

BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA

Residential Rental Unit Pre-inspection and Maintenance Guide

The Inspection Guide is designed to assist owners in preparation for the required inspections of their properties under the Borough of Tamaqua Ordinance No. 545. Owners should recognize that this Inspection guide is not the actual checklist and that owners are responsible for ensuring that their units are in compliance with applicable provisions of the Borough's Code, including the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code Standards, International Property Maintenance Code, Health and Safety Code as well as the Borough's Zoning Code.

The inspector will be looking for interior unit conditions as well as exterior conditions. The inspector's focus will be on identifying substandard maintenance conditions that do not meet minimum standards established by local and state laws. The inspector will also identify improper living arrangements, parking and trash issues. They will also note any zoning violations, unpermitted dwelling units; the renting of spaces not intended for habitation; and substandard, overcrowded, unsanitary and unsafe housing conditions that render a housing unit unfit or unsafe for occupancy. The owner/manager must accompany the inspector during the inspection(s). Tenants are welcome to be present during the inspection(s).

Exterior Areas

- All exterior premises shall be maintained in a clean, safe and sanitary condition.
- Sidewalks, walkways shall be kept in a proper state of repair, and maintained free from hazardous conditions (no trip hazards or broken curb)
- No grass, weeds or vegetation in excess of ten (10) inches
- All structures and exterior property shall be kept free from rodent harborage and infestation
- Exhaust vents shall not discharge directly upon abutting or adjacent property or another tenant
- All accessory structures including fences shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair
- No inoperative or unlicensed motor vehicle shall be parked on any premises
- Pools, hot tubs and spas containing water more than twenty-four (24) inches in depth shall be completely surrounded by a fence or barrier at least 48 inches in height above the finished ground level with self-closing and self-latching gate
- All exterior premises shall be free from any accumulation of rubbish, garbage or trash
- The owner of every occupied premises shall supply approved covered trash receptacles
- Trash receptacles shall be stored in proper enclosures or designated area not viewable from front public way

Exterior Structure

- All exterior surfaces shall be maintained in good condition and protected from the elements
- Legible and visible address from the main street (numbers or letters) four (4) inch minimum height
- Foundation walls shall be plumb and free from open cracks and breaks to prevent the entry of rodents and other pests
- All exterior walls shall be free from holes, breaks, and loose or rotting materials; and maintained weatherproof and properly surface coated
- The roof and flashing shall be sound, tight and have no leaks
- Roof gutters and downspouts shall be maintained in good repair and shall not discharge onto adjacent property or in a manner that creates a public nuisance
- Every exterior stairway, deck, porch and balcony shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair
- Stairs and porches over thirty (30) inches above the finished ground level shall have guardrails

- Guardrails shall be a minimum of thirty-six (36) inches on porches and thirty-four (34) inches for stairs, with maximum spacing of four (4) inches for guardrail openings
- Every handrail and guardrail shall be firmly fastened and capable of supporting normal imposed loads
- Every window, door and frame shall be kept in good working order and repair and shall be weather tight with no breaks or cracks
- Locks at all entrances to dwelling units shall tightly secure the door and must be thumb latch deadbolts (no double keyed deadbolts) A sliding bolt is also not an acceptable deadbolt lock
- Exterior lighting is in good working order at entrance, exit corridors, etc.

Interior Structure

- The interior of the structure and equipment therein shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and in sanitary condition.
- All interior surfaces, including windows and doors, shall be free from peeling, chipping, flaking or abraded paint, cracks or loose plaster, decayed wood and other defective surface conditions
- All floor covering shall be free from trip hazards (no loose carpet or tile)
- Every handrail and guardrail shall be firmly fastened and capable of supporting normal imposed loads
- Every interior door shall fit reasonably well within its frame and capable of being opened and closed as intended
- Every habitable room must have a window capable of being opened
- Walls and ceilings shall be covered with approved materials with proper finish (no exposed framing or insulation)
- The building shall be free of infestations (interior and exterior property)

