

Residential Rental Program

Inspection Checklist Guidebook



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Table of Contents

- Overview 2
- Checklist Guide 4
 - Section 1 – Egress 4
 - Section 2 – Water Systems 5
 - Section 3 – Electrical 6
 - Section 4 – Fire Safety 7
 - Section 5 – Walls, Roof & Foundation 9
 - Section 6 – Trash 10
 - Section 7 – Pest Control 11
 - Section 8 - Required Utilities, Equipment & Services 11
 - Section 9 – Safe and Sanitary 12
- Definitions 13



Overview

Program Description

The Residential Rental Program (RRP) is designed to proactively enforce minimum housing standards to ensure all renters in Denver have safe and sanitary housing. The program requires owners (or property managers) of Residential Rental Properties (see Definitions at the end of this guidebook for a definition of Residential Rental Property) to obtain a license from the City in order to offer, provide, or operate a Residential Rental Property.

Inspections based on Residential Health Rules and Regulations (and City Code)

The inspections are designed to verify that a property is compliant with a subset of the most critical Residential Health (RH) Rules and Regulations approved by the Denver Board of Public Health and Environment and adopted by the Manager of the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE). While all properties are required to be compliant with all existing building, fire, and housing codes, the HRRR inspections will only cover the items identified on the RRP Checklist. Here is a link to the [full Residential Health Rules and Regulations](#). Additionally, a small number of inspection items on the checklist are based on general provisions of the [Denver Revised Municipal Code](#) (DRMC) and are noted accordingly (see How to Read the Checklist and Guide).

Completing the Checklist Form:

All applicable sections of the form should be completed by the inspector. For multi-unit properties the inspector should also note which units were inspected.

The checklist uses a compliant/non-compliant format. If any unit at the property is non-compliant with any of the checklist regulations, the non-compliant item should be noted as non-compliant. For multi-unit properties the inspector should also note which unit(s) did not meet the compliance standards. Upon completing a non-passing inspection, the inspector should provide the property owner/manager the inspection report, which indicates which regulations are out of compliance. Once informed that the property is non-compliant, it is the responsibility of the property owner/manager to bring the property into compliance before seeking a reinspection. Please be advised that fixing some non-compliant items may require a building and/or zoning permit from the Community Planning and Development Department.

If a non-compliant item is brought into compliance *during* the inspection (e.g. tacked extension cords are removed) the inspector should check both the compliant and non-compliant boxes and explain in the notes that the violation was corrected onsite during the inspection.

Reinspections

If a non-compliant item is not addressed during the inspection, a property owner/manager may hire an inspector for a partial reinspection that only covers the *same units and checklist items* that were previously non-compliant. However, if more than 90 days pass between an initial inspection and an application for a license, a new, full inspection is required, regardless of whether the property had a successful partial reinspection. A property owner/manager may extend the amount of time they



have to submit a passing inspection by submitting an application for a license with their original non-compliant inspection Checklist Form within 90 days of that original inspection. They will then have 90 days from the date of their application to submit a passing reinspection form.

For reinspections, the inspector should complete a second checklist form and mark the “Reinspection” box. The reinspection form should note which items were previously non-compliant and verify that the *same units and checklist items* were reinspected and have been brought into compliance. The property owner/manager should submit both the initial and reinspection forms with their license application.

Selection of Units for Multi-Unit Properties:

Inspectors may use a random-number generator to select the unit(s) that will be inspected at a multi-unit property. Free random-number generators can be found by searching online. To use the random-number generator enter 1 for the minimum value and the total number of units for the maximum value. The generator will provide a randomly selected value/unit number. If the property uses a unit system other than numerical (e.g. Apt A, B, C, etc.) the inspector may use the order in which the units are listed as the “unit number”. If a unit is selected that is not accessible due to a tenant denying access or is not occupied due to on-going maintenance or repairs, another unit should be randomly selected. Property owners/managers are not allowed to select which units are to be inspected.

How to Read the Checklist and Guide

The Checklist form itself is not useable without the Checklist Guide, which provides the full text of the regulation each checklist item pertains to, as well as additional guidance on how the regulation should be applied. Items that are only applicable to dwellings in multi-unit properties or properties with basement units are noted as “Multi-Unit Dwelling Only” or “Basement Units Only” in their descriptive titles, accordingly.

