
Rental Inspections Program



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION, AUGUST 19, 2020



TONIGHT'S WORK SESSION

In April, Code Compliance staff provided a presentation on Housing Rental Inspection Programs and asked City Council if this would be of interest to them to pursue further.

City Council asked staff to do some more research and bring it back to them for further consideration and direction.

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Purpose

Program achieves compliance of health, safety and welfare code violations in/on residential rental properties that are a threat to the occupant's safety, and a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.



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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Purpose

- Address the issue of substandard rental properties,
- Promote greater compliance with health and safety standards,
- Preserve the quality of McMinnville neighborhoods and available housing.

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APRIL CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Directed staff to bring a code that would adopt the IPMC as a minimum standard of maintenance for residential structures.

This then would allow for a complaint based rental maintenance program.

There was some discussion about a proactive rental inspection program with a database and registration structure, and City Council asked staff to bring back some more information about the proactive rental inspection programs.



**McMinnville has
about 5000 rental
housing units**

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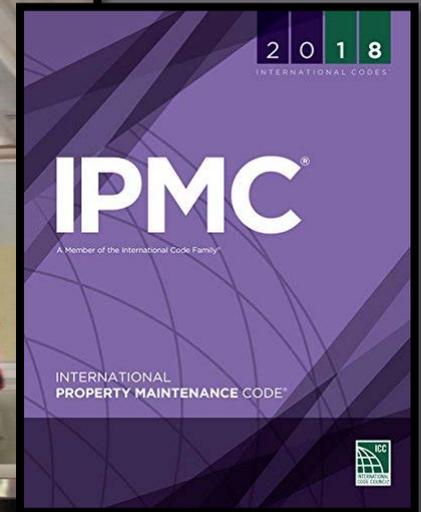
RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - IPMC

Establish Minimum Habitability Standards for all Residential Rental Properties.
(IPMC has minimum standards.)

The standards cover ten areas:

- heating
- plumbing
- security
- electrical
- appliances
- smoke detection
- structural integrity
- weatherproofing
- carbon monoxide alarms
- rats

*Mold is addressed through the weatherproofing and plumbing standards.



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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM – Reactive

How Does it Work?

- Establishes a minimum standard of habitability for residential rentals in McMinnville.
- If tenant has a problem they need to work with landlord to resolve it. (Must prove this effort has occurred).
- If tenant cannot resolve the issue, they call Code Compliance who will conduct an inspection and enforce compliance with the landlord to the minimum standards.

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Reactive

Costs:

Since this will be complaint basis only, current code compliance staffing has capacity with new efficiency systems to absorb the anticipated workload – no new staffing impact.

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Structure

PROACTIVE VERSUS REACTIVE

	PROACTIVE	REACTIVE
INITIATED	Permit/Licensing	Complaint Basis
INSPECTIONS	Annual Random Inspections, Routine	Inspections only with a complaint
FEEES	Yes	No
ADMINISTRATION	More Workload	Same Workload
PROS	Comprehensive	Spotty
CONS	More Process	Retaliation Potential
EFFECTIVENESS	More effective, Protects all tenants	Limited

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A Guide to Proactive Rental Inspection Programs



ChangeLab Solutions

CHALLENGES WHEN IMPLEMENTING PRI PROGRAMS

PRI programs can yield important improvements in a locality's housing stock. But they may also amplify many of the challenges that arise with traditional complaint-based programs, because (1) proactive inspection programs typically bring inspectors into contact with a much wider cross-section of a locality's housing, and (2) inspections are not initiated exclusively by tenant complaints. In some cases, code enforcement activities can potentially result in displacement of tenants. This section examines some common challenges, and the following section offers strategies for addressing these challenges to maximize the effectiveness and benefits of PRI programs.

Uninhabitable and "Illegal" Units

In extreme cases, an inspector may find substandard conditions that immediately threaten the health and safety of residents. PRI programs should include measures that require landlords to fix properties quickly; however, in the worst cases, the locality may require a tenant to vacate the property.

Inspectors may also encounter "illegal" units: units that have not been registered or licensed, and units that exist in violation of zoning or building codes. Where possible, localities should aim to bring units into compliance to preserve rental housing stock.

Where uninhabitable or illegal units cannot be brought into compliance, relocation programs and supportive social programs, discussed in more detail below, are critical to ensure that tenants remain housed.

