windows have latching hardware?
- Do the windows open in case they are needed for a fire escape?

Interior finishes

- Any holes in walls, ceilings or floors?
- Is the carpet ripped or torn creating a possible trip hazard?

Electrical

- Has all visible knob and tube wiring been replaced?
- Do you see light fixtures hanging down on wires? They need replaced.
- Is there any exposed wiring in the living area? It needs to be in conduit.
- Are there any exposed electrical splices? They need to be in a junction box.
- Are there cover plates on all outlet switches and junction boxes?

In the Kitchen

- Any leaking plumbing?
- Adequate counter and appliances to prepare and store food?
- Any evidence of mice or rodents?
- Is there proper sanitation?
- Is there a working light fixture?
- Are there adequate outlets? You will need at least one outlet over the counter area. Any replacements should be done with a GFI within 6 ft. of the sink area.

In the Bathroom:

- Is there at least one outlet? Any remodel or addition use a GFI outlet. (There have been many accidental electrocutions in bathrooms that resulted in death and a GFI would have prevented them).
- Is there a vent or operable window?
- Does the toilet work properly?
- Is there a working sink, tub and or shower?

In the Living Room and Bedrooms:

- Is there an outlet on two different walls?
- Do the windows open in the bedrooms?

In the Basement:

- Are the steps safe?
- Is there a smoke detector?
- Do you see knob and tube wiring? If so then it needs updated.
- Are all splices in junction boxes?
- Is there excessive storage? Be sure to keep the furnace, water heater and electrical panel area clear.

Smoke Detectors:

- Is there a working smoke detector on each floor?
- Is there a working smoke detector in the basement (if the basement is accessible)?
(The best system for smoke detectors is to install in every bedroom and hallway and every level of the home. The type that are wired to your homes electricity and with a battery back up are best. This may become a requirement in the future).

Apartments over three units:

All of the above requirements will apply, plus you will need to check the following:

- Is there a 5# ABC fire extinguisher available within 75ft. on the same floor?
- In shared hallways you may need fire rated doors.
- Is the hallway covered with a fire resistive material such as sheetrock or plaster?
- Are exit signs working?
- Does the emergency lighting work when the test button is pushed?

Rental Permits:

Rental Permits are issued after a satisfactory initial inspection. Inspections are done on a rotating basis after that to ensure continued compliance. The rental permit has a yearly fee which is payable to the City of Newton.

Please call the Newton Fire Department during business hours at 641-792-3347 to schedule an inspection or if you have any questions.