



Permitting and Inspections Department
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Helpful Tips to Prepare for Your Rental Inspection

Adopted: 9/18/18

Revised: 10/04/18 *MR*

This list of questions will help you prepare for your rental inspection. The questions ask about commonly found violations and help ensure your property is as safe and ready as possible. This list is not intended to be exhaustive but a helpful place to start before the Code Enforcement Officer performs an inspection.

The Code Enforcement Officer will ask questions, share violation observations, explain how to correct them, provide a length of time and a written report. Please ask if something is unclear. The Code Enforcement Officer may need to research an issue and follow up with you. Please be aware that the inspector needs access to all units and areas of your building including the owner's unit. We may follow up for quality assurance purposes and ask about your experience. Thank you for your partnership to keep Portland safe!

Fire Safety

- Is there a working smoke alarm (photoelectric) in each room used for sleeping? In each area immediately outside of the sleeping room? On each level, including the basement?
- Is there at least one carbon monoxide alarm on each level?
- Is the hot water heater and furnace clear of flammable materials (at least 3 feet away)?
- Are all exit doors, hallways, and stairwells free of obstructions inside and out?
- Is the Knox Box installed properly (buildings with a fire alarm or suppression system)?

Doors and Windows

- Do exterior doors and windows open and close easily? Are they weathertight? Are the window screens in place?
- Do all rooms used for sleeping or living space have two means of approved escape from each room? If using a window as a means of escape, does at least one window meet the minimum requirements? See our *Secondary Means of Escape and Egress Informational Bulletin* on the Permitting and Inspections homepage for more information.

Walls, Ceilings and Floor

- Are the walls, windows sills and ceiling in good repair?
- Is the surface of the flooring in good condition (free from damage)?



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Stairs, Porches, Decks, and Handrails

- Is every stairway and porch structurally sound and safe?
- How is your deck or stairs attached to the building? Check for loose or missing bolts or deterioration of the wood surrounding the bolts.
- Is the flashing in place under the deck? Any signs of water damage?
- Do the foundation posts fit solidly into the piers? Do you see rust at the connections?
- Do the fasteners have signs of weakness and corrosion?
- Do you see large splits or areas of rot on the ledger boards, posts, joist and decking?
- Are the railings, handrails, and balusters loose? Capable of supporting the required weight?
- Do the stairs have signs of rot and cracks on stringers, risers or treads? Are the treads loose or uneven?

Heating, Plumbing and Electrical

- Is all fuel burning equipment in good repair, properly installed and connected to chimneys or vents?
- Does the heating system maintain the minimum of 68 degrees Fahrenheit in every habitable room between September 15th through May 15th of each year?
- Does the water heater have a temperature and pressure-relief valve discharge pipe?
- Is the property free of faulty electrical receptacles, outlets or switches, damage to exposed wiring, improper wiring or fuses? Is the electrical panel accessible and properly labeled? Do all of the outlets have covers? Are there listed surge protectors or power strips in place of extension cords?
- Is there a working exhaust fan or operable window in the bathroom for ventilation?
- Are all of the required plumbing fixtures properly installed and maintained? Does the hot water meet the minimum temperature of 110 degrees Fahrenheit?

Sanitation

- Does the premises have a sufficient number of approved containers for disposal of rubbish, ashes, garbage, and waste? Is the trash removed regularly?
- Are the premises free from infestation such as insects, rodents, or vermin?



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Exterior

- Does each building have address numbers that are clearly visible from the street?
- Does each unit have a clearly marked number?
- Are the exterior surfaces of the building protected from the elements and decay by means of a protective covering or treatment? Is the siding, brick or paint free of deterioration?
- Is the roof in good repair, weather proof and watertight?
- Is the foundation in good repair and level, with no cracking or deterioration?
- Does the property have a swimming pool? Is it protected by a 48" barrier or fence with a self-latching, self-closing gate, or other approved method?
- Are all motor vehicles registered?
- Are accessory structures (garage, sheds, fences) structurally sound and in good repair?
- Are there any cooking or heating devices on a deck, balcony, underneath an overhang or within 10 feet of a structure (for a 3+ Family property)?

Annual Professional Service Required

- Is the sprinkler system in working condition? Does it have a current inspection tag?
- Is your fire alarm system in working condition? Is there a current City of Portland inspection sticker?

All city, state and federal codes must be followed. A few examples of code requirements not specifically mentioned in this list are boiler protection, fire doors, excessive storage, and lead-based paint hazards. These examples are not exhaustive of all potential violations.

Please contact our Licensing & Registration Office in Room 307 of City Hall, by calling (207) 756-8131 or email at housingsafety@portlandmaine.gov with questions. To meet at City Hall, please call (207) 874-8703 to schedule an "Ask the Code Officer" appointment. These are 30-minute appointments and available every Thursday morning.

References:

[City of Portland Housing Safety Program](#)

[City of Portland Fire and Home Safety](#)

[City of Portland Code of Ordinances](#)