



Inspection Guide for 1 & 2 Family Rental Property

Inspection Division Community and Economic Development

Purpose. The purpose of this publication is to provide a useful general guide to the most important features that will be inspected in 1 and 2 family type rental residential properties. Other types of residential properties have additional features that are outlined in supplements to this guide. This guide may also be used by homeowners who want to review the condition of their homes for safety and compliance with applicable codes and ordinances.

Organization. This guide is organized into 4 major sections: A. Exterior; B. Accessory Structures; C. Interior; and D. Other.

Intent. The intent of this publication is to focus owner attention on key features of 1 & 2 family type rental residential property, generally state what to look for, and point to the governing code section(s).

Formal inspections by City Inspectors will include these specific items, but any hazard to life, limb, or property that is not specifically listed will also be noted for correction. Using this publication as a guide, the owner should also apply common sense when evaluating property.

There are many potential violations that are not included here either because the danger to persons/property is relatively low or because the specific circumstance is rare and/or is so obviously wrong as to not need listing. An example of a relatively low danger violation is an electrical cable that is fastened to the underside of exposed joists in a basement instead of being encased in conduit or run above the bottom of the joists. An example of a violation thought to be rare *and* obvious is a case where live bare electrical wires are hanging out of a junction box.

In particular, potential plumbing and electrical hazards are nearly infinite and range from obvious (broken pipes) to arcane ("S" traps are illegal) to highly technical (proper and legal instances of wet venting fixtures). The best way to stay safe is to stay legal: Owners of rental property must hire the services of licensed plumbers, electricians, and Mechanical Contractors to perform almost all electrical, plumbing, and HVAC work. Permits and inspections are required by law for most work.

References. The most important reference needed to effectively use this guide is the 2003 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) with City of Rock Island amendments. The amended IPMC is posted on the City website (www.rigov.org), the Rock Island Public library has reference copies for reading, and a copy is available for reading at Inspection Division in City Hall. The other primary reference is the Rock Island Code of Ordinances (ORD), available for reading at the City Clerk's Office (City Hall) and on the City website.

Secondary references include the full suite of 2003 International Codes as adopted by the City of Rock Island, the currently adopted National Electrical Code and the Illinois Plumbing Code. These references are available for reading at Inspection Division in City Hall.

Revisions. This guide will be reviewed and revised as needed annually until all registered rental residential property has been fully inspected once and less frequently thereafter. Send your comments, suggestions, and questions to Inspection Division at Rental.Inspection@rigov.org or (309) 732-RENT or Rental Residential Inspection, 1528 – 3rd Ave, Rock Island, IL 61201.

A. Exterior (Building exterior, pavements, steps, grounds, pools, spas, vehicles, etc.)

1. House/Building Number. Are house/building numbers plainly visible and legible from the street? Numbers must contrast with their background and be at least 4” high with at least ½” wide stroke. **See IPMC 304.3**

Note: Existing numbers that meet the former requirements may remain: “Each of the figures of every street address number shall be not less than three inches (3”) in height and plainly marked so as to be easily read and be firmly and conspicuously affixed on the front part of the buildings to which the same are attached.” New and replacement numbers must comply with IPMC 304.3.

2. Sanitation. Is the property clean, safe, and sanitary? **See IPMC 302.1.**

3. Vegetation. Are weeds or grass over 10” in height? Is the yard vegetation overgrown, unkempt, or noxious? **See ORD 13-38.**

4. Accumulation of rubbish or garbage. Is there any accumulation of rubbish or garbage on the property? **See IPMC 307.1.**

5. Rubbish and Garbage Containers. Are there serviceable, approved covered rubbish and garbage containers? Are the containers properly located and being emptied? **See IPMC 307.2.1 and 307.3.**

6. Sidewalks, stairs, and driveways. Are sidewalks, stairs, driveways, parking spaces, and similar areas free of hazardous conditions and in a proper state of repair? *As a general guide, edge differences in height of 1” or more, such as a sidewalk slab edge sticking up, will be considered hazardous.* **See IPMC 302.3.**

7. Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs.

a. Are swimming pools clean, sanitary, and in good repair? **See IPMC 303.1.**

b. Are there proper enclosures and gates around pools, spas, hot tubs, etc. containing water more than 24” in depth? **See IPMC 303.2.**

8. Vehicles. Are there obviously inoperative or unlicensed vehicles outside? Are vehicles, RVs, boats, trailers, etc. parked or stored in prohibited locations? **See IPMC 302.8.**

