

INSPECTION CHECKLIST FOR EXISTING SINGLE FAMILY & DUPLEX STRUCTURES

The purpose of the Iowa City Housing Code (IHC) is to "ensure that housing facilities and conditions are of the quality necessary to protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of not only those persons utilizing the housing, but the general public as well". The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive guideline for the inspection of "existing" single family and duplex structures based on the IHC. Residential structures may be subject to the provisions of the IHC, the Uniform Building Code (UBC) and the International Residential Code (IRC). Iowa City first adopted the UBC on July 9, 1956. Various versions of this Code have been continuously adopted since 1956. The IRC was adopted September 1st, 2002. The general rule of thumb regarding "*grand-fathering*" is that structures that met Building Codes in effect at the time of construction are considered to be in compliance or "*grand-fathered*". An example of an exception to *grand-fathering* is smoke detectors. Residential smoke detectors were not required until the 1970 version of the UBC. All dwelling units, regardless of the date of construction, are required to have smoke detectors. Other provisions of the Housing Code may supercede the Building Code in effect at the time of construction and therefore negate *grandfather* status.

The Housing Inspection division also enforces provisions of the Iowa City Zoning and Nuisance Codes. Every residential dwelling within Iowa City, regardless whether it's owner-occupied or rental, has a maximum occupancy limit for roomers depending on, among other concerns, the zone the property is located in and the number of conforming off-street parking spaces provided. The Zoning Code along with the IHC and the UBC/IRC combine in determining maximum occupancy. An example of this is a single-family dwelling located in an RS-8 zone. The zone allows for a maximum occupancy of a family plus one roomer or three unrelated persons provided that one additional off-street parking space is provided for the roomer.

1. 19-A(1)a. STRUCTURE: All structural and associated components (foundation, roof, walls, support members, stairs, sidewalks, etc.) are maintained in a safe and sound condition.
2. 19-A(1)b. STRUCTURE: Structure is maintained in compliance with Building Codes in effect at the time of construction.
3. 19-A(1)c. STRUCTURE: Required occupancy separations between dwellings and between dwellings and attached garages are provided and maintained.
4. 19-A(2) STRUCTURE: All exterior components are maintained in a weather-tight, waterproof, rodent proof and insect-proof condition. Examples are exterior siding penetrations by gas piping, AC line sets, electrical conduit, etc.
5. 19-A(3) DOORS & HARDWARE: All doors and hardware, including storm doors, are maintained in a good and functional condition, fit well within their frame and provide security if required.
6. 19-A(4) WINDOWS & HARDWARE: All windows and hardware are maintained in good and functional condition, and window area meets natural light and ventilation requirements.
7. 19-A(5) INTERIOR SURFACES: All interior walls, ceilings, floors and other interior surfaces must provide a cleanable surface. All public and service areas maintained in a sanitary condition.
8. 19-B ACCESSORY STRUCTURE: Detached garages, sheds are maintained in good condition.
If garage is required parking, the parking use must be maintained.
No vermin harborage. No excessive storage of solid waste.
Detached garages and sheds must meet required setbacks according to the zoning ordinance in effect at the time of construction.
9. 19-C RAINWATER DRAINAGE: Gutters and downspouts are maintained in good and functional condition and direct water away from the structure(s).
Gutters and downspouts secured to the building.
Gutters are free of debris.
Downspout termination has diverter and extension to direct water away from the structure.

