



## **GUIDELINES FOR LANDLORDS INSPECTIONS OF RENTAL HOUSING**

### **PURPOSE – INTENT**

It is the desire of the City of Chesapeake to render service to the landlord and tenant alike. With the cooperation of all parties concerned, Chesapeake can work toward eliminating its problems of blighted rental housing. Please work with us toward that goal, and we shall assist you in every possible way.

The purpose and intent of these programs is to ensure the public health, safety and welfare in rental dwelling units located within designated rental inspection districts. This program is designed and intended to prevent property deterioration and neighborhood blight in areas by requiring proper building maintenance and continued compliance with all applicable regulations.

### **UNITS INCLUDED**

This ordinance shall apply to rental dwelling units used as a place of residence including, but not limited to, condominiums, efficiencies, townhouses, manufactured or mobile homes, single-family homes, two-family homes, multi-family homes or multi-family apartments within designated Special Emphasis Areas.

### **PROCEDURES**

No rental dwelling unit, which is within a rental inspection districts, may be occupied until it has been inspected and approved for occupancy by the Code Compliance Division.

Each owner of rental housing within a rental inspection districts shall notify the Department of Neighborhood Services, Code Compliance Division when a change of tenant takes place or is anticipated, and shall request an inspection of the dwelling unit(s) in question. The office is located at 306 Cedar Road,

2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Chesapeake, Virginia 23322. You may contact our office by calling (757) 382-6378 or by fax (757) 382-6793 or email address: [neighborserv@cityofchesapeake.net](mailto:neighborserv@cityofchesapeake.net)

The owner or his agent shall contact the Code Compliance Division to make arrangements for an inspection. The initial inspection fee is \$35.00 (thirty-five dollars). The first reinspection fee is \$10.00 (ten dollars) and the second reinspection fee is \$50.00 (fifty dollars). Fees will be collected at the time of inspection by check or money order.

Inspections are conducted using the Chesapeake City Code and the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code as the criteria for compliance and any amendments thereto, and further shall comply with any other applicable law, ordinance, regulations or standard set forth in, or adopted or incorporated by the code of the City of Chesapeake.

The owner or his agent shall agree to meet the inspector at the dwelling unit(s) to be inspected and shall make entrance to the structure possible. At the time of inspection, if the dwelling unit(s) meets Property Maintenance Code Standards, a **Rental Certificate of Approval** shall be issued. If the dwelling unit(s) is in violation of the Property Maintenance Code, the inspector shall prepare a checklist of the necessary repairs and shall give a copy of this checklist to the owner or his agent.

If violations are found that would not have an adverse effect on the health, safety or welfare of an occupant, the owner or his agent may sign a Temporary Rental Certificate of Approval allowing the tenant to occupy the dwelling while repairs are being completed.

When violations are found that would have an adverse effect on the health, safety or welfare of an occupant, no Rental Certificate of Approval or **Temporary Rental Certificate of Approval** will be issued and the dwelling unit must remain vacant until all of the repairs are made.

When a temporary release has been issued, a specific time period shall be given by the inspector for any necessary repairs to be completed. If at the end of the time period, no reinspection has been called for, the repairs have not been completed and the unit is occupied and the owner or his agent shows no intention of making the repairs, legal action may be taken.

If additional information is required, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Services  
Neighborhood Inspections Division at (757) 382-6378 or by fax, (757) 382-6793  
or email to : [neighborserv@cityofchesapeake.net](mailto:neighborserv@cityofchesapeake.net)  
Business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The information included herein is not meant to be all-inclusive.

# CODE INFORMATION

## **SECTION PM-301.0 GENERAL**

### **PM-301.1 Scope**

The provisions of this chapter shall govern the minimum conditions and the responsibilities of persons for maintenance of structures, equipment and exterior property.

### **PM-301.2 Responsibility**

The owner of the premises shall maintain the structures and exterior property in compliance with these requirements except as otherwise provided for in this code. A person shall not occupy as owner-occupant or permit another person to occupy premises which are not in a sanitary and safe condition and which do not comply with the requirements of this chapter. Occupants of a dwelling unit are responsible for keeping in a clean, sanitary safe condition that part of the dwelling unit or premises which they occupy and control.