9. Structural Integrity. Is the exterior of the building structurally sound, free from deterioration, in good repair, and no threat to persons nearby? **See IPMC 304.1 and 304.4.**

10. Chimney. Are chimneys and similar structures structurally safe and in good repair? **See IPMC 304.11.**

11. Roofs, gutters, and drainage. Are roofs, gutters, and appurtenances sound and weather tight? Are drains, gutters, and downspouts free-running? Is water discharged improperly? **See IPMC 304.7.**

12. Exterior Walls. Are all exterior walls free from holes, breaks, and loose or rotting materials? Are they weatherproof and properly coated to prevent deterioration? **See IPMC 304.6.**

13. Protective Treatment. Are all exterior surfaces in good condition? Are wooden surfaces painted, covered, or treated? Is paint peeling or flaking? Are masonry joints and siding joints water tight and weather resistant? Are metal items rusting or corroding? **See IPMC 304.2.**

14. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? **See IPMC 304.13, and 304.13.1.**

15. Insect Screens. Are self-closing screen doors present and in good repair? Are there screens on operable windows? *This will also be inspected from inside the structure.* **See IPMC 304.14.**

16. Foundation Walls. Are foundation walls plumb and free from open cracks or breaks? *This will also be inspected from inside the basement.* **See IPMC 304.5.**

17. Basement Hatchways. Are basement hatchways maintained to prevent the entrance of surface water, rain, and rodents? **See IPMC 304.16.**

18. Basement Windows. Are there rodent shields, storm windows, or other approved protection against rodent entry on operable basement windows? **See IPMC 304.17.**

19. Stairways, Porches and Decks. Are all exterior stairs, decks, porches, balconies, etc. structurally sound, in good repair, and capable of supporting the imposed loads? **See IPMC 304.10.**

20. Handrails and Guards. Are required handrails and guardrails present, in good condition, firmly fastened, and capable of supporting normally imposed loads? *Generally handrails are required for 4 or more steps and handrails/guardrails are required whenever there is a potential fall of 30 inches or greater. Fall protection must meet barrier requirements, not simply a top rail.* **See IPMC 304.12 and 306.1.**

21. Doors. Are all exterior doors, door assemblies, and hardware in good condition? Do locks tightly secure the doors? Do locks on means of egress doors open readily from inside without keys, special knowledge, or effort? **See IPMC 304.15, 304.18, 304.18.1, and 702.3.**

B. Accessory Structures (Fences, garages, sheds, greenhouses, carports, detached decks, etc.)

Note: The top level reference is IPMC 302.7: All accessory structures, including detached garages, fences and walls, shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.

Standards of care are generally the same as those previously listed, with some relaxation where appropriate.

1. Structural Integrity. Are fences, garages, sheds, carports, etc. structurally sound, free from deterioration, in good repair, and no threat to persons nearby? **See IPMC 304.1 and 304.4.**

2. Roofs, gutters, and drainage. Are roofs, gutters, and appurtenances sound and weather tight? Are drains, gutters, and downspouts free-running? Is water discharged improperly? **See IMPC 304.7.**

3. Doors. Are all exterior doors, door assemblies, and hardware in good condition? **See IPMC 304.15.**

4. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? **See IPMC 304.13, and 304.13.1.** *Note: Generally windows are not required in unoccupied accessory structures. However, cracked, broken or missing glazing is unacceptable. Replacement materials other than glazing may be acceptable to the Building Official but they must meet standards of weather tightness and protective treatment.*

5. Protective Treatment. Are all exterior surfaces in good condition? Are wooden surfaces painted, covered, or treated? Is paint peeling or flaking? Are masonry joints and siding joints water tight and weather resistant? Are metal items rusting or corroding? **See IPMC 304.2.**

Note: The following apply if any tenant has use of or access to the interior of the accessory structure:

5. Electrical Wiring/Equipment. Is all wiring and electrical equipment properly installed and maintained in a safe condition? **See IPMC 605.1.**

6. Flammables Hazards. Is there reasonable protection against the ignition of flammable or explosive vapors? (Fuel burning appliances at least 18" off the floor, explosion-proof electrical fixtures in pits, proper storage of flammable liquids, etc.) **References: Various cites – Fuel Gas Code, Residential Code, Fire Code, etc.**

7. Accumulation of rubbish or garbage. Is there an interior accumulation of rubbish equal to or greater than 25% of the useable volume of the structure or is there any improperly stored garbage in the structure? **See IPMC 307.1.**