Tenant-Side Code Violations

Because PRI program inspectors are not only invited into rental housing units by tenants filing complaints, they are more likely to uncover tenant-side code violations or illegal occupancies than they would under complaint-based programs. Because the central goal of proactive rental inspection programs is to maintain housing in safe and healthy condition, code enforcement should prioritize remedying such violations rather than displacing tenants from their homes.

Hoarding: About three to five percent of Americans suffer from hoarding.^{160, 161, 162, 163} Severe hoarding not only puts a tenant and other occupants of a housing unit at risk, but may place neighboring residents at risk of fire, disease, or infestation of vermin.^{164, 165, 166} This disorder is not widely understood and localities often struggle with effective ways to address hoarding.¹⁶⁷ For example, one study out of New York found that "almost a quarter of individuals seeking help for housing problems from a community eviction prevention organization met the criteria for [hoarding disorder]; only about half of these individuals were receiving mental health treatment."¹⁶⁸ However, as hoarding is a form of mental illness,¹⁶⁹ localities should identify ways to assist hoarders without rendering them homeless.^{169, 170}



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

An increasing number of localities have enacted PRI programs, a number of strategies have emerged to address the above challenges and ensure successful programs. We highlight a few below.

Diverse Stakeholders in Designing the Program

As described above, PRI programs differ from locality to locality. The most effective programs are targeted to local housing stock characteristics and the specific concerns of the community. In taking this approach, proactive code inspections program should be developed with input from diverse stakeholder groups.¹⁷¹ In Seattle, for example, the City Council required the Department of Building Inspections to convene a Rental Property Licensing and Inspection Stakeholder Group, which would provide recommendations for the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance.¹⁷² The group met almost a dozen times over a six-month period, with the assistance of a professional facilitator and mediator. The input of all represented groups was carefully

Community-Based Organizations in Implementation

As described above, proactive code inspections programs bring code enforcement officers into contact with a much wider cross-section of residents than do complaint-based programs. Localities that have not affirmatively sought out housing inspections, or that have not sought out tenants and landlords about rental housing inspections, may struggle to ensure effective implementation of inspections, some localities have engaged community members and nonprofit organizations in the implementation of

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Advantages of a Proactive Program:

- *PRI Programs preserve safe and healthy rental housing (takes the burden off of the tenant).*
- *PRI Programs help protect the most vulnerable tenants. (language barriers or disabilities may be barrier to complaints)*
- *PRI Programs may preserve neighborhood property values.*

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Basic Program Structure:

- *Registration:* requires property owners to register their rental properties or to obtain a certificate or license.
- *Periodic Inspections:* requires period inspections of all rental properties, usually every few years.
- *Enforcement:* If a property fails inspection, initiate enforcement measures.

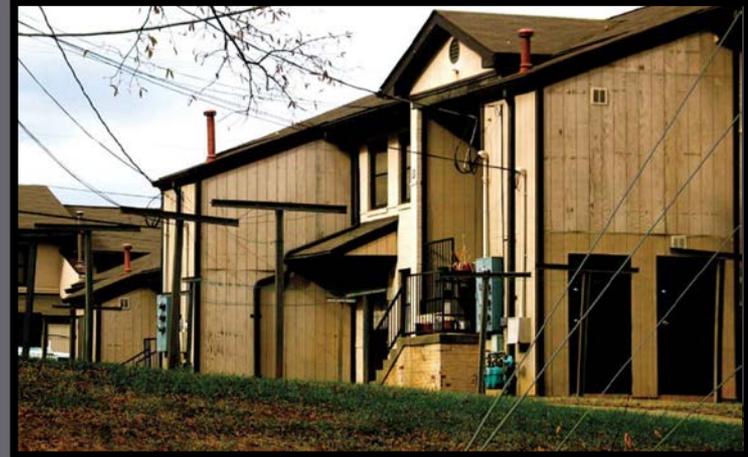
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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Types of Housing:

- *Multi-unit Properties*
- *Single-Family Homes:*
- *Government Owned*



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City of
McMinnville



RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Scope of Inspections: - Exterior