The Checklist is separated into sections (ex. Section 1 - Egress) with individual inspection items that each have a number (ex. 1.1), a short descriptive title (ex. Bathtubs & Showers in Good Condition) and the Residential Health (RH) regulation to which it refers (ex. RH, 2-202, A-C; meaning Residential Health regulation 2-202, paragraphs A through C). A small number of items are based on the Denver Revised Municipal Code (DRMC), which is noted on their descriptive titles (ex. DRMC, 27-195; meaning Chapter 27, section 195 of the DRMC).



Checklist Guide

Section 1 – Egress

1.1 Egress to Ground Level, Stairs in Good Condition, & Emergency Exits Clear (RH, 2-202 A-C):

- A. Every dwelling unit shall have a means of egress leading to a safe and open space at ground level.
- B. Every inside and outside stairway, every porch, and every appurtenance shall be maintained and kept in sound condition and good repair.
- C. Doors, windows, corridors, stairways, fire escapes, and passageways, serving as ordinary or emergency exit routes shall be free of stored, discarded, or extraneous material, and in no case shall these routes be obstructed or locked to persons within the dwelling.

Additional Explanation – See *Definitions* for “Sound Condition and Good Repair” standard. For dwellings in multi-unit buildings, emergency exit and stairway doors must be able to be opened from within by means of a push bar, must reclose automatically, and should remain closed at all times when not in use. Additionally, exit pathways must be clear of debris or materials that would prevent exiting.

1.2 - Lighting of Halls & Stairways – Multi-Unit Dwellings (RH, 2-205 C):

- C. Every public hall or stairway in or leading into every multiple dwelling shall have a minimum of 100 lux of illumination measurable with a standard light meter at floor level.

Additional Explanation - This item is only applicable to multi-unit dwellings (including inspections for single units within a multi-unit property). All hallways and stairways that are commonly accessible by the tenants should have the minimum lighting required by the regulation.

1.3 - Dual Egress for Below Grade Units – Basement Units Only (RH, 2-202 D):

- D. Separate dwelling units located in basements or cellars shall be provided with two (2) separate egress routes.

Additional Explanation – This item is only required where the below grade dwelling unit is a complete, separate dwelling unit, meaning it includes its own separate entrance, kitchen and full bathroom. This item is considered to be a critical life safety issue and compliance is required for all below grade units, regardless of whether the property was compliant with the building code at the time of construction.



Section 2 – Water Systems

2.1 – Dwelling connected to Municipal or approved Water System (RH, 2-203 A 1):

1. All dwellings shall be connected to the municipal water system, or to an approved water system.

2.2 - Hot Water Minimum Temperature 110°F (RH, 2-207 C 1)

1. Every dwelling shall have supplied water-heating facilities that are installed in accordance with the Housing Code and the Denver Building and Fire Code, are maintained and operated in sound condition and good repair, properly connected with the hot water lines required under the provisions of this article, and are capable of heating water to such a temperature as to permit an adequate amount of water to be drawn at every required kitchen sink, lavatory basin, bathtub or shower at a temperature of not less than one hundred twenty degrees Fahrenheit (120F), except for facilities providing assisted living that are required to comply with Chapter 26 DRMC.

Additional Explanation - A minimum hot water temperature of 110 degrees Fahrenheit is considered compliant with this regulation.

2.3 - Gas-Fired Water Heater Location (RH, 2-207 C 3):

2. Gas-fired water heaters shall not be installed in any bathroom, toilet room, room used for sleeping purposes, or in any room or space not properly ventilated.

Additional Explanation – For proper ventilation standards refer to the International Residential Code or the International Building Code, whichever is applicable, for the year in which the property was constructed.

2.4 - Water Heater provided with Pressure/Temp Relief Valve (RH, 2-207 C 8):

8. All closed system water heaters must be provided with an approved water pressure and/or temperature relief valve to minimize the possibility of explosions.

Additional Explanation - For the purposes of these inspections, "Approved" means as manufactured or in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. Only a visual inspection is required.

2.5 - Toilet Working Properly & Connected to Approved Water & Sewer System (RH, 3-301 B 1):

1. Every dwelling unit shall have a flush water closet toilet properly connected to an approved water and sewer system that is in sound condition and good repair in a room affording privacy to a person within. Such flush water closet shall have an integral, water-seal trap and be provided with an integral flushing rim constructed so as to flush the entire interior of the bowl.