C. Interior (Building interior, life safety, sanitation, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, etc.)

1. Doors. Are all exterior doors, door assemblies, and hardware in good condition? Do locks tightly secure the doors? Do locks on means of egress doors open readily from inside without keys, special knowledge, or effort? **See IPMC 304.15, 304.18, 304.18.1, and 702.3.**

2. Attached garage.

a. Separation between attached garage and occupied areas. Attached garages should be separated from occupied space by at least a 1 hour rated assembly. Unmodified existing structures will not be required to come into full compliance unless the situation is egregious (e.g. open wall between garage and house). However, such separation as existed when the structure was built must be maintained, such as closing up wall penetrations made to provide electrical service into the garage. **See IPMC 703.1.**

b. Flammables Hazards. Is there reasonable protection against the ignition of flammable or explosive vapors? (Fuel burning appliances at least 18" off the floor, explosion-proof electrical fixtures in pits, proper storage of flammable liquids, etc.) **References: Various cites – Fuel Gas Code, Residential Code, Fire Code, etc.**

c. Electrical Wiring/Equipment. Is all wiring and electrical equipment properly installed and maintained in a safe condition? **See IPMC 605.1.**

d. Doors. Are all doors, door assemblies, and hardware in good condition? **See IPMC 304.15.**

e. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? **See IPMC 304.13, and 304.13.1.**

f. Accumulation of rubbish or garbage. Is there an interior accumulation of rubbish or is there any improperly stored garbage in the structure? **See IPMC 307.1.**

3. Basement (*additional items more commonly found on other levels may apply as well*)

a. Dry and sanitary. Is the basement dry and sanitary? **See IPMC 305.1 and 304.7.**

b. Stairs and Walking surfaces. Are the stairs and walking surfaces safe and in good repair? Are required guards and handrails present, in good condition, firmly fastened, and capable of supporting normally imposed loads? **See IPMC 305.4 and 306.1.**

c. Occupied area means of egress/emergency escape openings. Is there a safe, continuous, and unobstructed path out of the basement to the public way? Is there a proper emergency escape opening in bedrooms? **See IPMC section 702 in entirety.**

d. Smoke detector(s). If no bedrooms: Is there a properly installed, operating, and located smoke detector in the basement? If bedroom(s): Is there a properly installed, operating, and located smoke detector in the bedroom? In the area outside each bedroom? **See IPMC section 704 in entirety.**

e. Electrical Wiring/Equipment. Is all wiring and electrical equipment properly installed and maintained in a safe condition? Are there sufficient and proper receptacles in habitable spaces? **See IPMC 605.1 and 605.2.**

f. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? Are there rodent shields, storm windows, or other approved protection against rodent entry on operable basement windows? Are the windows provided with locking hardware or other approved means to prevent unauthorized entry? **See IPMC 304.17, 304.13, 304.13.1, 304.18, and 304.18.2.**

h. Electrical Service ground. Is the electrical service properly grounded? **See IPMC 605.1.**

i. Electrical Distribution panel/over-current protection. Is the distribution panel safe, properly labeled, and accessible to the occupant? **See IPMC 605.1.**

j. Water meter bonding jumper. Is there a proper bonding jumper across the water meter? **See IPMC 605.1.**

k. Laundry outlet. Is the laundry receptacle properly grounded or protected by a GFCI? **See IPMC 605.1 and 605.2.**

l. Clothes Dryer Exhaust. Is the clothes dryer properly vented? **See IPMC 403.5.**

m. Bathroom GFCI receptacle. Is there at least one receptacle in the bathroom and are bathroom receptacles GFCI protected? **See IPMC 605.2 and IPMC 605.2.1.**

n. Bathroom ventilation. Is the bathroom properly ventilated by operable window or exhaust fan? **See IPMC 403.2.**

o. Bathroom fixtures (tub, shower, lavatory, water closet). Are all fixtures serviceable, sanitary, and safe? Are they substantially in compliance with Illinois Plumbing Code requirements? **See IPMC 502.1, 503.1, 503.2, and Illinois Plumbing Code.**

p. Chimney Vent/cleanout. If there are chimney vents or cleanouts, are they properly secured, functional, and clear of debris or obstructions? **See Mechanical Code.**

q. Water heater. Is the water heater properly installed and vented? Does it have a properly installed temperature-pressure relief valve? Is it sized correctly for the occupant load? **See IPMC 505.4, 603.2, and Illinois Plumbing Code.**

r. Furnace/boiler. Is the furnace or boiler properly installed and vented? If it is 10 years old or older, have annual Carbon Monoxide inspections been conducted? Is make-up water prevented from cross-connecting to the potable water supply? **See IPMC 603.1.1, 603.2, and Illinois Plumbing Code.**

s. Interior surfaces. Are interior surfaces in good, clean, and sanitary condition? Is there peeling or flaking paint, loose plaster, decayed wood, or other defective surface conditions? **See IPMC 305.3.**

u. Plumbing. Is all plumbing properly installed, in good working order, free from obstructions, leaks, and defects, and capable of performing its intended function? Is the water supply protected from contamination? **See IPMC 504.1, 504.2, 506.1, 506.2, and Illinois Plumbing Code.**