CITY OF GRESHAM – RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAM 1333 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham, OR 97030 – Phone: (503) 618-2248	
PROPERTY:	CASE NUMBER:
INSPECTION:	INSPECTOR:
INSPECTION DATE: <small>(Owner/Agent on site during inspection)</small>	
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE NOTICE EXTERIOR INSPECTION CHECKLIST	
<small>Where noted (*) use of more building permits may be required. To verify permit requirements, contact the City of Gresham Permit Center at (503) 618-2845. All required permit inspections must be completed and approved before the nearest violation can be considered resolved.</small>	
1. Category: General	
Violation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental property operating without a rental license. (GRC 9.55.060) Sidewalk: Hazardous conditions (IPMC 302.3) Window, skylight, door frame not in sound condition (IPMC 304.13) 	
2. Category: Stairs/Handrails	
Violation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handrails in disrepair (IPMC 304.12) Incapable of supporting normally imposed loads (IPMC 304.10) Height of railing does not meet code requirements (Min: 30", Max 42") (IPMC 305.1) 	
3. Category: Porch/Decks	
Violation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not structurally sound (IPMC 304.10) In disrepair (IPMC 304.10) Incapable of supporting normally imposed loads (IPMC 304.10) 	
4. Category: Detached Garage/Accessory Structure	
Violation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaning and in significant disrepair (IPMC 302.7) Roof deteriorated or significant repair needed (IPMC 302.7) Fencing leaning and in significant disrepair (IPMC 304.2) 	

CITY OF GRESHAM – RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAM 1333 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham, OR 97030 – Phone: (503) 618-2248	
5. Category: Lighting	
Violation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No lighting fixture(s) in public hallways, stairways, laundry facilities, furnace or boiler rooms (IPMC 605.3) Insufficient lighting in common hallways/corridors (IPMC 402.2) Insufficient lighting in common stairways that serve as means of egress (IPMC 402.2) Exposed wiring (IPMC 604.3) Light fixture(s) inoperable, missing or damaged (IPMC 605.1) Receptacles not GFCI protected/will not hold plug (IPMC 605.2) 	
6. Category: Premises Identification	
Violation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not in place (IPMC 304.3) Improper size (IPMC 304.3) Improper location (IPMC 304.34) 	
7. Category: Laundry Room	
Violation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient lighting (IPMC 605.3) Inadequate dryer exhausting (IPMC 403.5) Receptacle(s) damaged, not grounded or not GFCI protected (IPMC 605.2) 	
8. Category: General Nuisance(s)	
Violation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siding: missing, in significant disrepair, or signs of dry rot. (IPMC 304.2) Gutters/downspouts: Full of debris, not working, or missing (IPMC 304.7) Tall grass/vegetation over 10' high (GRC 7.13.06.0208) Garbage/Insufficient number of containers, or accumulation of rubbish/garbage. (GRC 7.15.06.1005) Foundation wall in disrepair, allowing the entry of rodents and other pests. (IPMC 304.5) 	

General
Stairs/Handrails
Porch/Decks
Accessory Structures
Lighting
Premises Identification
Laundry Room
General Property
Nuisances

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Scope of Inspections: - Interior

CITY OF GRESHAM – RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAM 1533 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham, OR 97030 – Phone: (503) 618-2244												
PROPERTY: CECADD	CASE NUMBER: CASENO											
INSPECTION:	INSPECTOR:											
INSPECTION DATE: (Owner/Agent on site during inspection?)												
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE NOTICE INTERIOR INSPECTION CHECKLIST <small>Where noted (1) one or more building permits may be required. To verify permit requirements, contact the City of Gresham Permit Center at (503) 618-2244. All required permit inspections must be completed and approved before the relevant violations can be considered resolved.</small>												
1. Category: General Interior												
Violation:		Comments										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of insect and/or rodent infestation (IFRAC 308.1) Surface(s) significantly decayed, defective, or in damaged condition (IFRAC 305.2) Visible significant presence of mold, dampness, water damage (IFRAC 305.3.1) Appliance(s) not in safe working condition (IFRAC 603.1) 												
2. Category: Smoke Detector/Carbon Monoxide Detector												
Violation:		Comments										
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Smoke Detectors</td> <td>Carbon Monoxide Detector</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not operational <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.1)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.4.1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Improper number <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.2)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Improper location <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.3)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.3)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Battery taken out <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.4)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.4.1)</td> </tr> </table>	Smoke Detectors	Carbon Monoxide Detector	Not operational <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.4.1)	Improper number <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.2)	<input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.2)	Improper location <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.3)	<input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.3)	Battery taken out <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.4)	<input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.4.1)		
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Battery taken out <input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC 704.4)	<input type="checkbox"/> (IFRAC R216.4.1)											
3. Category: Emergency Exits												
Violation:		Comments										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsafe, non-continuous and/or obstructed path to the public right of way (IFRAC 702.1) 												
4. Category: Interior Stairs												
Violation:		Comments										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not in sound condition or in disrepair (IFRAC 305.4) 												
5. Category: Interior Handrails/Guardrails												
Violation:		Comments										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In disrepair/Not firmly fastened (IFRAC 305.4) Not capable of supporting normally imposed loads (IFRAC 305.5) Handrail measured height <30" or >42" (IFRAC 306.1) Guardrail measured height <30" (IFRAC 306.1) 												

