CITY OF FROSTBURG

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION CHECKLIST FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

This checklist is not intended to be all inclusive but rather provides an abbreviated list of commonly observed issues. A self-inspection prior to scheduling an inspection is recommended to avoid unnecessary re-inspection fees.

These standards apply to existing construction and conditions only. Changes and renovations may be subject to current new construction codes. Please call City Hall with questions or for clarification.

EXTERIOR PROPERTY AREAS AND STRUCTURE

1. All exterior property and premises shall be maintained in a clean, safe, and sanitary condition. (IPMC 302.1)
2. All sidewalks, walkways, stairs, driveways, parking spaces, and similar areas shall be kept in a proper state of repair, and maintained free from hazardous conditions. (IPMC 302.3)
3. All accessory structures, including detached garages, fences, and walls, shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair. (IPMC 302.7)
4. All exterior surfaces, including but not limited to, doors, door and window frames, cornices, porches, trim, balconies, decks, and fences, shall be maintained in good condition… (IPMC 304.2)
5. Doors providing access to a dwelling unit, rooming unit, or housekeeping unit that is rented shall be equipped with a deadbolt lock designed to be readily openable from the side from which egress is to be made without the need for keys, special knowledge or effort and shall have a minimum lock throw of 1 inch. (IPMC 304.18.1)
6. Premise Identification. Buildings shall have approved address numbers placed in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches in height with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch. (IPMC 304.3)
7. Rental Housing Signs. Signs advertising "For Rent", the Property Owner, or the Owner's Agent of a rental property is limited to one (1) non-illuminated sign per property and shall be mounted flush to the building or porch railing or within a window. The sign shall be placed on a basement or first floor wall, at a maximum height of 12 feet above grade and the sign shall not exceed 3 square feet in size (18"x24"). (Frostburg Zoning Ordinance 2014)
8. When dumpster is not provided, leak-proof containers are required for storage of garbage. If stored on the side of property containers must be screened from view (CC Art. VI, Sec. VII).

HANDRAILS AND GUARDRAILS

9. Every exterior and interior flight of stairs having more than four risers shall have a handrail on one side of the stair and every open portion of a stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck , ramp or other walking surface which is more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below shall have guards. Handrails shall not be less than 30 inches in height or more than 42 inches in height measured vertically above the nosing of the tread or above the finished floor of the landing or walking surfaces. Guards shall not be less than 30 inches in height above the floor of the landing, balcony, porch, deck, or ramp, or other walking surface. (IPMC 307.1)

INTERIOR STRUCTURE

10. A safe, continuous and unobstructed path of travel must be provided from any point in the building out to the public street. (IPMC 702.1)
11. The interior of a structure and equipment therein shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and in a sanitary condition. (IPMC 305.1)
12. A habitable room, other than a kitchen, shall be a minimum of 7 feet in any plan dimension. (IPMC 404.1)
    a. Habitable spaces, hallways, corridors, laundry areas, bathrooms, toilet rooms and habitable basement areas shall have a minimum clear ceiling height of 7 feet. (IPMC 404.3)
    b. Every living room shall contain at least 120 SF. (IPMC 404.4.1)
13. Every habitable space in a dwelling shall contain at least two separate and remote receptacle outlets. (IPMC 605.2) *Standard outlets near water sources may be deemed a hazard by the inspector and replacement with GFCI outlet will be required.*

SMOKE DETECTORS

14. Single or multiple station smoke alarms shall be installed and maintained at all of the following locations:
    a. On the ceiling or wall outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of bedrooms.
    b. In each room used for sleeping purposes.
    c. In each story within a dwelling unit, including basements and cellars, but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. (IPMC 704.1.2)
15. The Rental Housing Code further requires that smoke alarms on each floor, with the exception of the smoke alarms located in the bedrooms:
    a. must be interconnected so that all detectors within the unit sound if any one is activated. (RHC 4.02.a.ii)
    b. must be UL approved AC-powered with battery backup

