



## Tips for Successful Rental Property Inspections

### Before an Inspection

- Notify your tenant(s) in writing of an upcoming inspection and ask them to notify you of any concerns that might be discovered during the inspection.
- Remind your tenant(s) of the inspection at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled inspection to allow time to reschedule if necessary.
- PRE-INSPECT your rental units and repair potential violations prior to the scheduled inspection.

### Day of Inspection

- **DON'T FORGET THE KEYS!**
- Come to the inspection prepared to make basic repairs. Inspectors will point out any violations observed and provide guidance on acceptable repairs. Inspectors will also answer any housing-related questions that you or your tenants may have.
- Also, bring along the following items:
  - Notebook and a pen
  - Tools (screwdrivers, hammer, pliers and tools for small jobs)
  - Extra smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
  - Batteries
  - Outlet/switch covers

### After Inspection

- When possible, make repairs immediately following the inspection, and notify the inspector when complete.
- If repairs are more substantial and cannot be completed immediately, create a plan with a timeline to make repairs. If you are unable to complete repairs by the scheduled re-inspection date/time, notify the inspector prior to inspection time.

### When to Call a Professional

When working on a rental property, licensed contractors are required for certain types of construction and repair work, including: electrical, mechanical and plumbing. Some construction and repair projects require building permit issuance. If you are unsure if the work you plan to do requires a permit, please contact Rich Parker at Veenstra & Kimm at 515-249-2761.

## Common Violations to Avoid by Pre-Inspecting

### **Smoke Alarms**

You may identify missing or non-functioning smoke alarms during your pre-inspection. Be sure working alarms are placed in the following places:

- Outside each separate sleeping area
- In each sleeping area
- One on each story within dwellings including basements

### **Carbon Monoxide Alarms**

You may identify missing or non-functioning carbon monoxide alarms, which are required in any dwelling with fuel-burning appliances or attached garages. One working alarm should be present at:

- Each dwelling unit
- Each story within dwellings including basements

### **Electrical Outlets**

Be on the Look-out for electrical outlets which have:

- Improper wiring
- Broken or scorched receptacles
- Broken or missing outlets/switch covers
- Non-functioning GFCI outlets (use test button to check)

### **Windows**

Check for windows which are non-working (will not open or close or stay opened/closed), have broken glass, show paint or glaze deterioration, or have missing or damaged screens.

### **Railings**

Stairway railings with graspable handrails are required on stairways with four or more steps. Guardrails are required to be in place on any walking surfaces elevated 30" or more above the adjacent surface; this includes stairways and decks. Openings cannot be more than 4" wide.

### **Appliances**

All appliances installed or on site must be in working order. All appliances not in use must be stored in a safe way.

### **Plumbing**

Leaking, damaged or non-functioning plumbing fixtures or piping need to be addressed. Please try to fix any slow or clogged drains as well.

### **Mechanical**

Furnace or heating systems should be vented properly and should be able to heat to at least 68 degrees. Hot water heaters should feature an approved pressure-temperature relief valve, a discharge tube and proper ventilation. Kitchens should have permanently installed lighting and a sink with hot and cold water. Bathrooms should have a window or fan for ventilation as well as permanently installed lighting.

## **Safe and Sanitary Conditions**

All doors and windows accessible from the outside must have working locks. Fire extinguishers should be available on each story or within each unit of multi-family buildings. Units must be clean, sanitary and fit for human occupation. The following conditions need to be mitigated prior to inspection: infestation of rodents or insects, tripping hazards (rips or tears in flooring, cords, etc.) and hoarding.

## **Exits**

There must be immediate access to two unobstructed means of exiting. Exit sign lights and emergency lighting should be in working order.

## **Exterior Area Maintenance**

Garages, sheds and other accessory structures on the premises must be in good shape. A garbage service must be supplied. Foundations must be water-tight and rodent-proof. Roofs must be maintained and free of leaks. Exterior walls and siding must be in good condition. Gutters or downspouts must not be missing, loose or disconnected. Walkways and sidewalks must also be well maintained.

## **Other**

Units must be free of loose, flaking or chipping paint. Floors, walls and ceilings must be in good condition. Ceilings must all be at least seven feet in height.

This is only a guide. For complete information, visit [Winterset.gov/309/residential-rental-housing-inspection-pr](http://Winterset.gov/309/residential-rental-housing-inspection-pr).