



Inspection Guide and Checklist for Single Family and Multi Family Rental Property

Inspection Division Building and Zoning Department

Purpose. The purpose of this publication to provide a useful general guide to the most important features that will be inspected in 1 and 2 family type rental residential properties. Other types of residential properties have additional features that are outlined in supplements to this guide. This guide may also be used by home owners who want to review the condition of their homes for safety and compliance with applicable codes and ordinances.

Organization. This guide is organized into 4 major sections: A. Exterior; B. Accessory Structures; C. Interior; and D. Other.

Intent. The intent of this publication is to focus owner attention on key features of single family and multi family type residential property, generally state what to look for, and point to the governing code section(s).

Formal inspections by Village Inspectors will include these specific items, but any hazard to life, limb, or property that is not specifically listed will also be noted for correction. Using this publication as a guide, the owner should also apply common sense when evaluating property.

There are many potential violations that are not included here either because the danger to persons/property is relatively low or because the specific circumstance is rare and/or is so obviously wrong as to not need listing. An example of a relatively low danger violation is an electrical cable that is fastened to the underside of exposed joists in a basement instead of being encased in conduit or run above the bottom joists. An example of a violation thought to be rare and obvious is a case where live bare electrical wires are hanging out of a junction box.

In particular, potential plumbing and electrical hazards are nearly infinite and range from obvious (broken pipes) to arcane ("S" traps are illegal) to highly technical (proper and legal instances of wet venting fixtures). The best way to stay safe is to stay legal: Owners of rental property must hire the services of licensed plumbers, electricians, and Mechanical Contractors to perform almost all electrical, plumbing, and HAVAC work. Permits and inspections are required by law for most work.

References. The most important reference needed to effectively use this guide is the Village of Paddock Lake property maintenance code, which is available at the Village Hall. The other primary reference is the Village of Paddock Lake Code of Ordinances (ORD), available for reading at the Village Clerk's Office (Village Hall) and on the Village website

Secondary references include the full suite of 2003 State of Wisconsin Administration Codes as adopted by the Village; the currently adopted National Electrical Code and the NFPA Fire codes. These references are available for reading at Inspection Division in Village Hall.

A. Exterior (Building exterior, pavements, steps, grounds, pools, spas, vehicles, etc.)

1. House/Building Number. Are house/building numbers plainly visible and legible from the street? Numbers must contrast with their background and be at least 4" high and at least ½" wide stroke. **See 36.15(b)**

2. Sanitation. Is the property clean, safe, and sanitary? **See 36.14 and 18.02**

3. Vegetation. Are weeds or grass over 10" in height? Is the yard vegetation overgrown, unkempt, or noxious? **See 36.14 and 18.01**

4. Accumulation of rubbish or garbage. Is there any accumulation of rubbish or garbage on the property? **See 36.14, 18.01 and 18.02**

5. Rubbish and Garbage Containers. Are there serviceable, approved covered rubbish and garbage containers? Are the containers properly located and being emptied? **See 36.17**

6. Sidewalks, stairs, and driveways. Are sidewalks, stairs, driveways, parking spaces and similar areas free of hazardous conditions and in a proper state of repair? *As a general guide, edge differences in height of 1" or more, such as a sidewalk slab edge sticking up, will be considered hazardous.* **See 36.15.**

7. Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs.

a. Are swimming pools clean, sanitary, and in good repair?

b. Are there proper enclosures and gates around pools, spas, hot tubs, etc. containing water more than 24" in depth? **See 12.03 and NEC 680**

8. Vehicles. Are there obviously inoperative or unlicensed vehicles outside? Are vehicles, RV's, boats, trailers, etc. parked or stored in prohibited locations? **See 36.**

9. Structural Integrity. Is the exterior of the building structurally sound, free from deterioration, in good repair, and no threat to persons nearby? **See 36.15**

10. Chimney. Are chimneys and similar structures structurally safe and in good repair? **See 36.15**

11. Roofs, gutters, and drainage. Are roofs, gutters and appurtenances sound and weather tight? Are drains, gutters and downspouts free-running? Is water discharged improperly? **See 36.15**

12. Exterior Walls. Are all exterior walls free from holes, breaks, and loose or rotting materials? Are they weatherproof and properly coated to prevent deterioration? **See 36.15.**

13. Protective Treatment. Are all exterior surfaces in good condition? Are wooden surfaces painted, covered, or treated? Is paint peeling or flaking? Are masonry joints and siding joints water tight and weather resistant? Are metal items rusting or corroding? **See 36.15**

14. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? **See 36.15**

15. Insect Screens. Are self-closing screen doors present and in good repair? Are there screens on operable windows? *This will also be inspected from inside the structure.* **See 36.15**

16. Foundation Walls. Are foundation walls plumb and free from open cracks or breaks? *This will also be inspected from inside the basement.* **See 36.15**

17. Basement Hatchways. Are basement hatchways maintained to prevent the entrance of surface water, rain, and rodents? **See 36.15**

18. Basement Windows. Are there rodent shields, storm windows, or other approved protection against rodent entry on operable basement windows? **See 36.15**

19. Stairways, Porches, and Decks. Are all exterior stairs, decks, porches, balconies, etc. structurally sound, in good repair, and capable of supporting the imposed loads? **See 36.15**

20. Handrails and Guards. Are required handrails and guardrails present, in good condition, firmly fastened, and capable of supporting normally imposed loads? *Generally handrails are required for 3 or more steps and handrail/guardrails are required whenever there is a potential fall of 24 inches or greater. Fall protection must meet barrier requirements, not simply a top rail.* **See 36.15 and Comm. 21.04**

21. Doors. Are all exterior door, door assemblies, and hardware in good condition? Do locks tightly secure the doors? Do locks on means of egress doors open readily from inside without keys, special knowledge, or effort? **See 36.15, Comm. 21.03, 21.04**

B. Accessory Structures (Fences, garages, sheds, greenhouses, carports, detached decks, etc.)

Note: The top level reference is IPMC 302.7: all accessory structures, including detached garages, fences and walls, shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.

Standard of care are generally the same as those previously listed, with some relaxation where appropriate.

1. Structural Integrity. Are fences, garages, sheds, carports, etc. structurally sound, free from deterioration, in good repair, and no threat to persons nearby? **See 36.14, 12.03, 12.04, 12.07**

2. Roofs, gutters, and drainage. Are roofs, gutters, and appurtenances sound and weather tight? Are drains, gutters and downspouts free-running? Is water discharged properly. **See 36.14 and 12.07**

3. Doors. Are all exterior door assemblies, and hardware in good condition? **See 36.14**

4. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? **See 36.14.**
Note: Generally windows are not required in unoccupied accessory structures. However, cracked, broken or missing glazing is unacceptable. Replacement materials other than glazing may be acceptable to the Building Official but they must meet standards of weather tightness and protective treatment.

5. Protective Treatment. Are all exterior surfaces in good condition? Are wooden surfaces painted, covered, or treated? Is paint peeling or flaking? Are masonry joints and siding joints water tight and weather resistant? Are metal items rusting or corroding? **See 36.14**

6. Electrical Wiring/Equipment. Is all wiring and electrical equipment properly installed and maintained in a safe condition? **See 36.21, 2008 NEC**

7. Flammables Hazards. Is there reasonable protection against the ignition of flammable or explosive vapors? (Fuel burning appliances at least 18” off the floor and listed for use in accessory structure, explosion-proof electrical fixtures in pits, proper storage of flammable liquids, etc.) **References: Fuel Gas Code, Residential Code, Fire Code, etc.**

8. Accumulation of rubbish or garbage. Is there an interior accumulation of rubbish equal to or greater than 25% of useable volume of the structure or is there any improperly stored garbage in the structure? **See 36.17 and 18.01**

C. Interior (Building interior, life safety, sanitation, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, etc.)

1. Doors. Are all doors, door assemblies, and hardware in good condition? Do locks tightly secure the doors? Do locks on means of egress doors open readily from inside without keys, special knowledge, or effort? **See 36.16, Comm 21, NFPA-1**

2. Attached garage.

a. Separation between attached garage and occupied areas. Attached garages should be separated from occupied space by at least a ¾ hour rated assembly. Unmodified existing structures will not be required to come into full compliance, unless the situation is egregious (e.g. open wall between garage and house). However, such separation as existed when the structure was built must be maintained, such as closing up wall penetration made to provide electrical service into the garage. **See 36, Comm. 21.08**

b. Flammables Hazards. Is there reasonable protection against the ignition of flammable or explosive vapors? (Fuel burning appliances at least 18” off the floor, explosion-proof electrical fixtures in pits, proper storage of flammable liquids, etc.) **References: Various – Fuel Gas Code, Residential Code, Fire Code, etc.**

c. Electrical Wiring/Equipment. Is all wiring and electrical equipment properly installed and maintained in a safe condition? **See 36.21**

d. Doors. Are all doors, door assemblies, and hardware in good condition? **See 36.16**

e. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? **See 36.16**

f. Accumulation of rubbish or garbage. Is there an interior accumulation of rubbish or is there any improperly stored garbage in the structure? **See 36.17**

3. Basement (*additional items more commonly found on other levels may apply as well*)

a. Dry and sanitary. Is the basement dry and sanitary? **See 36.15**

b. Stairs and Walking surfaces. Are the stairs and walking surfaces safe and in good repair? Are required guard and handrails present, in good condition, firmly fastened, and capable of supporting normally imposed loads? **See 36.15, Comm 21.03**

c. Occupied area means of egress/emergency escape openings. Is there safe, continuous, and unobstructed path out of the basement to the public way? Is there proper emergency escape opening in bedrooms? **See 36.22, 36.19, 36.15, Comm. 21.03**

d. Smoke detectors(s). If no bedrooms: Is there properly installed, operating, and located smoke detector in the basement? If bedroom(s): Is there a properly installed, operating, and located smoke detector in the bedroom? In the area outside each bedroom? **See 36.22, Comm. 21.09**

e. Electrical Wiring/Equipment. Is all wiring and electrical equipment properly installed and maintained in a safe condition? Are there sufficient and proper receptacles in habitable spaces? **See 36.21, NEC 2008**

f. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? Are there rodent shields, storm windows, or other approved protection against rodent entry on operable basement windows?

g. Electrical Service and ground. Is the electrical service properly grounded? **See 36.21 and 2008 NEC**

h. Electrical Distribution panel/over-current protection. Is the distribution panel safe, properly labeled and accessible to the occupant? **See 36.21 and 2008 NEC**

i. Water meter bonding jumper or metal water pipe ground. Is there a proper bonding jumper across the water meter? **See 36.21 and 2008 NEC**

j. Laundry outlet. Is the laundry receptacle properly grounded or protected by a GFCI? **See 36.21 and 2008 NEC**

k. Clothes dryer Exhaust. Is the clothes dryer properly vented? **See 36.19**

l. Bathroom GFCI receptacle. Is there at least one receptacle in the bathroom and are the bathroom receptacles GFCI protected? **See 36.21 and 2008 NEC**

m. Bathroom ventilation. Is the bathroom properly ventilated by operable window or exhaust fan? **See 36.19**

n. Bathroom Fixtures (tub, shower, lavatory, water closet). Are all fixtures serviceable, sanitary, and safe? Are they substantially in compliance with plumbing code requirements? **See 36.20 and Comm. 81-85**

o. Chimney Vent/cleanout. If there are chimney vents or cleanouts, are they properly secured, functional, and clear of debris or obstruction? **See State of Wisconsin Mechanical Code.**

p. Water Heater is the water heater properly installed and vented? Does it have a properly installed temperature-pressure relief valve? Is it sized correctly for the occupant load? **See 36.20 and State of Wisconsin Plumbing Code**

q. Furnace/boiler. Is the furnace or boiler properly installed and vented? If it is 10 years old or older, have annual Carbon Monoxide inspections been conducted? Is make-up water prevented from cross-connecting to the potable water supply? **See 36.21, 36.20 and State of Wisconsin Plumbing Code.**

r. interior surfaces. Are interior surfaces in good, clean and sanitary condition? Is there peeling or flaking paint. Loose plaster, decayed wood, or other defective surface conditions? **See 36.16**

s. Plumbing. Is all plumbing properly installed, in good working order, free from obstructions, leaks, and defects, and capable of performing its intended function? Is the water supply protected from contaminants? **See 36.20 and State of Wisconsin Plumbing Codes.**

4. Occupied Levels (*additional items more commonly found in basements may apply as well*)

a. Dry and sanitary. Is the area dry and sanitary?

b. Stairs and Walking surfaces. Are the stairs and walking surfaces safe and in good repair? Are required guards and handrails present, in good condition, firmly fastened, and capable of supporting normally imposed loads? **See 36.16**

c. Occupied area means of egress/emergency escape openings. Is there safe, continuous, and unobstructed path out of the basement to the public way? Is there a proper emergency escape opening in bedrooms? **See 36.19 (c) 36.22, 36.16, 36.15**

d. smoke detector(s). If no bedrooms: Is there a properly installed, operating and located smoke detector on this level? If bedroom(s): Is there a properly installed, operating, and located smoke detector in each bedroom? In the area outside each bedroom? **See 36.22 and Comm. 21.09**

e. Electrical Wiring/Equipment. Is all wiring and electrical equipment properly installed and maintained in a safe condition? Are there sufficient and proper receptacles in habitable spaces? **See 36.21 and NEC**

f. Windows. Are any windows cracked, broken, or missing proper glazing? Are the windows within 6 feet of outside standing/walking surfaces provided with locking hardware or other approved means to prevent unauthorized entry? Do operable windows stay in position when opened? **See 36.15**

g. Insect Screens. Are there screens on operable windows? **See 36.15**

h. Bathroom GFCI receptacle. Is there at least one receptacle in the bathroom and are bathroom receptacles GFCI protected? **See 36.21 and NEC**

i. Bathroom ventilation. Is the bathroom properly ventilated by operable window or exhaust fan? **See 36.19**

j. Bathroom fixtures (tub, shower, lavatory, water closet). Are all required fixtures present, serviceable, sanitary, and safe? Are they substantially in compliance with Wisconsin Plumbing Code requirements? **See 36.20 and Wisconsin Plumbing Codes.**

k. Kitchen/Food preparation area. Is there suitable space and equipment to store, prepare and serve food in a sanitary manner? **See 36.20, 36.16**

l. Kitchen GFCI receptacle(s). Are receptacles within 6 feet of sinks or exposed pipes GFCI protected? **See 36.21, 36.04(d) and NEC**

m. Kitchen Sink/plumbing. Is there a required kitchen sink present that is serviceable, sanitary, and safe? **See 36.20 and WI. Plumbing Code.**

n. Bedroom requirements. Are bedrooms large enough (70 sq ft/one or 50 sq ft each for 2 or more sleepers)? Are they private? Are they separate from means of access/egress to other bedrooms? Is there a properly sized egress window? **See 36.19, 36.22, 36.04(d), 36.04(e), 12.05.**

o. Lighting. Are all spaces provided with natural or artificial light sufficient to permit the safe use and occupancy of the spaces? **See 36.19**

p. Interior surfaces. Are interior surfaces in good, clean, and sanitary condition? Is there peeling or flaking paint, loose plaster, decayed wood, or other defective surfaces conditions? **See 36.15 and 36.16**

D. Other

1. Infestation. Is the structure free from insect rodent infestation? **See 36.18**

2. Attics. Is the attic clean and sanitary? *Walk-up attics will be inspected. Attics that are not accessible by means of permanent or folding stairs will not be inspected unless there is evidence of a problem.* **See 36.17, 36.16, 36.15**

- 3. Overcrowding.** Is there sufficient living space for the number of occupants?
- 4. Unrelated Groups.** Are there more than 2 unrelated individuals living in a single dwelling unit? **See 12.05**
- 5. Storm Water Sump Pumps.** Pumps shall be equipped with check valves and discharge to ditch line or grass area. **Comm. 21.17, Comm. 82.36.**
- 6. Motor Vehicle(s).** All vehicles stored on property shall be operable and licensed. **Ordinance 18.01, 18.03, 18.04**
- 7. Dog License.** All dogs under tenants or owners care shall be licensed with the Village. **Ordinance 19.02 and 19.09**
- 8. Domestic Animal Sanitation.** Dog and cat wastes are properly disposed of and do not create a nuisance. **19.18 and 19.06**
- 9. Parking.** All motor vehicles, trailers and boats are parked on impervious surfaces (driveway)
- 10. Trees.** Trees on property do not pose a health or safety hazard