

Rental Housing Program

Residential Rental Code

On July 1, 2013, as required by Iowa Code Chapter 364.17, the Johnston City Council passed Ordinance 887, adopting Chapter 153 of the City Code known as the Residential Rental Code. The adoption of this code requires all rental property in the city to be registered and inspected every two years by the Building Department. Rental properties are required to meet the minimum standards established by the Johnston Residential Rental Code. Owners are required to register their rental properties and schedule an inspection every two years. Rental property is any property not occupied by the owner, even those occupied by family members who are not the owners. During the inspection, owners are notified of any required violations and given a compliance schedule to make repairs.

The inspection fee is charged based on the number of units with additional inspection fees if all repairs are not completed by the first re-inspection. All fees are paid prior to the inspection and a Rental Housing Certificate is issued to the owner. This certificate is valid for 2 years and is transferable to a new owner. However, the certificate may be revoked if new violations occur between inspection periods and are not corrected.



Rental Housing Inspection Checklist

Rental Housing inspectors look at many items. So that you may have a better idea and understanding of what to keep an eye on in regards to maintenance, we have listed a few of the most common items of concern. Please note; this list is not all inclusive and may not fit all homes.

Outside

- Are address numbers visible from the street?
- Are the steps uniform in height and depth and in good condition?
- Do balconies, decks, and landings have guardrails as required?
- Do stairs with 4 or more risers have handrails?
- Are private sidewalks free from trip hazards and safe?
- Is the property free from rubbish, refuse, or other nuisance items?

Structure

- Are windows weather tight and in working condition? Lockable? Screens?
- Are window panes cracked or broken?
- Does each sleeping room have a proper egress?
- Are there unsealed penetrations in the exterior of the building?
- Is there evidence of pest infestation/damage?
- Do exterior doors seal and latch properly?
- Are self closing doors and/or hinges present as required and functioning adequately?
- Are walls and ceilings properly sealed and maintained in a sanitary condition?
- Are floors solid with coverings in hazard free condition?
- Do habitable rooms have proper ceiling height of 7 feet?

Common Spaces

- Do common hallways have exit lights and signage?
- Are fire extinguishers present?

Electrical

- Are outlets in kitchens, bathrooms, garages, and storage areas GFCI protected?
- Are cover plates for switches, outlets, and junction boxes in place and secure?
- Are electrical panel circuits labeled? Are there unprotected openings?
- Are smoke detectors present in all sleeping rooms, hallways, storage/mechanical rooms, and each level of the dwelling?

Plumbing

- Does each dwelling unit have a tub/shower, lavatory, water closet, and kitchen sink in working order? Free of leaks in both supply and drainage?
- Is there hot water?

Mechanical

- Is the water heater vented properly?
- Are clothes dryers vented outside the building with approved piping?
- Does the furnace provide heat to each required room?

Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems

- Is the building equipped with a sprinkler system?
- Are all heads visible and unobstructed?
- When was the system last tested?