

## CITY OF STORM LAKE RESIDENTIAL RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM

Building Official: Scott Olesen

### WHEN DID THE PROGRAM START

- ▶ The City Council had directed City Staff to create a rental housing program and in 1999, after months of development, the City adopted the rental housing inspection program.

### Program Mission Statement

**“To provide safe and sanitary rental housing within the City of Storm Lake through a fair and equitable, revolving inspection process.”**

### Program History

- ▶ Started 1999
- ▶ There are 437 registered rental properties in Storm Lake which contain a total of 1,152 rental units.
- ▶ Inspectors: Fire Fighter Josh Fevold, Code Enforcement Officer Bob Swanson, Fire Chief Mike Jones, Building Official Scott Olesen.
- ▶ Approximately 40% of the units pass the first time.

### FEES/REGISTRATION

- ▶ New rental housing or housing which has been newly converted to rental housing shall be registered within 30 days of the units first being occupied.
- ▶ Failure to register a new rental unit or newly converted rental unit within 75 days of the units first being occupied will be subject to a municipal infraction.
- ▶ If a rental unit is registered between July 1 through June 30 of the following year and it is sold or otherwise conveyed to a new owner, the former owner must notify the City of the change in ownership. There is no charge for recording a change in ownership.

### New Fees & Registration Process

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Registration Notices sent – July 1, 2011</li> <li>▶ Registration Due by – August 31, 2011</li> <li>▶ Late Registration Fee Imposed – September 1, 2011</li> <li>▶ Municipal Infraction Period Begins – October 15th, 2011</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Registration fee is \$15.00 per structure</li> <li>▶ Plus \$8.00 per unit for all units over 1</li> <li>▶ \$50.00 Late Registration Fee</li> <li>▶ \$50.00 No Show Fee</li> <li>▶ Municipal Infraction Costs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 1<sup>st</sup> – \$75.00</li> <li>◦ 2<sup>nd</sup> – \$125.00</li> <li>◦ 3<sup>rd</sup> – \$200.00</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Registration Timeline

Program Fees

## Rental Fee Examples

- ▶ Single Family Home
- ▶ \$15.00 annual fee
- ▶ Total Cost \$15.00/year
- ▶ 10 Unit Apartment Complex
- ▶ \$15.00 annual fee
- ▶ \$72.00 unit fees
  - \$8.00 x 9 units
- ▶ Total Cost = \$87.00/year

## Inspection Process

- ▶ Letter of Inspection mailed to owner
  - Includes date & time of inspection at least 2 weeks from date of letter
  - Notice to tenants in English/Spanish/Lao of upcoming inspection (\*New)
  - Smoke Detector minimum standards & Requirements (\*New)
- ▶ Inspection
  - Violations of Smoke Detector minimum standards will be issued a municipal infraction at the initial inspection (\*New)
  - All other violations will be noted, copy of violations provided
  - Re-inspection date and time set (60 day allowance unless life threatening)

## Inspection Process

- ▶ Re-inspection Held
  - Inspect units and property to ensure that compliance has been achieved on **ALL** noted violations.
  - Any remaining violations may be subject to municipal infraction and cited at the time of re-inspection.
  - \$50.00 re-inspection fee will be charged.

## Inspection Process

- ▶ Postcards will be eliminated.
- ▶ Smoke Detector Minimum Standards enforced at initial inspection.
- ▶ Representative of Owner must be at least 18 years of age or older.
- ▶ Tenants must be notified
  - If found to not have provided proper notification - inspection will be terminated and treated as a "no show."

## Smoke Detector Requirements

- ▶ A smoke detector shall be located in the following areas:
  - Each bedroom
  - Hallways outside of bedrooms
  - On each level of the structure
- ▶ Newly installed detectors must be dual sensor type:
  - Smoke/Carbon Monoxide
  - Or Photoelectric/ionization type
- ▶ All must be operational with batteries installed

## SMOKE DETECTORS

- ▶ Property owners are responsible for the smoke detectors in the building.
- ▶ Smoke detectors must be installed in the required locations and operational at the time of inspection.

## 60 DAYS TO CORRECT

- ▶ In order to make the process more streamlined for property owners, there will be a standard amount of time allowed for non-life threatening repairs to be completed and for re-inspections to be scheduled.
- ▶ Life threatening violations which will be required to be remedied immediately would include, but not limited to: missing flues on water heaters or furnaces, class 1 flammable liquids stored in a dwelling, or damaged electrical systems.
- ▶ If a re-inspection is necessary the inspector will schedule it with the property owner at the time of the initial inspection. If the necessary repairs are not done at the time of the re-inspection a municipal infraction may be issued.

## TIPS TO AVOID “NO SHOW” FEES

- ▶ Read notice of inspection right away – if the time and date don't work – CALL and reschedule.
- ▶ All reschedules **must be 48 hours** in advance of scheduled inspections.
- ▶ Make sure your representative is **at least 18 years of age**.

## REQUIREMENTS TO NOTIFY TENNANTS

- ▶ It is the property owner's responsibility to notify their tenants that a rental housing inspection has been scheduled and that the City will need to go through their rental unit on the appointed date.
- ▶ The property owner shall notify the tenant that pets must be secured outside of the rental unit while it is being inspected.
- ▶ The tenants must provide access to all portions of the dwelling, if they have areas in the unit that are locked; they will have to be able to open them so the area can be inspected.

## Tenant Notification Requirements

- ▶ Owner is responsible for providing notice to tenants
- ▶ Notice must be provide at least 24 hours in advance (Iowa Code)
- ▶ City will provide a Notice in Spanish, Lao, and English
- ▶ Owner is responsible for changing date if rescheduled with their tenants

## REQUIREMENTS FOR WHO'S ALLOWED TO SHOW A RENTAL UNIT

- ▶ Property owner's must either be at the inspection to provide access to the property or must, prior to the date of the inspection, arrange for another person to be at the inspection to provide access to the rental unit.
- ▶ The person representing the owner can be the tenant if they consent.
- ▶ The person representing the owner **must** be at least 18 years of age.
- ▶ If the owner does not provide someone as listed above, the inspector will have to re-schedule the inspection and the owner will be assessed a no show fee.

## “WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR” COMMON VIOLATIONS

- Missing or non operating smoke detectors
- Electrical panels which are not labeled.
- Electrical panels which are over fused. An example would be a panel which has 30 amp fuses installed where a maximum of a 15 amp fuse is allowed.
- Improper use of extension cords.
- Missing or broken electrical outlet and switch covers.

## “WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR” COMMON VIOLATIONS

- Unenclosed lights in clothes closets.
- Water heaters without piping from the over pressure and temperature relief vent.
- Fire extinguishers which are missing, discharged, or have not been inspected yearly.
- Wire splices not in a junction box or in an uncovered junction box.
- Tenants occupying parts of the dwelling which are not intended for occupation such as basements without windows.
- Missing or corroded flues on water heaters or furnaces.

## PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE

- While on site, inspectors will look for trash, peeling paint, and dilapidated structures, among other items.
- The inspector will make a note of any items which may be a Maintenance Code violation.
- Bob Swanson will perform a separate follow up inspection to determine whether or not a violation exists and will contact the property owner if needed.

## Common Violations

- ▶ Buildup of combustible materials near furnaces and water heaters



## Common Violations

Window not sized for egress



## Common Violations

Recent bedroom conversion in a basement—no window



## Common Violations

Children's bedroom in basement—no window or smoke detector  
Using portable light for permanent use