## **SECTION PM-302 EXTERIOR PROPERTY AREAS**

### **PM-302.6 Exhaust Vents**

Pipes, ducts, conductors, fans or blowers shall not discharge gases, steam, vapor, hot air, grease, smoke, odors and other gaseous or particulate wastes directly upon abutting or adjacent public or private property or that of another tenant.

### **PM-302.7 Accessory Structures**

All accessory structures, including detached garages, fences and walls shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.

## **SECTION PM-304 EXTERIOR STRUCTURE**

### **PM-304.3 Premises 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. These numbers shall contrast with their background. Address numbers shall be Arabic numeral or alphabet letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches (102 mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch (12.7 mm).

### **PM-304.4 Structural Members**

All structural members shall be maintained free of deterioration, and shall be capable of safely supporting the imposed dead and live loads.

### **PM-304.6 Exterior Walls**

All exterior walls shall be free of holes, breaks, and loose or rotting materials; and maintained weatherproof and properly surface coated where required to prevent deterioration.

**PM-304.7    Roofs and Drainage**

The roof and flashing shall be sound, tight and not have defects that admit rain. Roof drainage shall be adequate to prevent dampness or deterioration in the walls or interior portion of the structure. Roof drains, gutters and downspouts shall be maintained in good repair and free from obstructions. Roof water shall not be discharged in a manner that creates a public nuisance.

**PM-304.9    Overhang Extensions**

Canopies, marquees, signs, metal awnings, fire escapes, standpipes, exhaust ducts shall be maintained in good repair and be properly anchored so as to be kept in a safe and sound condition. When required, all exposed surfaces of metal or wood shall be protected from the elements and against decay or rust by periodic application of weather-coating materials such as paint or similar surface treatment.

**PM-304.11    Chimneys and Towers**

All chimneys, cooling towers, smoke stacks and similar appurtenances shall be maintained structurally safe and sound and in good repair. All exposed surfaces of metal or wood shall be protected from the elements and against decay or rust by periodic application of weather-coating materials, such as paint or similar surface treatment.

**PM-304.12    Handrails and Guards**

Every handrail and guard shall be firmly fastened and capable of supporting normally imposed loads and shall be maintained in good condition.

**PM-304.13    Window, Skylight and Door Frames:**

Every window, skylight door and frame shall be kept in a sound condition, good repair and weather-tight.

**PM-304.13.1    Glazing**

All glazing materials shall be maintained free of cracks and holes.

**PM-304.13.2    Openable Windows**

Every window, other than a fixed window, shall be easily openable and capable of being held in position by window hardware.

**PM-304.14    Insect Screens**

During the period from April 1 to December 1, every door, window and other outside opening required for ventilation of habitable rooms, food preparation areas, food service areas or any areas where products to be included or utilized in food for human consumption are processed, manufactured, packaged or stored, shall be supplied with approved tightly fitting screens of not less than 16 mesh per inch (16 mesh per 25 mm) and every swinging door shall have a self-closing device in good working condition.

*\*Exception: Screen doors shall not be required where other approved means, such as air curtains or insect repellent fans are employed.*

**PM-304.15 Doors**

All exterior doors, door assemblies and hardware shall be maintained in good condition. Locks at all entrances to dwelling units, rooming units and guest rooms shall tightly secure the door. Locks on means of egress doors shall be in accordance with Section 702.3.

**CHAPTER 62-2 (CITY CODE) ACCUMULATION OF WEEDS AND DEBRIS AND GROWTH OF GRASS OR SIMILAR VEGETATION ABOVE CERTAIN HEIGHT – PROHIBITED.**

The city council finds that the accumulation in this city of weeds and debris and the growth of grass and similar vegetation beyond a certain height in specified areas of the city constitute a danger to the health and safety of the residents of the city and that such conditions shall be remedied as provided in this section.

- (1) Remove all weeds and debris from such property;
- (2) Cut all grass or similar vegetation found on any such property one acre or less in size when the average height of such grass or vegetation exceeds 15 inches; and
- (3) Cut all grass or similar vegetation found on any such property greater than one acre in size and located within 150 feet of any dwelling or structure and any road or thoroughfare when the average height of such grass or similar vegetation exceeds 15 inches.

**SECTION PM-305 INTERIOR STRUCTURE**

**PM-305.1 General**

The interior of a structure and equipment therein shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and in a sanitary condition. Occupants shall keep that part of the structure which they occupy or control in a clean and sanitary condition. Every owner of a structure containing a rooming house, housekeeping units, a hotel, a dormitory, two or more dwelling units or two or more nonresidential occupancies, shall maintain, in a clean and sanitary condition, the shared or public areas of the structure and exterior property.