16. Smoke alarms in sleeping rooms should be interconnected and hard wired but are permitted to be solely battery operated in buildings where no construction is taking place and in existing areas of buildings undergoing alterations or repairs that do not result in the removal of interior wall or ceiling finishes exposing the structure, unless there is an attic, crawl space or basement available which could provide access for building wiring without the removal of interior finishes. (IPMC 704.3)
17. Smoke detectors are to be installed within six (6) inches of the ceiling if mounted on the wall. (RHC 4.02.a)
18. Adjoining rental units in a rental property not furnished with approved fire and smoke separation assemblies shall be required to interconnect smoke detectors between units. (RHC 4.02.a.iii)
19. In rental units containing attached garages or units with fuel fired appliances or heating source, a carbon monoxide detector with 120v power and battery backup shall be installed in the vicinity of the subject equipment or entry door to habitable area and interconnected with an approved smoke detector system. (RHC 4.02.a.vi)
20. When replacing smoke alarms, replace with new alarm with sealed long-life battery backup, per MD State Law.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

21. Every rental unit shall contain not less than one (1) fire extinguisher, 2.5 pound charge, approved by Underwriters Laboratory for combating Class A, B, and C fires. (RHC 4.02.b.i)
22. Fire extinguishers must be mounted in plain sight on a wall in, or, readily accessible to the kitchen area, except that the location of fire extinguishers regulated and approved by the State Fire Marshall for multi-family rental properties will be acceptable. (RHC 4.02.b.ii)

EMERGENCY EGRESS

23. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools, or special knowledge. (IPMC 702.4)
24. Rental units that undergo major renovation shall be subject to current emergency escape and rescue opening provisions (window sizes and standards for sleeping rooms) found in the City's adopted building codes pursuant to the MD Building Performance Standards.
25. All sleeping rooms must have an emergency escape and rescue opening. An emergency escape and rescue opening that does not meet the standards set forth in the MD Building Performance Standards may continue to exist except where the condition creates an inimical hazard to public welfare. The emergency escape and rescue opening shall be sufficient in size to allow an adult to exit the room in case of a fire (as determined by inspector).
26. The bottom of the opening shall be not more than 44 inches above the sleeping room's floor. In an instance where the bottom of the opening exceeds 44 inches from the floor, provisions shall be made to permanently affix a ladder or construct a step to achieve the 44 inch requirement.
27. Replacement windows not associated with a major renovations should have a clear opening equal to or greater than the clear opening of the window to be replaced. (RHC 4.03)

BEDROOM(S)

28. Bedrooms shall not constitute the only means of access to other bedrooms or habitable spaces and shall not serve as the only means of egress from other habitable spaces. (IPMC 404.4.2)
29. Every bedroom shall have access to at least one bathroom without passing through another bedroom. Every bedroom in a dwelling unit shall have access to at least one bathroom on the same story as the bedroom or an adjacent story. (IPMC 404.4.3)
30. Every bedroom shall contain a minimum of 70 SF and every bedroom occupied by more than one person shall contain a minimum of 50 SF of floor area for each occupant thereof. (IPMC 404.4.1)
31. All exterior doors, door assemblies, operator systems if provided, and hardware shall be maintained in good condition. Locks at all entrances to dwelling units and sleeping units shall tightly secure the door.

BATHROOM(S)

32. Every bathroom must contain at least one receptacle. (IPMC 605.2) *Standard outlets near water sources may be deemed a hazard by the inspector and replacement with GFCI outlet will be required.*
33. Every bathroom shall have an operable window, except that a window is not required if the room is equipped with a mechanical ventilation system. Air exhausted by a mechanical ventilation system from a bathroom must discharge to the outdoors and not be recirculated. (IPMC 403.2)
34. Every toilet shall be securely fastened to the floor.

