



RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTIONS: MOST COMMON VIOLATIONS

Following is a list of the **most common** violations of the housing and fire codes found during the inspection of residential rental properties. If you should have any questions or need additional information regarding any of these requirements, feel free to contact the Bureau of Housing Inspection.

1. **Heating Systems:** All heating systems must be cleaned and inspected at least once every two years to ensure that the unit is working properly. Property owners must submit proof that any furnace, boiler, or heating device has been inspected by a qualified technician within the previous two years. (Be sure to ask your contractor for a service report; an invoice or statement is not acceptable.)
2. **Chimneys:** Every chimney (including fireplace chimneys), flue, or furnace/boiler vent must be inspected at least once every two years to ensure adequate draft, structural integrity, and freedom from combustible deposits and obstructions. Property owners must submit proof that every chimney, flue, or furnace/boiler vent has been inspected by a qualified technician within the previous two years. (Be sure to ask your contractor for a service report; an invoice or statement is not acceptable.)
3. **Bedroom Door Locks:** Bedroom doors locks that may be locked when the bedroom is not occupied (e.g. padlocks) are **PROHIBITED**. A violation of this section may result in a complaint and summons to municipal court without first issuing a notice of violation.
4. **Prohibited Areas:** No room or area shall be used as a sleeping room or habitable space unless a Certificate of Occupancy covering that area has been issued by the Construction Official. A violation of this section may result in a complaint and summons to municipal court without first issuing a notice of violation.
5. **Smoke Detectors:** All dwelling units are required to be equipped with working smoke detectors. Homes built before 1977 may have battery-operated detectors; homes built after 1977 must have hard-wired, interconnected detectors. There should be at least one detector on each level of the unit, and there should be a detector within 10 feet of each bedroom. Smoke detectors should not be more than 10 years old. (The most common problems are missing/dead batteries and removed/inoperable detectors.)
6. **Carbon Monoxide Alarms:** Working carbon monoxide alarms must be provided in the immediate vicinity (10 feet) of all sleeping rooms. The device may be a battery-powered, plug-in, or direct-wired type, and must be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If electrically operated, no switch should be able to cause loss of power to the alarm. (The most common problems are missing/dead batteries and removed or inoperable detectors.)

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(continued)

7. **Kitchen Fire Extinguishers:** Every dwelling unit must be provided with a portable fire extinguisher which listed, labeled, charged and operable. The size should be no smaller than **2A:10B:C**, but weigh no more than 10 pounds. The extinguisher **must be mounted** within 10 feet of the kitchen, and it must be visible and readily accessible.
8. **Paint, Interior and Exterior:** All painted surfaces such as walls, window and door frames, trim work, porch floors, etc. must be properly maintained (no chipped or peeling paint or cracks) at all times. **This is especially important in older homes where lead-based paint may be present.**
9. **Windows:** All windowpanes must be kept intact and free of cracks or breaks at all times. All openable windows must be able to remain open without the use of bars, chocks, or other devices. (The most common problem is broken sash cords/chains.)
10. **Stoves and Other Appliances:** All appliances supplied by the owner, including gas or electric stove burners, must be kept in proper operating condition at all times. (The most common problem is gas burners which don't ignite or missing control knobs.)
11. **Faucets/Sink Traps:** Water faucets serving sinks, bathtubs and shower stalls must operate properly and without leaks or breaks. Make sure faucets do not leak when in the closed position and check all sink traps for leaks.
12. **Window Locks:** Any window opening onto an area affording easy access to the premises must be equipped with a working locking device. (The most common problem is window locks which are missing, broken, or painted shut.)
13. **Bathroom Door Locks:** All bathroom doors must be equipped with a working privacy lock.
14. **Screens:** All windows required to be openable must be provided with tight-fitting screens of not less than sixteen mesh per inch. Screens should not be permanently affixed and must be provided year round for use and removal by the tenants.
15. **GFCI Receptacles in Bathroom and Kitchen:** All electrical receptacles within 6 feet of a water source must be equipped with a GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupted) type receptacle.
16. **Gutters and Drain Leaders:** Rain water and melting snow must be properly drained from the roof and away from the building so as not to cause a hazard in walkways and/or driveways. Repair or replace any broken or rotted gutters and drain leaders.
17. **Hand/Guard Rails for Staircases:** All staircases must be equipped with handrails and vertical guards. The vertical guards must extend from the handrail to the stair tread and must either be solid or bars spaced no more than 4 inches apart. (New handrails must meet the technical requirements of the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code.)