

**CITY OF GRASS VALLEY ADMINISTRATIVE  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**



**Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Effective Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Revised:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Authority:** Council  
**City Administrator:** City Manager

**SUBJECT: Inspection of Multiple Unit Buildings intended for Human Occupancy**

**PURPOSE**

This policy establishes procedures for building inspectors and code enforcement officers in the City of Grass Valley to address substandard conditions in multiple-unit buildings any part of which is intended for human occupancy. These procedures must be followed when a building inspector or code enforcement officer inspects one unit in a multiple-unit building, and determines the unit is substandard or in violation of lead hazard rules in the State Housing Law and that those defects or violations could reasonably affect other units in the building.

**REFERENCES**

California Health & Safety Code section 17970.5;  
California Health & Safety Code section 17970.7;  
California Health & Safety Code section 17920.3;  
California Health & Safety Code section 17920.10.

**POLICY / PROCEDURE FOR INSPECTION OF MULTIPLE-UNIT BUILDINGS**

1. **RESPOND TO INITIAL COMPLAINT.** Upon receiving a complaint from a tenant, a resident, an occupant, or an agent of any of them, regarding a potential violation of Health & Safety Code sections 17920.3 or 17920.10, a building inspector must:
  - Inspect the building, or portion of the building intended for human occupancy, or the premises on which it is located, that may be in violation;
  - Document any violations of Health & Safety Code section 17920.10 based on a reasonably competent and diligent visual inspection of the property;
  - Document any substandard conditions under Health & Safety Code section 17920.3; and
  - Include such documentation in an inspection report;
  - Advise the owner or operator of each violation and each action required taken to remedy the violation; and
  - Schedule a reinspection to verify correction of violations.
  
2. **CONSIDER OTHER UNITS.** If a building inspector has determined that one unit in a multiple-unit building is substandard under Health & Safety Code section 17920.3, or is in violation of Health & Safety Code section 17920.10, the inspector should consider whether those defects or violations have the potential to affect other units of the building.

3. CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERING OTHER UNITS. When considering if the substandard condition or violation could reasonably affect other units, a building inspector should draw on his or her experience and professional judgment and the circumstances. A building inspector **must** consider at least these factors:
  - the building type, age, size, and type of construction;
  - cause of the substandard condition; and
  - history of violations.
4. CONCLUDE BASED ON CRITERIA. Based upon these considerations, a building inspector should conclude:
  - Whether the defect or violation has the potential to affect other units; and
  - The likely scope of the defect or violation throughout the building.
5. DETERMINE ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS. A building inspector should then determine how many additional units should be inspected, as aligned with the two conclusions in paragraph 4.
  - If concluding the defect or violation has the potential to affect other units, a building inspector **must** make reasonable attempts to inspect the units adjacent to, above, and below the unit in which the defect or violation was found, consistent with existing law and inspection practices.
  - If concluding the defect or violation has the potential to affect more units beyond the units adjacent to, above, and below the unit in which the defect or violation was found, the building inspector **must** also make reasonable attempts to inspect those units, as aligned with the likely scope of the defect or violation throughout the building.
  - If concluding the likely scope of the defect or violation is small and limited, a building inspector should seek to inspect only the units adjacent to, above, and below the unit in which the defect or violation was found, and any further likely affected units.
  - If concluding the likely scope of the defect or violation is large and likely to affect a larger percentage of units, a building inspector should seek to inspect a larger percentage of units in the building.
  - If after inspection of the first unit or after additional inspections, a building inspector finds severe, building-wide defects or violations, he or she may inspect all units on the premises.
6. CONTACT THE PROPERTY OWNER. If concluding that the defect or violation has the potential to affect other units, a building inspector **should** contact the property owner, landlord, or known representatives, to explain the reason for the inspections and to request cooperation and attention to any confirmed violations. The City **must** also provide the property owner with a notice or order to repair or abate, within a reasonable

time after the inspection is completed. The City **must** advise the building owner or operator of each known violation, and each action required to remedy the violation.

7. COORDINATE ADDITIONAL UNIT INSPECTIONS. For each unit that a building inspector seeks to inspect, he or she should follow the City's standard inspection practices, including providing a Correction Notice
  - If concluding the likely scope of the defect or violation is large or building-wide, a building inspector should additionally post a Correction Notice on-site, in common areas. The building inspector should establish one or more days on which residents may schedule an inspection. Software solutions may be used to share available inspection times, coordinate inspections, and to efficiently complete a large volume of inspections.
8. SCHEDULE REINSPECTIONS. After providing the notice or order to repair or abate mentioned above, and advising on the known violations and actions required to remedy the violations, the City **must** reasonably attempt to schedule reinspection of affected units to verify correction of violations.
9. NON-RESPONSES AND REFUSALS. If a resident fails to respond to the Request for Inspection, or refuses to allow access and inspection, his or her unit need not be inspected and another unit may be selected as a replacement. The goal of inspecting additional units is to assess housing and building conditions with the consent of residents, and without unduly disrupting their privacy. If a building inspector reasonably suspects that unsafe conditions are present in a unit, continued efforts to gain access may be pursued. If a building inspector believes residents' health and safety may be compromised by reasonably suspected unsafe housing conditions, he or she may seek an inspection warrant from the Nevada County Superior Court if the resident(s) do not consent to an inspection.
10. FREE REPORTS ON REQUEST. The City must provide a complaining tenant, resident, occupant, or their agents free, certified copies of an inspection report and citations issued. If an inspection reveals a condition potentially affecting multiple tenants, residents, or occupants, the City must provide all potentially affected tenants, residents, occupants, or their agents free copies of the inspection report and citations issued.
11. FEES. The City may not collect fees from a property owner or an owner's agent for a property inspection or inspection report under these procedures, unless it finds a material violation of Health & Safety Code section 17920.10 or deems and declares the property substandard under Health & Safety Code section 17920.3. However, the City is not prohibited from imposing fees on rental property owners to support a rental property inspection program, or otherwise from imposing generally applicable charges, fees, or assessments to cover the costs of required inspections or inspection reports.