10. 19-D GRADING, DRAINAGE & LANDSCAPING: Provides positive drainage, dust control, and eliminates erosion.
 Positive drainage at the foundation away from the bung.
 Ground cover or landscaping to prevent dust/erosion.
 No ponding on site that creates stagnant water.
11. 19-E CHIMNEY/FLUE PIPING: Components properly installed and maintained.
 All vent connectors, flue piping and associated materials must be listed and approved for their intended use.
 Draft diverters and vent connectors are mechanically fastened. Three sheet metal screws per vent connector and draft diverter connection (exception, B vent).
 Positive incline for horizontal run (greater than 45 degree angle from the vent = horizontal) of vent connector, minimum $\frac{1}{4}$ " per foot. Horizontal run of vent connector cannot exceed 75% of the vertical run of vent.
 Type B vents require a bird/weatherproof cap at the termination. Masonry chimney bricks and mortar are in good condition. Minimum clearances are maintained from combustible surfaces.
12. 19-F EXTERIOR SURFACES: All materials subject to rust or rot are protected from the weather and deterioration/decay by paint or other approved exterior surface (aluminum, vinyl or steel siding, trim etc.).
 Treated lumber and wood naturally resistant to decay such as redwood and cedar are not required to be protected.
 Metal roofs, handrails, guardrails need to be maintained rust free.
 Wood surfaces requiring paint need proper surface preparation and both. a primer and finish coating.
 Mold/mildew needs to be treated with mildewcide to kill growth.
13. 19-G EGRESS/EXITING: Every means of egress is maintained in good condition and is free of obstruction.
 Required *escape and rescue* windows are provided and maintained. All structures constructed since July 13, 1971 are required to have *escape and rescue* windows installed for all sleeping rooms.
 If an *escape and rescue* window is below grade an adequate sized exterior window well is provided and maintained.
 No double cylinder deadbolts present on doors.
14. 19-H STORM WINDOWS/SCREENS: Single pane windows are required to have storm windows provided. Required locations for storm windows are all habitable rooms and bathrooms.
 For inter-changeable storms and screens, storms on November 1 and screens on May 1. All openable windows are required to have screens, screen mesh $\frac{1}{16}$ "square.
16. 19-I ELECTRICAL: No hazards from overloading, poor condition, inadequate insulation, improper fusing, and etc. Fixtures and equipment are maintained as manufactured. No unapproved extension cords, multi-plugs or adapters.
 Building service size is adequate.
 All overhead conductors are at least 10' above grade.
 If over-fusing is present in any panel, all fuses must be changed to TYPE S fuses. No exposed energized parts of fixtures, equipment or wiring.
 Wiring installation meets general code requirements for electrical installations. Wiring devices must be listed and approved for their intended use.
 Approved grounding electrode connection is present, including:
 A grounding electrode conductor bonded to the metal water pipe system.
 A bonding jumper at the water meter.
 Grounding electrode connection for cable TV service.
 Grounding electrode connection for telephone service.
 All wire splices are within junction boxes (except original knob and tube splices).
 All outlets test "normal". Outlet replacement must meet NEC standards.
 All light fixtures and other electrical appliances or accessories are maintained as manufactured.
 No plug adapters, socket adapters, or unapproved extension cords or multi-plugs adapters.
 Access maintained in front of electrical panels.
 A switched light fixture or outlet is present for all habitable rooms, bathrooms, laundry room, furnace room, and basement or cellar. The switch must be readily accessible at the entry door.

Every habitable room contains at least two double receptacles spaced at least 25% of the room perimeter apart.

Ceiling fans shall be attached to a fan rated junction box or a framing member and not interfere with smoke detection.

17. 19-J PLUMBING: Installation meets general code requirements for plumbing installation.
 - Fixtures, supply piping and drainage piping are plumbed and maintained in a good and sanitary condition.
 - Fixtures are installed and maintained to manufacturer's instructions.
 - All associated plumbing materials must be approved and used as intended.
 - Water heater and boilers have approved relief valves and extension pipes.
 - Clothes washer has an approved standpipe or drainage into an approved floor or wash sink.
 - Floor drain covers and clean-out caps in place. Other clean-outs are accessible.
 - Adequate water pressure available at all fixtures (15 lbs. residual pressure). Hot water is available at a minimum of 120 degrees F.
 - No cross-connections (between potable water and waste drainage). This may include adapters that connect to the tub spout to create a hand held shower unit.

18. 19-K GAS PIPING/APPLIANCES: Installation meets general code requirements for gas piping installation.
 - Fixtures and supply piping are safely maintained.
 - All associated gas piping materials must be listed, approved and used as intended.
 - A gas shut-off valve must precede flexible connectors.
 - Flexible connectors cannot pass through walls, floors, or ceilings.
 - Gas shut-off valve must be within easy reach of each fuel-burning appliance.
 - Gas appliances prohibited in bathrooms and sleeping rooms (except approved direct vent).
 - Gas appliances in garages must be elevated 18" above the floor, unless sealed combustion direct-vent appliances.
 - Exterior gas piping is treated to prevent rust.

