



# **RESIDENTIAL RENTAL UNIT REGISTRATION**

## **LICENSING AND INSPECTION GUIDE**

This checklist and ordinance outline is to be used as a guide to understand the Rental Registration, Licensing and Inspection Ordinance and the Inspection process. This guide is not to suggest that this is a complete list of every item to be evaluated at the time of inspection; it is meant to reference commonly inspected items. Please note that the Ordinance states that “A license or inspection by itself shall not warrant that a Rental Unit is lawful, safe, habitable or in compliance with all City Codes.”

Inspection criteria for the Rental Inspections are established in accordance with the City of Easton Property Maintenance Code as amended and may be amended, and City Health and Housing Standards.

The purpose of the Rental Registration, Licensing and Inspection ordinances is to promote and protect the public health, safety and welfare.

## **EXTERIOR**

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- Sidewalks shall be maintained in good condition without tripping hazards and free from weed and grass growth.
- Exterior yard will be inspected for city code violations (including: weeds, debris, and inoperable vehicles).
- Street address numbers must be installed on the front of the main structure and contrast their background.
- Entire exterior of main structure and all accessory structures (garages, sheds, fences) will be inspected for property maintenance violations. *Violations include:* Peeling / chipped paint, missing / damaged siding, rotted wood on exterior of structure (including garages and sheds).
- All accessory structures, including detached garages and fences must be structurally sound and in good repair.
- Condition of roof (bowed / missing shingles).
- Chimneys: structurally safe and sound and in good repair.
- No broken windows.
- Gutters and downspouts must be in good repair and properly discharge storm water.
- Foundation: Excessive cracking or shifting, crawlspace openings securely covered.
- Stairways, decks, porches and balconies: structurally sound and in good repair, and capable of supporting the imposed loads.
- All handrails and guards must be at the required height, properly installed and in good repair.
- Fire Escapes shall be properly installed and maintained. Fire Escapes shall be tested and report submitted to the City Department of Code Enforcement by a Professional Engineer every five years. A copy of the report to be completed is available by the Code Enforcement Office.
- Garbage cans and recycling bins shall be available.
- Abandoned oil tanks (exterior or interior) shall be removed or underground may be abandoned in place in accordance code.
- Out-of-service antennas, satellite dishes, telecommunication lines shall be removed.

## **INTERIOR**

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- In two-unit or multi-unit buildings, every unit shall be numbered for identification purposes. Rooming houses shall have every room identified.
- All means-of-egress doors (including screen and storm doors) must be properly operable and weather tight. Double-keyed locks (locks that are keyed on the inside of doors leading to the exterior) are prohibited. Screen and storm doors must have door handles and hardware for proper closure. Door shall be readily open-able without special tools, keys or knowledge.
- Check for general cleanliness – all surfaces must be clean. This includes walls, windows, counter-tops, sinks, tubs, cabinets, floors, etc.
- Carpeting must be in good condition, clean and free from stains and tears. All flooring throughout the dwelling must be clean and in good repair (i.e. linoleum, tiles, etc.).
- All windows must be properly operable, in good repair, and able to readily open/stay open with its own hardware. Locks must be properly operable. Interior window wells and frames must be free of chipped and peeling paint, etc.
- Window screens must be installed properly and in good repair.
- All interior surfaces must be free of chipped/peeling paint, and in good repair.
- All electrical equipment must be properly installed and in good working order. All switch and plug covers must be installed. Panel box must be properly installed, including blanks for missing knockouts and unused breaker openings, labeled and able to safely perform its intended function.