**PM-305.3 Interior Surfaces**

All interior surfaces, including windows and doors shall be maintained in good, clean and sanitary condition. Peeling, chipping, flaking or abraded paint shall be repaired, removed or covered. Cracked or loose plaster, decayed wood and other defective surface conditions shall be corrected.

**PM-305.4 Stairs and Walking Surfaces**

Every stair, ramp, landing, balcony, porch, deck or other walking surface shall be maintained in sound condition and good repair.

**PM-305.5 Handrails and Guardrails**

Every handrail and guardrail shall be firmly fastened and capable of supporting normally imposed loads and shall be maintained in good condition.

**SECTION PM-308 EXTERMINATION**

**PM-308.1 Infestation**

All structures shall be kept free from insect and rodent infestation. All structures in which insects or rodents are found shall be promptly exterminated by approved processes that will not be injurious to human health. After extermination, proper precautions shall be taken to prevent reinfestation.

**CHAPTER 4 LIGHT VENTILATION AND OCCUPANCY LIMITATIONS**

**SECTION PM-402 Light**

**PM-402.1 Habitable Spaces**

Every habitable space shall have at least one window of approved size facing directly to the outdoors or to a court. The minimum total glazed area, for every habitable space shall be 8 percent of the floor area of such room. Whenever walls or other portions of a structure face a window of any room and such obstructions are located less than 3 feet (914 mm) from the window and extend to a level above that of the ceiling of the room, such window shall not be deemed to face directly to the outdoors nor to a court and shall not be included as contributing to the required minimum total window area for the room.

*Exception: Where natural light for rooms or spaces without exterior glazing areas is provided through an adjoining room, the unobstructed opening to the adjoining room shall be at least 8 percent of the floor area of the interior room or space, but not less than 25 square feet (2.33 m<sup>2</sup>). The exterior glazing area shall be based on the total floor area being served.*

**PM-402.2 Common Halls and Stairways**

Every common hall and stairway in residential occupancies, other than in one-and two-family dwellings, shall be lighted at all times with at least a 60 watt standard incandescent light bulb for each 200 square feet (19m<sup>2</sup>) of floor area or equivalent illumination , provided that the spacing between lights shall not be greater than 30 feet (9144 mm). In other than residential occupancies, means of egress, including exterior means of egress stairways shall illuminated at all times the building space served by the means of egress is occupied with a minimum of 1 footcandle (11 lux) at floors, landings and treads.

**SECTION 403.0 Ventilation**

**PM-403.1 Habitable Spaces**

Every habitable space shall have at least one operable window. The total operable area of the window in every room shall be equal to at least 45 percent of the minimum glazed area required in Section PM-4021.

**PM-403.2 Bathrooms and Toilet Rooms**

Every bathroom and toilet room shall comply with the ventilation requirements for habitable spaces as required by Section PM-403.1, except that a window shall not be required in such spaces equipped with a mechanical ventilation system. Air exhausted by a mechanical ventilation system from a bathroom or toilet room shall discharge to the outdoors and shall not be recirculated.

**PM-403.3 Cooking Facilities**

Unless approved through the certificate of occupancy, cooking shall not be permitted in any rooming unit or dormitory unit, and a cooking facility or appliance shall not be permitted to be present in a rooming unit or dormitory unit.

*Exception: Where specifically approved in writing by the code official.*

**PM-403.4 Process Ventilation**

Where injurious, toxic, irritating or noxious fumes, gases, dusts or mists are generated, a local exhaust ventilation system shall be provided to remove the contamination agent at the source. Air shall be exhausted to the exterior and not be recirculated to any space.

**PM-403.5 Clothes Dryer Exhaust**

Clothes dryer venting systems shall be independent of all other systems and shall be vented in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

**SECTION PM-404.0 OCCUPANCY LIMITATIONS**

**PM-404.4.1 Area for Sleeping Purposes**

Every bedroom occupied by one person shall contain at least 70 square feet (6.5 m square) of floor area, and every bedroom occupied by more than one person shall contain at least 50 square feet (4.6 m square) of floor area for each occupant thereof.

**PM-404.4.2 Access from Bedrooms**

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.