6. Category: Front/Back Doors	
Violation:	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not operational/Not in sound condition/in need of repair (IFRAC 304.15.4, 304.15.5) No deadbolt lock installed / Lock installed improperly (IFRAC 304.15, IFRAC 304.15.1 & IFRAC 702.3) Double-keyed deadbolt / Improper lock present (IFRAC 304.16.1) 	
7. Category: Windows	
Violation:	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not operational/in need of repair (IFRAC 304.13) Not easily operable and/or not capable of being held open in position (IFRAC 304.13.2 & IFRAC 304.13.3) Inoperable/missing window sash locking device if window is w/in 6ft. of ground (IFRAC 304.18.2) Cracked, broken or missing panes (IFRAC 304.13.1) 	
8. Category: Heating/Ventilation Systems	
Violation:	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heat source inadequate of maintaining year round temperature of 68° (IFRAC 602.2) Illegal heat source (IFRAC 602.2) Inadequate bathroom or laundry room exhaust fan ventilation (IFRAC 602.3) Inadequate kitchen exhaust fan ventilation (IFRAC 602.4) 	
9. Category: Plumbing Systems	
Violation:	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water heater inoperable or improperly installed (IFRAC 505.4) Water heater incapable of delivering at 120° F. (IFRAC 505.4) Required plumbing fixture(s) missing (IFRAC 500.1) Missing/inoperable temperature pressure relief valve (IFRAC 505.4) Missing/improperly installed water heater discharge pipe (IFRAC 505.4) System obstructions, leaks and/or defects (IFRAC 504.1 & IFRAC 504.2) Plumbing system presents hazard(s) to occupants (IFRAC 504.3) Required fixture(s) not in good working condition (IFRAC 504.1) 	
10. Category: Electrical Systems	
Violation:	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposed wiring present (IFRAC 604.3) Cover plate(s) damaged or missing (IFRAC 604.3) Receptacle(s) damaged, will not hold plug, and warrant replacement (IFRAC 604.3) must be replaced with GFCI if required per IFRAC 605.2) Electrical system poses hazard to occupants or structure (IFRAC 604.3) Dwelling unit has inadequate electrical service (IFRAC 604.2) Light fixture(s) inoperable, missing or damaged (IFRAC 604.3) 	

General Interior
Smoke Detector/Carbon
Monoxide Detector
Emergency Exits
Interior Stairs
Interior
Handrails/Guardrails
Front/Back Doors
Windows
Heating/Ventilation
Systems
Plumbing Systems
Electrical Systems

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IPMC CODE REFERENCES - INSPECTIONS

602.2 Heating facilities:

- *Dwellings shall be provided with heating facilities capable or maintaining a room temperature of 68°F....cooking appliances shall not be used, nor shall portable unvented fuel-burning space heaters be used as a means to provide required heating.*

505.3 Water System:

- *The water supply system shall be installed and maintained to provide a supply of water to plumbing fixtures, devices and appurtenances in sufficient volume and at pressures adequate to enable the fixtures to function properly, safely and free from defects or leaks.*

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IPMC CODE REFERENCES - INSPECTIONS

304.13 Window, Skylight and Door Frames:

- *Every window, skylight, door and frame shall be kept in sound condition, good repair and weather tight.*

704.1 Fire Protection Systems:

- *Fire detection, alarm and extinguishing systems, mechanical smoke exhaust systems and smoke and heat vents shall be maintained in accordance with the International Fire Code in an operative condition at all times, and shall be replaced or repaired where defective.*

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Phasing in a Program:

- *Drive-by exterior inspections*
- *Focus on properties with historic of complaints*
- *Inspect oldest properties first*
- *Divide city into neighborhoods or quadrants*

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Strategies for Success

- *Involve diverse stakeholders in designing the program.*
- *Provide training for code enforcement staff.
(National Center for Healthy Housing)*
- *Provide education, outreach and ongoing support for landlords and tenants.*
- *Implement complementary programs.
(Funding assistance for low-income landlords, public access to code violation information, etc.)*

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Challenges of Implementation:

- *Discovery of uninhabitable and illegal housing units.*
- *Tenant side code violations.
(for example: hoarding)*
- *Rent Increases.*
- *Displacement of marginalized households.
(Funding assistance for low-income landlords, public access to code violation information, etc.)*

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Proactive

Funding

Most operate as a full cost recovery program with low fee structures.