LAUNDRY ROOM

35. Every laundry area shall contain at least one grounded-type receptacle or a receptacle with a ground fault circuit interrupter. (IPMC 605.2)
36. Clothes dryer exhaust systems shall be independent and vented outdoors in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, unless dryer is listed and labeled as a condensing (ductless) dryer. (IPMC 403.5)

BASEMENT & GARAGE

37. In rental units containing attached garages or units with fuel fired appliances or heating source, a carbon monoxide detector with 120v power and battery backup must be installed in the vicinity of the subject equipment or entry door to habitable area and interconnected with an approved smoke detector system. (RHC 4.02.a.vi)
38. Basement doors and hatchways must be kept secure to prevent the entrance of rodents, rain and surface drainage water. (IPMC 304.16)

ELECTRICAL

39. Dwelling units shall be served by a three-wire, 120/240 volt, single phase electrical service having a minimum rating of 60 amperes. (IPMC 604.2)
40. All electrical equipment, wiring and appliances shall be properly maintained in a safe and approved manner. (IPMC 605.1)
41. Every public hall, interior stairway, toilet room, kitchen, bathroom, laundry room, boiler room and furnace room shall contain at least one electric light fixture. (IPMC 605.3) Light fixtures in closets must have full globe.
42. Flexible cords shall not be used for permanent wiring. (IMPC 605.4)

HEATING SYSTEM

43. Heating facilities must be capable of maintaining a room temperature of 68 degrees F in all habitable rooms and bathrooms.
44. Cooking appliances shall not be used, nor shall portable unvented fuel burning space heaters be used, as a means to provide required heating. (IPMC 602.2)

PLUMBING

45. Water heating facilities shall be properly installed, maintained, and capable of providing an adequate amount of water to be drawn at every required sink, lavatory, bathtub, shower, and laundry facility at a minimum temperature of 110 degrees F. A gas burning water heater shall not be located in any bathroom, toilet room, bedroom or other occupied room normally kept closed, unless adequate combustion air is provided. An approved combination temperature and pressure relief valve and relief valve discharge pipe shall be properly installed and maintained on water heaters, (IPMC 505.4)
46. All plumbing fixtures shall be properly installed and maintained in working order and shall be kept free from obstructions, leaks and defects and be capable of performing the function for which such plumbing fixtures are designed. All plumbing fixtures shall be maintained in a safe, sanitary and functional condition. (IPMC 504.1)

PARKING

47. One off-street parking space is required for each unrelated occupant 18 years of age or older. *If property is currently registered and has less parking spaces than required, the condition may continue to exist so long as the property remains registered in the Frostburg Rental Housing Program.*
48. Newly created parking shall conform to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, including surface coverage, dimensions, driveways, drive aisles, and landscaping requirements. Call City Planner for lots 6 spaces or greater.

OCCUPANCY

49. Number of units and number of occupants allowed varies by Zoning District. See www.frostburgcity.com/planning.html or call City Planner, ext. 20.

COMMON CODE ENFORCEMENT VIOLATIONS

Observation of these violations will not be cause for a failing rental property inspection, but may result in citation(s) to tenants or property owners.

1. Within 24 hours of the end of any continuous winter snow event that causes 6 or more inches of snow, snow must be shoveled from sidewalk(s). (City Code Article III, Sec. II.a)
2. Tree/Hedges are not to obstruct or shade street lights, obstruct the passage of pedestrians on sidewalks, obstruct vision of traffic signs, or obstruct view of any street or alley intersection. (City Code Article III, Sec. VII.e)
3. Loose trash on the property (IPMC 308.1, City Code Article IV, Sec. VIII.)
4. Appliances stored outdoors are prohibited. (City Code Article VII, Sec. I.m.2)
5. All premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds or plant growth in excess of 12”. (IPMC 302.4, City Code Article VII, Sec. I.m.4.)
6. Except as provided for in other regulations, no inoperative or unlicensed motor vehicle shall be parked, kept, or stored on any premises, and no vehicle shall at any time be in a state of major disassembly, disrepair, or in the process of being stripped or dismantled. (IPMC 302.8, City Code Article III, Sec. IX.)
7. Upholstered furniture stored outdoors or on unenclosed porches is prohibited. (City Code Article VII, Sec. I.m.4)

IPMC – International Property Maintenance Code
RHC – City of Frostburg Rental Housing Code