*Exception: Units that contain fewer than two bedrooms.*

**PM-404.4.3 Water Closet Accessibility**

Every bedroom shall have access to at least one water closet and one lavatory without passing through another bedroom. Every bedroom in a dwelling unit shall have access to at least one water closet and lavatory located in the same story as the bedroom or an adjacent story.

**PM-404.5 Overcrowding**

Dwelling units shall not be occupied by more occupants than permitted by the minimum area requirements of Table PM-404.5.

<b>Table PM-404.5 MINIMUM AREA REQUIREMENTS</b>			
<b>Space</b>	<b>Minimum Area in Square Feet</b>		
	<b>1-2 occupants</b>	<b>3-5 occupants</b>	<b>6 or more occupants</b>
Living room a, b	No requirements	120	150
Dining room a, b	No requirements	80	100
Bedrooms For SI: 1 sq ft = 0.093m <sup>2</sup>	Shall comply with Section PM-404.4		
<b>Note (a) See Section PM-404.5.2 for combined living room/dining room spaces.</b>			
<b>Note (b) 1 See Section 404.5 for limitations on determining the minimum occupancy area for sleeping purposes.</b>			

**PM-404.4.4 Prohibited Occupancy**

Kitchens and non-habitable spaces shall not be used for sleeping purposes.

**SECTION PM-501 GENERAL/PLUMBING**

**PM-501.2 Responsibility**

The owner of the structure shall provide and maintain such plumbing facilities and plumbing fixtures in compliance with these requirements. A person shall not occupy as owner-occupant or permit another person to occupy any structure or premises which does not comply with the requirements of this chapter.

**SECTION PM-502.1 REQUIRED FACILITIES**

**PM-502.1 Dwelling Units**

Every dwelling unit shall contain its own bathtub or shower, lavatory, water closet and kitchen sink which shall be maintained in a sanitary, safe working condition. The lavatory shall be placed in the same room as the water closet or located in close proximity to the door leading directly into the room in which such water closet is located. A kitchen sink shall not be used as a substitute for the required lavatory.

**SECTION PM-503 TOILET ROOMS**

**PM-503.1 Privacy**

Toilet rooms and bathrooms shall provide privacy and shall not constitute the only passageway to a hall or other space, or to the exterior. A door and interior locking device shall be provided for all common or shared bathroom and toilet rooms in a multiple dwelling.

## **SECTION PM-504      PLUMBING SYSTEMS AND FIXTURES**

### **PM-504.1      General**

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 functions for which such plumbing fixtures are designed. All plumbing fixtures shall be maintained in a safe, sanitary and functional condition.

## **SECTION PM-505      WATER SYSTEM**

### **PM-505.1      General**

Every sink, lavatory, bathtub or shower, drinking fountain, water closet or other plumbing fixture shall be properly connected to either a public water system or to an approved private water system. All kitchen sinks, lavatories, laundry facilities, bathtubs and showers shall be supplied with hot or tempered and cold running water in accordance with the International Plumbing Code.

### **PM-505.2      Contamination**

The water supply shall be maintained free from contamination, and all water inlets for plumbing fixtures shall be located above the flood-level rim of the fixture. Shampoo basin faucets, janitor sink faucets, and other hose bibs or faucets to which hoses are attached and left in place, shall be protected by an approved atmospheric-type vacuum breaker or an approved permanently attached hose connection vacuum breaker.

### **PM-505.3      Supply**

The water supply system shall be installed and maintained to provide a supply of water to plumbing fixtures, devices and appurtenances in sufficient volume and at pressures adequate to enable the fixtures to function properly, safely and free from defects and leaks.

### **PM-505.4      Water Heating Facilities**

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 temperature of not less than 120 degrees F. (49 degrees C.). **A gas-burning water heater shall not be located in any bathroom, bedroom, 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.

## **SECTION PM-506      SANITARY DRAINAGE SYSTEM**

### **PM-506.1      General**

All plumbing fixtures shall be properly connected to either a public sewer system or to an approved private sewage disposal system.

## **SECTION PM-601            GENERAL/MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL**

### **PM-601.2    Responsibility**

The owner of the structure shall provide and maintain mechanical and electrical facilities and equipment in compliance with these requirements. A person shall not occupy as owner-occupant or permit another person to occupy any premises which does not comply with the requirements of this chapter.