- Beaverton Rental- \$75 per unit for first 40 units, plus \$1.25 for each addt'l unit
- Corvallis-\$15 per unit, \$1 increase in odd-calendar years
- Eugene-\$10 per unit, per year
- Gresham-\$55 for first 2 units, plus sliding scale of \$20 to \$45 on addt'l units
- Medford - \$40 first unit, plus \$1 for each addt'l unit
- Portland-New Code - fees currently being determined
- Salem-\$44.50 for first 3 units, plus sliding scale on addt'l units

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM - Gresham

Gresham Proactive Rental Housing Inspection Program:

- Established in 2007. Developed over a year and implemented in 2008.
- Has become a model for other communities.
- Focuses on: Health Hazards, Fire and Life Safety and Protection from the Elements
- Uses IPMC as a basis minimum standard
- Hybrid: Complaint and Proactive.

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM – Gresham

Structure of Program

- Rental Licensing Program
- Use Tax Assessor's records to identify any non owner-occupied residences where the owner's address differs from the property address.
- Inspect random statistical sampling every year.
- Respond to complaints.

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INSPECTION PROCESS & DOCUMENTATION

What happens during the inspection?

- A checklist of criteria will be utilized during the inspection to determine any violations of the Property Maintenance Code (PMC).
- Inspector will complete the checklist for each unit inspected as well as the exterior of the building.
- Inspector will work with the property owner or manager and tenant during the course of the case to resolve any outstanding violations.
- Once the violations are resolved (or if no violations found), the owner and tenant will receive notification that the case has been closed.

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INSPECTION TIMELINE (Mandatory and Complaint)

- First inspection:
 - If violations are found, a 30-day notice is issued.
 - Exception, fire/life-safety/rodents, then a 3 or 7 day notice is issued.
- Second inspection at 30 days: (or sooner, depending on violations)
 - If violations resolved, close case.
 - If violations remain, another 30 day Civil Penalty Warning is issued (note exceptions above).
- Third inspection at 30 days: (or sooner, depending on violations)
 - If violations are resolved, close case.
 - If violations remain, Civil Penalty may be issued.

*If penalties are issued, inspections go to every two weeks until case is closed.

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PROGRAM STATISTICS

Top 10 Violations for 2018 Complaint & Mandatory Inspections

Unmaintained Surfaces	237
<i>(holes in walls/floors, significant decayed cabinets, bare sheetrock, etc)</i>	
Smoke Detector - Improper Number	131
Electrical - Exposed Wiring	115
Plumbing - Hot Water Heater Discharge Pipe	115
Egress Door - Inoperable/Disrepair	111
Handrail - Improper Install/Disrepair	88
Electrical - Outlets Inoperable	82
Mold	81
Electrical - Cover Plate Broken or Missing	76
Smoke Detector - Inoperable	68

TOP 10 = 43% of all violations

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM – Gresham

Interview with Program Staff

Q. How has this program helped your residents?

A. The program has helped tenants as well as rental property owners. Many smaller property owners aren't well educated on building code and landlord-tenant law. This program has helped many property owners learn the requirements and ensure compliance with applicable laws. Tenants are obviously assisted because they're able to contact the City if a landlord is unresponsive to their maintenance requests. The program works to ensure safe, habitable housing in Gresham.

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM – Gresham

Interview with Program Staff

- Q. What suggestions would you have to Cities looking to adopt a RHI program code?**
- A. The property maintenance code has a lot of requirements. I would suggest focusing on fire, life, safety issues when conducting inspections and not cosmetic issues that are technically in violation of the property maintenance code. That will help ensure safe, habitable rentals, and also creates more buy-in from property owners/managers because they know inspectors aren't going to cite/fine them for scuffed paint or something like that. Over the years, Gresham has worked on an inspection checklist that focuses on pertinent fire, life, safety issues. The checklist can be found on our website.**

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM – Gresham

Interview with Program Staff

Q. How is the registration managed?

A. Gresham's business licensing staff manages the registration process. A lot of work was done at the beginning of the program to get rentals registered with the City. Now, staff periodically run a report that shows if a residential owner has a different address from the property. In that case, a letter is generated that asks if the property is a rental. If so, they're instructed to register the rental.