- Light fixtures shall have covers, guards, globes or the like protecting the light bulb.
- Extension cords shall not be used as permanent wiring or to provide power to heaters, air conditioners or similar equipment.
- Smoke detector requirements:
  - At least one detector on the outside hallway wall in the vicinity of each separate sleeping area.
  - One detector installed in each bedroom.
  - One detector on each story of a dwelling unit.
  - Hard-wired (electric) detectors must have a battery back- up.
- Fire extinguishers:
  - Must be located along normal paths of travel and in a conspicuous location where readily accessible.
  - Each dwelling unit and basements in a multi-unit structure requires a minimum 5-lb ABC (rating 2A-10BC) fire extinguisher mounted in the kitchen area.
  - All fire extinguishers must be inspected annually by a certified professional.
- Fire Protection Equipment:
  - Fire detection, protection, alarm and suppression systems must be tested and inspected by a certified professional annually.
  - The Code Office must receive a NFPA 72 inspection sheet, completed by a minimum NICET Level III certified professional to show the results of this inspection, annually.
  - Hardwired interconnected smoke alarm systems must be maintained in working order. If a hardwired batter backup alarm is not working, it cannot be replaced with a battery-only operated alarm.
- All interior doors must be properly operable and in good repair. Keyed locks are prohibited on the inside of bedroom doors. Door shall be readily open-able without special tools, keys or knowledge.
- Bedrooms: shall be at least 70 sq. ft. for one occupant; for more than one occupant the bedroom shall have a minimum 50 sq. ft. for each occupant.
- Minimum ceiling height for habitable spaces must be at least 7 feet, including habitable basements and attics.
- Bathrooms:
  - Sinks, tubs and toilets must be clean and able to safely perform its intended function.
  - Plumbing properly installed (traps, piping, flush tank assembly, etc.).
  - No leakage under bathroom sink.
  - Shelving board under sink free from rotting or evidence of excessive water damage.
  - Either a minimum of one open-able window or mechanical ventilation is required.
- Kitchen:
  - All surfaces clean.
  - All cabinets, counter-tops, storage areas in good repair.
  - No leaks under sink. Trap installed, shelving board in good repair.
  - All electrical equipment in proper operating condition.
  - Stove and refrigerator must be clean and in proper working order.
  - Exhaust over stove must be clean and properly installed.
- Water heater must be properly installed, vented properly (if gas), with a discharge pipe installed on the temperature-pressure relief valve. Discharge pipe shall extend to within 6" of the floor, or other approved method.
- All interior stairs, railings and guards must be at the required height, properly installed and in good repair.
- All clothes dryers shall properly exhaust to the exterior of the building.
- All mechanical units / heating must be properly installed and able to safely perform its intended function.

- Fuel-fired heating systems and chimneys shall be inspected, cleaned and certified by qualified professionals to be in good repair, clean and properly venting within the past twelve (12) months. Signed copies of certificates shall be provided to the Code Enforcement Office.
- Attics: if accessible, will be inspected for evidence of roof leaks, excessive storage or accumulations, habitability and openings that permit rodent/pest entry.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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The Pennsylvania Landlord-Tenant Act 54 of 1993 requires that if you are the owner of an apartment building or mobile home park where the tenants are responsible for their utility bill, the law requires that each unit is “individually metered.” The law provides additional requirements and protections; please see the law for additional details.

## **SUMMARY OF THE RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTIES LICENSING AND INSPECTION ORDINANCE**

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This is a summary of the relevant responsibilities established by Ordinance #4954. A copy of the entire Ordinance and any amendments is available in the Code Office at City Hall, 123 S. Third St, 2nd Floor, Easton, PA, or on the City Website at [www.easton-pa.gov](http://www.easton-pa.gov). In the event of any variance between this summary and the Ordinance, the Ordinance will govern.

The Ordinance requires that EACH residential rental unit/apartment be registered on a yearly basis. The registration/license “year” runs from August 15<sup>th</sup> of the current year to August 14<sup>th</sup> of the following year. Registrations received after August 15<sup>th</sup> will be subject to additional penalty fees. Registration fees for a ROOMING HOUSE are based on the number of rooms at the property. Residential rental units that are vacant, but available for rent, MUST be registered. If you have sold your rental unit, please indicate that on the referral invoice and return the invoice to us. The City must be notified of any changes in ownership/manager within five (5) days of any change.

Requirements for a residential rental license include, obtaining a business license, paying all real estate taxes, water, sewage and garbage/rubbish collection fees and the owner provides correct information concerning a manager, if applicable and provides a list of names of occupants age 18 or older.

The Ordinance requires that each residential rental unit be subject to an inspection at least once every four (4) years. Inspection appointments shall be made by this office with the Owner/Manager, who must accompany the Code Officer on the inspection of the property. The initial inspection and the re-check inspection (done after all necessary corrections, as identified by the Code Officer, have been completed) are included in the Registration/License fee. If, at the re-check inspection, all corrections have NOT been completed, there will be additional charges applied to any RE-INSPECTION. A charge will be applied if the Owner/Manager does not show up for a scheduled inspection/re-check appointment or if the Owner/Manager is unable to gain entry to the rental unit.

The owner is responsible to maintain the premises in compliance with the adopted property maintenance code and City health and housing standards. Failure of the Owner/Manager to correct the violation(s) within the established time period may result in the City invoking the remedies available under this Ordinance or other applicable Codes, Ordinances or Statutes, including condemnation or declaration of the premises being unfit for habitation.

The occupants shall comply with all applicable codes and ordinances of the City. Occupants shall collect and dispose of all rubbish, garbage and other waste in a clean and sanitary manner and comply with City solid waste and recycling regulations. Occupants shall not engage in, nor tolerate nor permit guests on the premises to engage in, any conduct declared illegal under any code or law or disruptive conduct.