19. 19-L HEATING/COOLING EQUIPMENT: Equipment installed according to applicable requirements.
 - Appliances are properly installed and safely maintained.
 - Service access is maintained.
 - Combustible storage is not within 3' of any fuel-burning appliance unless sealed combustion direct-vent appliances.
 - Adequate combustion/ventilation air provided and maintained for all fuel burning appliances.
 - Combustion/ventilation air ducts have minimum 1/4" mesh at exterior openings.
 - Heating equipment is capable of achieving 68 degrees at a point 3' above the floor in all habitable rooms.
 - Heating equipment is capable of maintaining 65 degrees at a point 3' above the floor in all habitable rooms.

20. 19-M KITCHEN/BATH FLOOR SURFACE: Floor surface is constructed and maintained so that the floor is easily kept clean, dry and in a sanitary condition.

21. 19-N SUPPLIED FACILITY: Required utilities shall function safely and be maintained. Equipment or appliances supplied by the owner (e.g. garbage disposal, dishwasher, built in appliances, vent fans, stove, refrigerator, air conditioning) are installed and maintained in a good, operable, and safe condition.
 - Appliances or equipment not required by the Code may be removed with the permission of the tenants) or between leases.
 - Clothes dryer moisture vent termination cannot have screening of any type.
 - Clothes dryer moisture vent meets minimum code requirements or the manufacturer's installation requirements. Maximum length of plastic flex vent is six feet and cannot be concealed.

22. 19-P PEST INFESTATION: Infestation in one unit, extermination is the responsibility of the occupant. Infestation in two units and/or common areas, extermination is the responsibility of the owner.

23. 19-Q FIRE PROTECTION: Smoke detector(s) and fire extinguisher provided.
 Functioning smoke alarms installed according to manufacturer's instructions on every floor level, in hallways leading to bedrooms, and in all bedrooms.
 Owner's responsibility to supply properly installed and operable smoke detectors at move in. Tenants have the responsibility to maintain smoke detectors operable at all times and replace batteries in smoke detectors when replacement is necessary.
 One 2A 10BC (minimum size) fire extinguisher is required to be provided and properly mounted in an easily accessible location.
 Approved address numerals for premise identification are installed.
24. 19-R HANDRAIL/GUARDRAIL:
 An approved graspable handrail is required for any stair having four or more risers.
 An approved guardrail is required for all stair and pedestrian areas that have an adjacent drop off exceeding 30".
 New or replacement handrails or guardrails must meet current Code specifications.
25. 19-S SEALED PASSAGES: All pipe chases, chutes, and access openings are fire and draft stopped to prevent the spread of fire.
26. 19-T TREES/VEGETATION: Trees, shrubs, and other vegetation are maintained to prevent decay or damage to structures.
 No vegetation contact with building exterior wood surfaces.
 Diseased or dead trees/vegetation must be removed.
 Vegetation obstructing utilities (including gas or electrical meters) must be removed.
 Volunteer tree saplings adjacent to building foundations need to be removed.
 Vegetation obstructing required natural light and ventilation must be removed.
 Vegetation obstructing a public sidewalk must be removed.
 Composting in compliance with the Nuisance Ordinance is acceptable.
27. 19-V(1) EXTERIOR AREA MAINTENANCE: Property yard areas are maintained clean and safe. Violations of the NUISANCE ORDINANCE must be abated: e.g. accumulation of solid waste or noxious materials, diseased or damaged tree or plant material, weeds, stagnant water, vermin and pests, hazardous conditions, and inoperable/obsolete vehicles. Cisterns must be securely covered or filled.
28. 19-V(2) FENCES: Fences are maintained in good repair.
 All fences must comply with the ZONING ORDINANCE.
29. 19-W REFUSE/WASTE FACILITIES: Adequate facilities are supplied and maintained to Code.
 Adequate approved containers (with lids) are supplied.
 Containers must be stored reasonably near the side or backyard.
 Container storage area must be maintained clean.
30. 19-X(1) OVER-OCCUPANCY: A dwelling cannot be occupied by a number of persons greater than allowed by the ZONING ORDINANCE.
 The maximum occupancy varies by zone, parking requirements, use, building classification, and floor area of the sleeping rooms.
31. 19-X(2) HABITABLE SPACE: Only rooms certified as habitable by Housing Inspection may be inhabited.
 All basement and attic sleeping rooms must be provided with approved escape *and rescue* windows.
32. Required off-street parking is provided and maintained.
 Required off-street parking cannot be used as storage (14-6N-1.A.6.)
 Existing non-conforming gravel parking areas can be maintained but not expanded.