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City of Newton

Rental Inspection Checklist

All rental properties within the City of Newton must be registered by December 31, 2019, and must be regularly inspected according to the schedule in the Administrative Policy. The checklist below is a simplified summary of items that will be inspected during the inspection process. This document should be understood as general guidance to the Rental Housing Inspection Program and should not be construed as a legally binding code. More information and references to the Newton Municipal Code can be found in Appendix: Inspection Form.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE

- Property owner applies for minimum rental housing occupancy permit for each dwelling unit before tenants can be allowed.
- Ownership (and, if applicable, management) contact information clearly identified on the application.
- Rental Housing Permit applied for and renewed each year.
- Inspection conducted once every three years for properties (landlord submits payment directly to inspector).
- Registration and permit fees paid and addressed to “City of Newton.”
- Contact information posted visibly on site.

EXTERIOR AREAS/STRUCTURE

- Property has address number(s) clearly visible from the street.
- Roof and walls not deteriorated and don't have paint peeling in excess of 50% of the total area.
- Accessory building(s) and fence(s) are in acceptable condition.
- Doors are operable and locks are functional.
- Windows and skylights are operable and undamaged. No torn screens or broken windowpanes.
- Chimneys appear to be structurally safe and undamaged.
- Foundation appears to be in adequate and in good repair
- Property does not have broken, rotten, split, or buckled walls.
- Stairways, porches, decks, and balconies have flooring, supports, and handrails in acceptable condition.
- Site appears to have adequate grading and drainage.

- Known cisterns, wells, or other hazards are fenced, covered, or filled.
- Property is not overgrown with weeds or brush. Yard is properly mowed.
- Property does not have an accumulation of garbage, junk, rubbish, or debris.
- Property is not providing habitation for rodents, wild animals, or other vermin.
- Property doesn't have illegal vehicles on site.
- Property does not have unsafe storage of combustible material.
- If the property has guttering, it is in a safe and acceptable condition.

INTERIOR AREAS/STRUCTURE

- Walls, ceilings, and floors are structurally sound and in acceptable condition. No splitting, sagging, leaning, or buckling due to defective material or deterioration.
- The building is maintained in a safe and sanitary manner.
- There is adequate counter and appliances to prepare and store food.
- All stairs are in acceptable condition. All stairs must have handrails and balusters or similar feature(s) that prevents a fall hazard from the open-side.
- Handrails are firmly fastened and in acceptable condition for all stairs.
- All habitable rooms are provided with adequate electrical service for proper illumination. Natural light is provided in all habitable rooms.
- There is adequate ventilation and no signs of leakage or mold inside.
- The carpet is not excessively ripped or torn creating a possible trip hazard.
- There is no evidence of mice or rodents.

PLUMBING

- Rental unit has use of functioning kitchen sink, toilet, and bathtub or shower.
- All applicable plumbing fixtures have hot and cold water and are connected to sanitary sewer system with proper clearance for usage and cleaning.
- Bathrooms provide adequate privacy and ventilation for users.
- Clothes dryer properly vented to the outside with manufacturer's instructions.

ELECTRICAL/MECHANICAL

- Electrical service is properly maintained and is sufficient to support the electrical usage.
- Adequate clearance for service is provided on the control side of all HVAC and utility appliances.
- Each unit has heating facilities capable of maintaining a room temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit in all habitable rooms and bathrooms. Cooking appliances and portable heating units shall not be used to provide heating to meet requirement.
- All electrical equipment, wiring, lighting, and appliances are properly installed and maintained in a safe and approved manner. No unsafe, exposed wiring is in the living area.
- Electrical panels are accessible, clearly marked, and circuits are properly labeled.
- Fuel-fired equipment has appropriate and functioning flues and shutoff valves.
- Every habitable room and every bathroom contains at least one (1) properly installed electrical outlet.
- Every laundry room contains at least one (1) grounded-type receptacle or a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- There are cover plates on all outlets, switches, and junction boxes.
- GFCI outlets installed for all outlets within six (6) feet of a water source.
- Water heaters have a properly installed pressure relief valve (PRV) with the discharge pipe reaching to within six inches of the floor.

FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- Place one smoke alarm in each sleeping room. Place one smoke alarm immediately outside of sleep areas (e.g., hallway). Place at least one smoke alarm on each floor, including the basement.
- All sleeping rooms have safe and appropriate access to a functioning window for egress.
- Each unit has an appropriately-sized, ABC-rated fire extinguisher.
 - For single-family properties, one properly maintained fire extinguisher, with a minimum size of 1-A 5-BC, must be present within the home.
 - For multi-family properties, there must be a minimum 2-A 10-BC extinguisher – checked and tagged by a qualified service person annually – located within 75 feet of each unit's main entrance with a minimum of one (1) per floor or within each unit.
- Place one carbon monoxide detector immediately outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms (e.g., hallway). There must be at least one carbon monoxide detector on each floor, including the basement (Only applies to properties with a potential carbon monoxide source).
- Fire alarm and suppression systems properly installed and operational where required.
- Two clear and passable egress routes exist for each floor above the first floor. Exit signs are in working condition.
- All egress doors and windows are operable from the inside without the need for keys, special knowledge, or effort.
- All fire resistance rating of walls, fire stops, floors, and doors, etc. are properly maintained.