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RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM – Gresham

Interview with Program Staff

- Q. What's one thing that you would say that your department has done that has made your program successful?**
- A. I believe one of the reasons we've had success with our program is that we strive to remain neutral between tenants and property owners/landlords. We have found neutrality to be important in gaining trust and program buy-in.**

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Work Towards Developing a Program Similar to Gresham

- Hybrid proactive and complaint based, but with random sampling it is not as administratively labor intensive.
- Provides for consistency and transparency.
- Work with rental property owners over the next year on the development of a program.
- Implement a registration/licensing program in 2022.

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Rental Inspections Program: Questions



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Input from City of Gresham

When program was introduced to your jurisdiction did you contact rental companies to get their input?

Yes, there was a stakeholder engagement process.

What was your biggest challenge in implanting the RHI? Our program has been in place since 2008, and I was not with the City at that time. I do know that a lot of outreach was necessary to rental property owners to ensure registration. Also, we've worked over the years on our exterior and interior inspection checklists, which include fire, life, safety issues.

Is your program pro-active or compliant based? Why? Both. The program conducts random mandatory inspections at rental properties and also completes complaint-based inspections. This helps ensure that all properties are kept to code.

How has this program helped your residents? The program has helped tenants as well as rental property owners. Many smaller property owners aren't well educated on building code and landlord-tenant law. This program has helped many property owners learn the requirements and ensure compliance with applicable laws. Tenants are obviously assisted because they're able to contact the City if a landlord is unresponsive to their maintenance requests. The program works to ensure safe, habitable housing in Gresham.

What suggestions would you have to Cities looking to adopt a RHI program code? See response to the last question. Also, the property maintenance code has a lot of requirements. I would suggest focusing on fire, life, safety issues when conducting inspections and not cosmetic issues that are technically in violation of the property maintenance code. That will help ensure safe, habitable rentals, and also creates more buy-in from property owners/managers because they know inspectors aren't going to cite/fine them for scuffed paint or something like that. Over the years, Gresham has worked on an inspection checklist that focuses on pertinent fire, life, safety issues. The checklist can be found on our website.

Do you have a rental registration that includes a fee? Yes. The annual registration fee funds the program. You can find more information on how the fee is structured and the cost online.

How has have a rental registration helped? What are the pros and cons? It has most certainly helped. Gresham has a lot of rental units, many of which were constructed in the 1970's and 80's. This program has helped ensure that rentals are kept in a habitable condition. You might be surprised when you see the conditions of some rentals that are occupied. I think one of the cons/unexpected aspects of the program is that occasionally when tenants complain about the condition of their rental, they overstate the issue or there are other issues outside the scope of the program at play (i.e. the tenant has a bad

relationship with the landlord, the tenant is being evicted, etc). We have structured the complaint process so that a tenant proves to us that they have submitted a written maintenance request to the property manager for their issue(s) and the property manager has failed to respond in a timely manner. In certain circumstances, we also ask for photos of the complaint before inspecting, for example, with mold complaints. We also put together a resource list, and often inspectors refer tenants to resources outside of the scope of our program.

How is the registration managed? Gresham's business licensing staff manages the registration process. A lot of work was done at the beginning of the program to get rentals registered with the City. Now, staff periodically run a report that shows if a residential owner has a different address from the property. In that case, a letter is generated that asks if the property is a rental. If so, they're instructed to register the rental.

What's one thing that you would say that your department has done that has made your program successful? I believe one of the reasons we've had success with our program is that we strive to remain neutral between tenants and property owners/landlords. We have found neutrality to be important in gaining trust and program buy-in.

What would you change about your current program? Registration fees were not indexed when the program was established. As programmatic costs rise annually, mostly due to increased staffing costs, this causes some long-term funding issues.

Suggestions from a local Housing Quality Standards Inspector

- Implementation of a section that makes the tenant responsible for making the property presentable. "In my experience, there are a lot of residents that hoard, do not keep good garbage service, burn their garbage, damage property, do not clean up after their animals, do not clean house, do not keep their yard in good shape, throw their cigarette butts everywhere, etc. the list goes on."
- If landlords incur registration fees or other city mandated fees they will pass those costs on to the rentals which will drive rents up even higher, which in turn will drive homelessness higher.