



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

## **Building Inspection Division**

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The following document has been prepared to assist property owners in self identifying some of the most common code violations observed by City of Madison Building Inspectors. The prepared checklist represents the majority of code violations identified by inspectors, it does not represent all potential code violations and does not account for unique or unusual circumstances that may arise. If you have specific code questions it is best to contact Building Inspection at (608) 266-4551 to discuss your questions or concerns. The complete minimum housing code can be found in Chapter 27 of the Madison Municipal Ordinances. [https://www2.municode.com/library/wi/madison/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](https://www2.municode.com/library/wi/madison/codes/code_of_ordinances)

### **MINIMUM HOUSING STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

#### **EXTERIOR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE:**

- All building exteriors must be free of excessive loose, peeling, or missing paint.
- All chimneys or other exterior masonry must be maintained free of damaged or missing bricks and/or mortar.
- All gutters must be properly secured to the building and be free flowing.
- All roofs must be maintained in a condition free of leaks or significant deterioration.
- All siding, trim, windows, and doors must be maintained in a weather-tight condition free of rotted wood.
- Exterior property areas must be kept free of accumulated junk, trash, debris, or other items not meant for exterior exposure.
- Trees must be kept free of dead wood and maintained so as to avoid causing damage to buildings.
- All public sidewalks adjacent to the property must be unobstructed to a minimum height of 7 feet.
- Trash carts must be stored at the rear of the property when not placed at the curb for pickup.
- Vehicles stored outside at any property must be kept in an operable condition.
- Fences, storage sheds, walkways, and other exterior structures must be properly maintained.
- All wood structures or surfaces between the principal building and the street lot line(s) must be painted or treated with pigmented stain.

#### **STAIRS, PORCHES, BALCONIES:**

- All stair systems with more than three steps must be equipped with a handrail.
- All open sides of stair systems and other raised areas greater than 24" above grade must be protected by substantial guardrails to prevent persons from falling off.
- An even rise and run must be maintained between individual stair treads along any stair system.
- Structures must be free of rotted wood, properly secured, and free of other structural defects.
- All new stair, handrail, and guardrail installations shall meet the current building code requirements, pre existing conditions may be allowed to remain in place provided they do not pose a safety hazard and are in good repair.

## GENERAL INTERIOR MAINTENANCE:

- Individual doorbells or an intercom system must be installed at the main, common entry door to any multi-unit building.
- All walls, ceilings, and other surfaces must be free of holes, defects, water damage, and peeling paint.
- All floors must be free of defects or trip hazards, and provide readily cleanable surfaces.
- All ranges, refrigerators, and appliances must be fully functional and free of missing or damaged parts.
- All kitchen and bathroom cabinets and countertops must be in proper condition and provide readily cleanable surfaces.
- All bathrooms must be equipped with either an operable window or a ventilation fan.
- All dwelling units must be equipped with a permanent heating system capable of maintaining heat of at least 67°F at all times.
- Heating systems shall be serviced by qualified individual on an annual basis and a record kept at the premises indicating the service date and by whom.
- Metal water piping systems must be properly bonded around the water meter.
- Common areas must be kept clean at all times and basements or other areas must be kept free of excessive storage or clutter, items not owned by current tenant or used in the maintenance of the building shall be removed from the property.
- Basement areas not having two approved means of egress must not be used for sleeping purposes.