4. Occupied Levels (*additional items more commonly found in basements may apply as well*)

a. Dry and sanitary. Is the area dry and sanitary? **See IPMC 305.1 and 304.7.**

b. Stairs and Walking surfaces. Are the stairs and walking surfaces safe and in good repair? Are required guards and handrails present, in good condition, firmly fastened, and capable of supporting normally imposed loads? **See IPMC 305.4 and 306.1.**

c. Occupied area means of egress/emergency escape openings. Is there a safe, continuous, and unobstructed path out of the basement to the public way? Is there a proper emergency escape opening in bedrooms? **See IPMC section 702 in entirety.**

d. Smoke detector(s). If no bedrooms: Is there a properly installed, operating, and located smoke detector on this level? If bedroom(s): Is there a properly installed, operating, and located smoke detector in each bedroom? In the area outside each bedroom? **See IPMC section 704 in entirety.**

e. Electrical Wiring/Equipment. Is all wiring and electrical equipment properly installed and maintained in a safe condition? Are there sufficient and proper receptacles in habitable spaces? **See IPMC 605.1 and 605.2.**

f. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? Are the windows within 6 feet of outside standing/walking surfaces provided with locking hardware or other approved means to prevent unauthorized entry? Do operable windows stay in position when opened? **See IPMC 304.13, 304.13.1, 304.13.2, 304.18, and 304.18.2.**

g. Insect Screens. Are there screens on operable windows? **See IPMC 304.14.**

h. Bathroom GFCI receptacle. Is there at least one receptacle in the bathroom and are bathroom receptacles GFCI protected? **See IPMC 605.2 and IPMC 605.2.1.**

i. Bathroom ventilation. Is the bathroom properly ventilated by operable window or exhaust fan? **See IPMC 403.2.**

j. Bathroom fixtures (tub, shower, lavatory, water closet). Are all required fixtures present, serviceable, sanitary, and safe? Are they substantially in compliance with Illinois Plumbing Code requirements? **See IPMC 502.1, 503.1, 503.2, and Illinois Plumbing Code.**

k. Kitchen/Food preparation area. Is there suitable space and equipment to store, prepare, and serve food in a sanitary manner? **See IPMC 404.7 and 404.2.**

l. Kitchen GFCI receptacle(s). Are receptacles within 6 feet of sinks or exposed pipes GFCI protected? **See IPMC 605.2.2.**

m. Kitchen Sink/plumbing. Is there a required kitchen sink present that is serviceable, sanitary, and safe? **See IPMC 505.1 and Illinois Plumbing Code.**

n. Bedroom requirements. Are bedrooms large enough (70 sq ft/one or 50 sq ft each for 2 or more sleepers)? Are they private? Are they separate from means of access/egress to other bedrooms? Is there a properly sized egress window? **See IPMC Section 404 in entirety.**

o. Lighting. Are all spaces provided with natural or artificial light sufficient to permit the safe use and occupancy of the space? **See IPMC section 402 in entirety.**

p. Interior surfaces. Are interior surfaces in good, clean, and sanitary condition? Is there peeling or flaking paint, loose plaster, decayed wood, or other defective surface conditions? **See IPMC 305.3.**

D. Other

1. Infestation. Is the structure free from insect and rodent infestation? **See IPMC section 308 in entirety.**

2. Attics. Is the attic clean and sanitary? *Walk-up attics will be inspected. Attics that are not accessible by means of permanent or folding stairs will not be inspected unless there is evidence of a problem.* **See IPMC 305.1**

3. Overcrowding. Is there sufficient living space for the number of occupants? **See IPMC 404.5, 404.5.1, 404.5.2, and 404.6.**

4. Unrelated Groups. Are there more 3 unrelated individuals living in a single dwelling unit? **See ORD Appendix A, Article III and Article IV or call Zoning at (309) 732-2900.**