Additional Explanation – See *Definitions* for “Sound Condition and Good Repair” standard.



2.6 - Bathtubs & Showers in Good Condition (RH, 3-301 D 2):

2. Bathtubs and showers shall be in sound condition and good repair and shall be properly connected to an approved water and sewer system.

Additional Explanation – See *Definitions* for “Sound Condition and Good Repair” standard.

Section 3 – Electrical

3.1 - Outlets & Fixtures Installed Properly (RH, 2-206 A 1):

1. Every outlet and fixture shall be installed in an approved manner and maintained in sound condition and good repair.

Additional Explanation - The polarity of each outlet should be tested. For the purposes of these inspections, "Approved" means in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and relevant building code requirements. See *Definitions* for “Sound Condition and Good Repair” standard.

3.2 - Total Circuitry Limits; No Make-Shift Outlets; Wiring in Good Condition (RH, 2-206 B 1-2):

1. All non-stationary and makeshift outlets that have been added to the building without regard to the total circuitry shall be considered hazardous and unapproved, and shall be removed.
2. Frayed and exposed wiring, wiring unprotected by proper conduit or covering, fixtures in disrepair, and wiring or fixtures repaired in a makeshift manner shall all be deemed unsafe, and removed, replaced, or repaired.

Additional Explanation – In addition to outlets and accessible wiring, the circuit breaker box must be inspected visually for any hazards or unsafe conditions. If the electrical system has been grounded and the grounding wire is accessible, the inspector should verify that the wire has been properly installed.

3.3 - At least 1 GFCI Outlet in All Bathrooms (RH, 2-212 C):

- C. All bathrooms shall have at least one GFCI electrical outlet.

Additional Explanation – This regulation is considered to be a critical life safety issue and compliance is required for all units, regardless of whether the property was compliant with the building code at the time of construction.



3.4 - Free of Unsafe Extension Cords & Makeshift Wiring (RH, 2-206 B 4-5):

4. No extension cord from any electrical outlet shall extend from one room into another or extend across any doorway or pass through any wall or partition of any dwelling unit or room, or shall be located where foot traffic passes directly over the extension cord.

5. Tacked extension cords and makeshift wiring shall be considered unsafe and unlawful.

Additional Explanation - Property owners/managers may address these issues during the inspection to comply with this regulation.

Section 4 – Fire Safety

4.1 - Smoke & CO Detector; Fire Extinguisher Present (DRMC, 27-195):

All residential rental property licensees shall ensure that all dwelling units within a residential rental property contain a functioning smoke detector, carbon monoxide detector and fire extinguisher.

Additional Explanation - All detectors/monitors must be less than 10 years old or the maximum life-expectancy of the device per the manufacturer, whichever is less.

At least one smoke detector should be located in every bedroom, outside each bedroom (one detector can cover multiple bedrooms as long as the detector is within 15 ft of each entrance), and on every occupiable level including the basement. Smoke detectors must be hard-wired.

Every residence with fuel-burning appliances or an attached garage must be equipped with at least one UL-listed carbon monoxide alarm or combination carbon monoxide/smoke alarm. Where a fuel-burning appliance is located within a bedroom or its attached bathroom, a carbon monoxide detector should be located within the bedroom. Carbon monoxide detectors can be plugged-in or hardwired. Testing of carbon monoxide levels is not required.

Fire extinguishers should be conspicuously located where they are readily accessible and immediately available in the event of fire. Extinguishers must be within 30 feet of any cooking equipment.

Every single-family home must have one or more portable fire extinguishers.

Every multi-unit residential facility must have one or more portable fire extinguishers, regardless of any other type of fire protection provided. They should be located along normal paths of travel, including exits from areas. Portable fire extinguishers must be mounted within the interior egress corridors when the facility has such corridors and mounted on the exterior of the building adjacent to exit stairways. In both situations, the portable fire extinguishers must be located within 75 feet line of travel of all areas of the living unit or one 2A:10BC portable fire extinguisher should be provided to each unit.