## **SECTION PM-602            HEATING FACILITIES**

### **PM-602.3    Heat Supply**

Every owner and operator of any building who rents, leases or lets one or more dwelling unit, rooming unit, dormitory or guestroom on terms, either express or implied, to furnish heat to the occupants thereof shall supply sufficient heat during the period from October 1 to May 15 to maintain the room temperatures specified in Section PM-602.2 during the hours between 6:30 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. of each day and not less than 60 degrees F. (16 degrees C.) during other hours.

## **SECTION PM-602            MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT**

### **PM-603.1    Mechanical Appliances**

All mechanical appliances, fireplaces, solid fuel-burning appliances, cooking appliances and water heating appliances shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe working condition, and shall be capable of performing the intended function.

### **PM-603.3    Clearances**

All required clearances to combustible materials shall be maintained.

### **PM-603.4    Safety Controls**

All safety controls for fuel-burning equipment shall be maintained in effective operation.

## **SECTION PM-604.0        ELECTRICAL FACILITIES**

### **PM-604.1    Facilities Required**

Every occupied building shall be provided with an electrical system in compliance with the requirements of this section and Section PM-605.0.

### **PM-604.2    Service**

The size and usage of appliances and equipment shall serve as a basis for determining the need for additional facilities in accordance with NFPA 70, listed in Chapter 8. Every dwelling shall be served by a main service which is not less than 60 amperes, three wires.

### **PM-604.3    Electrical System Hazards**

Where it is found that the electrical system in a structure constitutes a hazard to the occupants or the structure by reason of inadequate service, improper fusing, insufficient outlets, improper wiring or installation, deterioration or damage, or for similar reasons, the code official shall require the defects to be corrected to eliminate the hazard.

**PM-605.1 Installation**

All electrical equipment, wiring and appliances shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe and approved manner.

**PM-605.2 Receptacles**

Every habitable space in a dwelling shall contain at least two separate and remote receptacle outlets. Every laundry area shall contain at least one grounded type receptacle. Every bathroom shall contain at least one receptacle.

**PM-605.3 Lighting Fixtures**

Every public hall, interior stairway, water closet compartment, bathroom, laundry room and furnace room shall contain at least one electric lighting fixture.

**SECTION PM-702.0 MEANS OF EGRESS**

**PM-702.1 General**

A safe, continuous and unobstructed means of egress shall be provided from the interior of a structure to a public way.

**PM-702.3 Locked Doors**

All means of egress doors shall be readily openable from the side from which egress is to be made without the need for keys, special knowledge or effort, except as provided for in Section PM-702.11.1.

**SECTION PM-704.0 FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS**

**PM-704.1 General**

All systems, devices and equipment to detect a fire, actuate an alarm, or suppress or control a fire or any combination thereof shall be maintained in an operable condition at all times in accordance with the *International Fire Code*.

**PM-704.2 Smoke Alarms**

Single or multiple-station smoke alarms shall be installed and maintained in Groups R-2, R-3, R-4 and in dwellings not regulated in Group R occupancies, regardless of occupant load at all of the following locations:

1. On the ceiling or wall outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of bedrooms.
2. In each room used for sleeping purposes.
3. In each story within a dwelling unit, including basements and cellars but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.

Single or multiple-station smoke alarms shall be installed in other groups in accordance with the *International Fire Code*.

**PM-704.3 Power Source**

In Group R occupancies and in dwellings not regulated as Group R occupancies, single-station smoke alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring provided that such wiring is served from a commercial source and shall be equipped with a battery backup. Smoke alarms shall emit a signal when the batteries are low. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than as required for overcurrent protection.

*Exception: Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated in buildings where no construction is taking place, buildings that are not served from a commercial power source and in existing areas of buildings undergoing alterations and 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.*

**PM-704.4 Interconnection**

Where more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed within an individual dwelling unit in Group R-2, R-3, R-4 and in dwellings not regulated as Group R occupancies, the smoke alarms shall be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit. The alarm shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed.

*Exceptions:*

- 1. Interconnection is not required in buildings which are not undergoing alterations, repairs, or construction of any kind.*
- 2. Smoke alarms in existing areas are not required to be interconnected where alterations or repairs 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 interconnection without the removal of interior finishes.*

**PM-705.5.3 Tampering**

Anyone tampering or interfering with the effectiveness of a smoke detector shall be in violation of this code.

Reference: USBC Property Maintenance Code  
City Code

Revised: 6/15/06