

Residential Rental Dwelling Unit Inspection and Maintenance Program

FAQ's

Residential Rental Inspection Program - Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the program necessary? This program is designed to proactively identify blighted, deteriorated, and substandard rental housing stock and to ensure the rehabilitation or elimination of such housing that does not meet minimum standards. These standards address not only life, health, and safety issues but also the results of deferred or inadequate maintenance.

What defines a property as being a rental property? Rental property includes the following: single-family dwellings, duplexes, apartments, town homes, or condominiums, which are leased, rented, or occupied by a person or persons other than the owner.

Are there any exceptions? No.

How does the city determine that a property is a rental? The Clayton County Tax Assessor's Office provides the city with ownership information each month. The most recent set of records will be used to determine the rental properties based on the following: 1) The property address is different than the owner's mailing address and there is no Homeowners Tax Exemption filed with the Assessor's Office.

Who is responsible for registering the property? The property owner is responsible for completing the business license application annually and maintaining a business license separate and apart from obtaining and maintaining a Certificate of Compliance for the Rental Housing Inspection Program Certificate of Compliance.

Is there a fee charged for registration and inspection? There is both a business license fee and an inspection fee. The registration fee is paid annually for a business license and the inspection fee is paid for the initial inspection and for each subsequent periodic inspection. If code violations are observed during the inspection, re-inspection fees will apply at the time of the re-inspection. The fees are the sole responsibility of the property owner(s)

How often will a rental unit need to be inspected? Single-Family Residential Rental Units-An annual self-inspection is required to be conducted on the interior and exterior of the property.

Multi-Family Rental Units- Each owner shall submit a code compliance certificate annually with their business license renewal. The code compliance certificate shall cover at least 25 percent of the units in multi-family rental dwellings, provided all units shall be inspected, at a minimum, every four years. Exterior, and common area inspections shall cover at least 50 percent of the buildings, provided all buildings shall be inspected, at a minimum, every two years. The date of the issuance of the Certificate of Rental Inspection Compliance will become the anniversary date of the re-inspection.

How will the order of inspection be determined? A Certified Building Inspector is assigned to a particular section of the City and will inspect rental units in an organized and orderly fashion to inspect all the rental units in their respective section.

Residential Rental Inspection Program - Frequently Asked Questions

To whom will the payment be made and what are the alternatives? Payments are to the City of Forest Park. Payment can be made by personal check or cash at City Hall.

When will inspections be done? Inspections will be performed Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM by appointment.

Is the property owner required to be present during the inspection? The property owner or their designated representative must be present during inspections. It is the responsibility of the property owner to inform the tenants of impending inspections and to provide access.

Will tenants be allowed to attend the inspections? Both tenants and the property owners are encouraged to be present during the inspections. Informational exchanges are critical to the success of the program.

Will the property owner receive documentation of the inspection results? The property owner or agent will be furnished a copy of the inspection report, along with a correction notice, if any. Additionally, a "Rental Housing Certificate of Compliance" will be sent once all items have either been approved or corrected and approved.

Will additional fees be required if repairs are determined during the inspection? There is no charge for the first correction inspection at each site. Beyond that, each additional inspection is \$_____. If payments are not received, they will become a lien on the property.

How much time will be given to the property owner or agent to make corrections found to be unsatisfactory during the inspection? The property owner or agent will be given between one (1) and thirty (30) days to make corrections, depending on the nature and severity of the correction and/or violation.

Who will be performing the inspections? A Certified Building Inspector will perform all scheduled inspections.

How will I schedule an inspection? The inspection will be done by appointment. A Certified Building Inspector will call and schedule an appointment

How long will an inspection take? Each inspection will vary according to the individual property. However, one should set aside a minimum of one hour for a single-family residence and an additional ½ hour for each additional unit.

What preparations should be made involving animals prior to inspections? All pets will be confined or restrained in such a way as to eliminate any possibility of attack or escape during the inspection process.

When a property passes an inspection and a complaint is made after the fact, will I have to go through the Residential Rental Inspection Program again? Complaints received after completion of a successful inspection are referred to the Code Enforcement Officer. If a valid internal or external violation surfaces after a "Certificate of Compliance" has been issued, the owner will be required to abate the specific violation in order to remain in compliance.

Does the inspection take place both inside and outside of the residence? Please see “Checking Rental Property for Safety and Code Compliance” and the sample of our "Residential Inspection Form." There are numerous items that focus both on the interior and exterior of the rental property.

Will my older building be forced to comply with today's more stringent construction codes? No, your building is required to be maintained at a level consistent with the codes of the period in which it was constructed. However, construction improvements must coincide with the current codes as adopted by the City of Forest Park.

Do all units require smoke detectors? Installed battery-operated smoke detectors will be required in each sleeping room, each hallway adjacent to the sleeping rooms, and at each floor level.

Is the property owner required to obtain permits for minor repair work? Repair work normally requiring permits will still require permits. However, many items usually noted for repairs are exempt from permits.

Does it matter who does the actual repairs? The property owner may do the work only if the property is a single-family residence, a duplex, or an individual town home or condominium pursuant to the Uniform Building Code. A licensed general contractor or licensed trade specific contractor will acquire the appropriate permits as well accomplish the work if the owner does not do the work. Pursuant to the Uniform Building Code all other types of residential rental properties require that a licensed general contractor or licensed trade specific contractor acquire the appropriate permits as well accomplish the work.

What if during an interior inspection an Inspector observes illegal substances or activities? It is not the intent of the Certified Building Inspector impose upon the individual right to privacy of tenants or owners. However, Officers are required to report cases of possible child endangerment or abuse, animal cruelty or neglect, and situations which pose an immediate health and safety risk to the public.

What if the property owner ignores their required participation in the program? Pursuant to the Forest Park Municipal Code, any person who violates any provision of this Ordinance, or who fails to comply with any obligation or requirement of this Ordinance, is guilty of a misdemeanor unless the offense is charged as an infraction by a prosecuting attorney.