Electrical

- Each unit shall be supplied with a minimum 60 amperes service and shall have access to the service panel or disconnecting means for their rented unit
- All electrical equipment, wiring and appliances shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe and approved manner (no exposed or dangerous wiring)
- All panel boxes and outlets shall be properly grounded
- All receptacles, switches and junction boxes shall be covered with approved face plates
- All panels and breakers shall be properly labeled (panels shall be marked with unit being supplied)
- All open slots or punch outs shall be capped (no openings in the panel box)
- Switched lighting shall be provided at the top and bottom of all stairways (except basements)
- Every habitable space shall contain at least two (2) separate receptacle outlets.
- GFCI protection is required for all kitchen countertop receptacles, receptacles within six (6) feet of sinks, bathroom receptacles, garage receptacles, unfinished basements and crawlspace receptacles, pool and spa receptacles and outdoor receptacles

Plumbing & Heating

- Each unit shall be supplied with a heating system capable of heating all habitable rooms and maintaining a room temperature of 68° F
- Each unit shall be supplied with running water free from contamination
- Each unit shall be supplied with a plumbing system, free from obstructions, hazardous conditions, leaks and defects and shall be capable of performing the function for which its intended
- Each unit shall contain its own bathtub or shower, lavatory, water closet and kitchen sink and shall be in a sanitary, safe working condition
- All plumbing fixture shall be maintained in good working order (toilets functioning properly, etc.)

- All faucets or taps shall be free from leaks
- Each plumbing fixture shall have a separate trap
- All water heaters shall be properly strapped
- Water heater TPR (Temperature Pressure Relief valve) shall discharge within six (6) inches of floor with a one (1) inch air gap
- All gas meters shall have proper labeling and properly protected
- Gas lines shall have shut off valves at the appliance connection and all service gas lines shall be free of leaks
- Gutters, downspouts, sump pumps, floor drains or any storm water may not connect to the public sewer system

Sewer System

- Sump pump shall be in good working order and shall not discharge into sanitary sewer
- Cellar drain and rain leaders shall not discharge into sanitary sewer
- All vents and clean-outs shall be covered with approved, undamaged caps
- Vent pipes and/or clean-out riser pipes shall be secure

Fire Protection & Safety

- Smoke detectors shall be in working condition and installed in each bedroom and outside each sleeping area, one on each floor (battery operated are ok for existing buildings)
- Smoke detectors are required in additional locations for multi-family buildings (apartments or building with three (3) or more units) and shall be installed in common areas, corridors and at the top of each stairway
- Carbon monoxide alarms must be installed outside each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom
- Any dwelling unit with an attached garage shall have fire separation between the garage and dwelling in accordance with the PA UCC
- All stairways shall have continuous railing systems
- Floors, walls and ceilings between separate units shall be free from openings
- Exits and all path of egress to the public right of way shall be clear and unobstructed
- The area on and beneath exit stairs shall be clear of material
- The interior of the structure including the basement and attic storage shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition, free from rubbish and garbage

Ventilation & Occupancy Limitations

- Every habitable space shall have at least one window of approved size facing directly to the outdoors
- Every bathroom and toilet room shall be properly vented (either a window capable of being opened or a fan vented to the exterior)
- Clothes dryer exhaust shall be independent of all other systems and shall be exhausted outside the structure
- All combustion gases shall vent to the exterior of the structure
- The number of persons occupying a dwelling unit shall not create conditions that endanger the life, health, safety or welfare of the occupants

Common Areas (multi-family) (not one or two family)

- Every common hall and stairway shall be lighted at all times with at least a 60 watt standard bulb for each 200 square feet of floor area

- All means of egress, including exterior means of egress & stairways shall be illuminated at all times the building space served by the means of egress is occupied
- Emergency lighting shall be in working order and installed at all means of egress, including exterior means of egress, stairways and landings
- Exit signs shall be in place and readily viewable from any direction of egress travel
- All common areas shall be free from rubbish and garbage and maintained in a safe and sanitary condition
- All common areas shall be free from infestation

PLEASE NOTE RUNNING WATER, ELECTRICAL SYSTEM, HEAT SOURCE, SMOKE DETECTORS AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS, MUST ALL BE TURNED ON AND IN WORKING CONDITION DURING THE INSPECTION OR THE UNIT WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL