



COMMON PROBLEMS FOUND DURING INSPECTIONS

Although most buildings have some code violations and/or maintenance problems, the great majority of problems are minor and require little in the way of correction. Listed below are a few of the most common problems found during an inspection of a property. Use the list as a guide to correct items before the inspection, but be aware that work must be performed by licensed contractors under permit, where appropriate. If you have a question as to what work requires a permit, contact the Building Department as 531-1000.

SMOKE DETECTORS/CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Missing, disabled or improperly installed smoke detectors are the number one problem noted on most compliance orders. A monthly inspection of all smoke detectors by the owner or manager is strongly recommended.

- Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 to 15 years
- Smoke alarms shall be in each bedroom, hallway leading to bedrooms and one per level.
- All existing single-family homes must be equipped with an approved carbon monoxide alarm as of August 1, 2008.
- All multi-family or apartment dwelling units must be equipped with an approved carbon monoxide alarm as of August 1, 2009.

FURNACES AND FLUES

Openings in the furnace, venting, and chimney which allow exhaust gases to escape into the household environment are very serious. Exhaust leaks are difficult to detect and often go unnoticed until harm is done to the occupants. A visual inspection of the equipment is conducted by the inspector. The inspector may require a licensed contractor to verify the proper working order of the equipment by completing the Existing Fuel Burning Equipment Safety Test Report.

The furnace inspection completed by the licensed contractor shall consist of:

- inspection of the heat exchanger for signs of rust-through
- inspection of the venting and chimney/flue for proper connections, slope and signs of rust-through
- inspection of gas line and gas shut-off valve
- inspection of wiring
- inspection of proper clearance to combustibles
- inspection of filter
- tested for carbon monoxide
- outside combustion air (OAC)
 - Do you have it? Is it adequate?

WATER HEATER

The most common problem found with water heaters is a missing or inadequate temperature and pressure relief valve and/or a missing or improperly installed tpr valve discharge pipe. A permit is required for water heater replacement. The water heater inspection includes a visual inspection of:

- venting; must be in good condition, properly connected, with an adequate draft hood
- temperature and pressure relief valve; must be properly installed and in good condition, with a properly attached discharge pipe (must extend to within 18" of floor and must be metal)
- gas shut-off valve and gas line; must be properly connected in good condition; valve must not be broken

- cold water shut-off valve
- leaks
- proper clearance to combustibles

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM – An electrical permit is required for any new or changed wiring.

Though many potential electrical problems are hidden, the inspector looks for obvious conditions that can lead to electric shock or fire ignition. Potential problems include:

- bare, abused, obsolete or worn wiring; splices or fixtures installed without a junction box
- oversized fuses; signs of overloading
- loose or damaged fixtures, switches, or outlets
- missing outlet or switch covers; missing cover plate on fuse box; missing covers on junction boxes
- overhead service lines too low to ground/deck/porch, etc. (Min. 10' above; Pre-1963 a min. of 8' above)
- improperly wired fixtures, switches, or outlets
- unusual installations and other hazards
- use of extension cords in place of permanent wiring (garage door openers, sump-pumps, etc.) is not permitted
- incandescent light bulbs lacking 12" clearance to combustibles

PLUMBING

The most common problems found in plumbing are a cross-connection of contaminated water with potable/drinking water. This can occur through improperly installed or obsolete ballcocks in toilets (lack of 1" air gap between critical water level of ballcock and top of overflow tube; or unapproved, non-anti-syphon ballcock; or through hoses left connected to faucets (laundry tub or exterior), when not in use.) Other potential problems include:

- fixtures that are improperly vented
- leaks; corroded traps
- clean-out covers or plugs that are loose or missing
- loose toilets
- flexible plumbing (not permitted) for waste lines
- ABS (black) and PVC (white) plastic plumbing glued together
- bathtubs or sinks with porcelain worn off
- lack of ventilation in bathroom (mechanical or window)
- missing tiles in shower/tub area
- floor drains must have covers
- anti-siphon devices present on all outside hose connections, laundry tubs with threaded faucets and hand-held shower sprayers that could hang into water tubs

EXITS AND EGRESS

- Every sleeping room must have two acceptable means of escape in case of fire, such as a door and a properly sized window.
- All basement sleeping areas must have a door directly to the outside, or a legal egress window.
- All egress corridors must provide a safe continuous and unobstructed path of travel and resistance to fire.
- All access panels must be Fire Rated.

EXTERIOR

Items that require correction in this area include:

- siding, soffits, fascia, and trim that is rotted, broken, or missing

- peeling paint (50% or more per side)
- leaking foundation
- missing, broken, or torn window or door screens and storms
- missing or broken window or door glass
- missing or broken shingles; leaking roof (no curled or cupped shingles)
- deteriorated siding
- driveway, sidewalk, parking lots must be in good condition and maintained. If replaced, a permit is required.

MISCELLANEOUS

- | | |
|---|--|
| -missing/inoperable window locks within 6 feet of ground | -unscreened refuse/recycling containers |
| -broken windows | -improper storage/disposal of materials |
| -holes in fire walls and missing door closers on fire doors | -missing house/building numbers |
| -missing, inoperable, or inadequate locks on door | -junk and debris in yard |
| -evidence of rats, mice, or cockroach infestation | -dual-key deadbolts |
| -standing puddles or stagnant water | -structural problems |
| -missing/inadequate handrails on stairs with 4 or more risers | -other items determined by the inspector |
- Sump pump covers must be solid and permanently secured. All sump pumps must have an approved electrical outlet and discharge to the exterior, not to an interior drain.