## DOORS:

- Common area entry doors into a building containing multiple dwelling units must be equipped with a positive locking guarded latch lock (storeroom lock) and a self-closer. These doors must close and lock automatically without anyone having to physically lock the door.
- Every dwelling unit door must be equipped with a keyed deadbolt lock. The deadbolt must have a minimum one inch throw and the strike plate must be secured using screws least two and one half inches long.
- Main dwelling unit door must be equipped with a door viewer (peephole) if the door has no window.
- Sliding patio doors must be equipped with the both a primary lock that is part of the door assembly and a secondary lock. If the patio door is on the first floor level or accessible from the outside, an additional ventilation lock is also required. Ventilation locks must secure the door in the open position between one to five inches open. Acceptable secondary and ventilation locks include rods or other substantial material cut to the appropriate lengths, pins or stops that install in the track, or adjustable security bars sold for this purpose.
- Basement doors to common areas in multi-unit buildings must be equipped with a positive locking guarded latch lock (storeroom lock) and a self-closer.
- Laundry room doors located in shared basements must be equipped with a positive locking guarded latch lock (commonly referred to as a storeroom lock) and a self-closer.
- Fire doors that are required in multi-unit buildings must be present, equipped with all required latching hardware and self-closers, and must not be left propped open.

- All other doors must be in good repair and be equipped with properly functioning knob and latch assemblies and strike plates.
- Double-keyed deadbolt locks are not allowed on any doors.
- Hasp locks are not allowed on any doors other than storage lockers.

#### **WINDOWS:**

- All windows
  - Must be equipped with properly functioning sash locks.
  - Must open and close properly and the lower sashes of double hung windows must stay up, when opened, without the use of a prop. Any broken or cracked glass must be replaced.
  - Must be either double glazed (thermo pane) or equipped with storm windows between the dates of November 15<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Must be equipped with properly fitting insect screens in good repair between the dates of June 1st and October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Windows at or below the first floor level and any windows accessible from porches, balconies, trees, etc. must be equipped with ventilation locks. Ventilation locks must allow each window to be locked between one (1) to five (5) inches open for ventilation purposes and be movable to permit the window to still be fully opened from the inside of the dwelling unit when not in use.

#### **SMOKE ALARMS:**

- Hard-wired smoke alarms or smoke alarms powered by tamper resistant, 10-year, lithium ion batteries must be installed in every bedroom (or area used for sleeping), and within six feet of the outside of bedroom entry doors, and at least one smoke alarm must be installed on each floor level (including basements). <https://www.cityofmadison.com/sites/default/files/city-of-madison/fire/documents/SmokeAlarmPlacementVisualGuidelines.pdf>
- Dual purpose smoke detector / carbon monoxide alarms are allowable if they meet the listed power source requirements for smoke detectors.

#### **CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS:**

- One and two unit buildings containing any fuel burning appliance, must have a carbon monoxide alarm installed on each floor level (including basements) of each dwelling unit.
- Buildings with 3 or more dwelling units require carbon monoxide alarms are to be installed within 15 feet of the bedroom entry doors of any dwelling units containing fuel burning appliance and one within any other room (such as mechanical rooms, laundry rooms etc.) containing fuel burning appliances.
- Carbon monoxide alarms may be either battery powered or plug-in.

#### **PLUMBING:**

- Adequate cold water and hot water of at least 120°F must be available at every kitchen sink, bathroom lavatory, bathtub, and shower.
- All plumbing fixtures must be properly installed, properly functioning, and free of leaks.
- All drains must drain freely.
- All dishwasher drains must be equipped with a code compliant air gap or air break.
- All toilets must be properly functioning and secure to the floor.

## **ELECTRICAL:**

- All 3-prong electrical outlets must be properly grounded. Outlets that cannot be properly grounded must be replaced with 2-prong outlets or GFCI-protected receptacles labeled 'No Equipment Ground'. Any outlets replaced within kitchens, bathrooms, garages, unfinished basements, within 6 feet of a water source, or the building exterior must have GFCI protection.
- All electrical switch, outlet, and junction box cover plates must be properly and securely installed and free of cracks or damage.
- All light fixtures must be secure, properly functioning, and equipped with covers (if originally equipped.)
- The electrical conductors for garbage disposals must be secured with a clamp (listed for the wiring method) where they pass into the body of the disposal.
- All screw-in fuses must have S-type bases of the appropriate rating for each circuit.
- Every bathroom must have at least one outlet receptacle, every bedroom must have at least two outlet receptacles.
- Extension cords may not be used as permanent wiring.