Fire extinguishers should have an up-to-date inspection tag and be maintained per the manufacturer's specifications. Inspectors should verify that extinguishers are:

1. Located in the designated place (as indicated by maps, signage, or other means).



2. Visible, or there is a means of indicating the extinguisher location, and that operating instructions on nameplates are legible and face outward.
3. Accessible.
4. Reading or indicating that the pressure is in the operable range or position
5. Full (determined by weighing or hefting). For non-rechargeable extinguishers use push-to-test pressure indicators.
6. In good condition (including tires, wheels, carriage, hose, and nozzle for wheeled extinguishers). Examine for obvious physical damage, corrosion, leakage, or clogged nozzles, broken or missing safety seals and tamper indicators.

4.2 - Furnace Room Door Requirements are Met – Basement Units Only (RH, 2-201 C):

C. All areas within a basement or cellar used for habitable purposes shall be entirely separated from any furnace room by at least 1-hour fire resistive material as defined by the ASTM; this includes any door.

Additional Explanation – Habitable purpose means used for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces.

4.3 - Boiler/Furnace have approved Safety Devices (RH, 2-207 A 3-4):

3. Boilers and furnaces shall be equipped with approved safety devices to limit high steam pressures, water temperatures, or air temperatures in warm air furnaces.
4. Each gas fired boiler shall be equipped with a low water cut-off.

Additional Explanation - For the purposes of these inspections, "Approved" means as manufactured or in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

4.4 – Gas Supply Pipes in Good Condition (RH, 2-207 A 1):

1. Gas supply pipes shall be free from internal obstructions, splits, crimps, or other imperfections which would render them unfit for the purpose intended and joints shall be constructed in safe and leak-proof fashion.



Section 5 – Walls, Roof & Foundation

5.1 - Free of Holes in Walls or Roof; Deteriorating Paint (RH, 2-208 A):

- A. Foundation walls, exterior walls, roofs, and all appurtenances shall be free from holes, cracks, breaks, deteriorated paint, decay and erosions which would permit the entry of weather, water, pests, or vermin or permit the loss of heat. These components shall also be free from bulges, shifting of materials, loose material, which might fall or collapse, and shall be maintained in sound condition and good repair.

Additional Explanation - With regard to foundation walls, exterior walls, roofs, and appurtenances, a unit or property is considered compliant if defects do not allow entry of weather, water, pests or vermin or the loss of heat and are not likely to fall or collapse. Roof inspection should be limited to the interior of the unit/property to verify that there are no signs of intrusion or a collapse hazard.

With regard to "deteriorated paint", for the purposes of these inspections, a unit or property is considered compliant if the paint does not create a health hazard (see 2-209 A 2 below). Purely aesthetic defects should not be considered non-compliant with this regulation.

5.2 – Free of Lead Hazards & Hazards Associated with Water Intrusion (RH, 2-209 A 2):

- A. Floors, interior walls and ceilings, and other members such as baseboards, moldings, and door frames shall be:

2. Free from holes, cracks, breaks, dampness, mold associated with dampness, loose or peeling paint, lead hazards, loose or peeling plaster or wallpaper;

Additional Explanation – As in 5.1, for the purposes of these inspections, purely aesthetic defects should not be considered non-compliant with this regulation. Inspectors should check for signs of water intrusion, mold and lead hazards.

With regard to mold, testing is not required, the inspector should use their professional judgement to determine if mold is present that would constitute a hazard. SEE NEXT PAGE FOR "LEAD HAZARD".

For the purposes of these inspections a "Lead Hazard" means the existence of deteriorated, lead-based paint in the interior or exterior of a dwelling unit or structure constructed prior to January 1, 1979. In properties built prior to January 1, 1979, if peeling paint is observed, the inspector should measure the area of the deteriorated paint. If the deteriorated paint is inside and the surface area is larger than six (6) sqft, or is on the exterior of the building and the surface area is larger than twenty (20) sqft, the inspector should test for lead-based paint. Any publicly available lead-testing kit may be used. If the test shows evidence of lead-based paint the property should be considered non-compliant with this regulation. If the property is found to have a lead hazard as defined above, before being able to pass any subsequent inspection, the property owner/manager will need to have a certified lead professional remediate the lead-based paint in accordance with [EPA](#) and [CDPHE](#) regulations.



5.3 - Free of Leaks in Below Grade Units – Basement – Basement Units Only (RH, 2-201 B 1):

B. No basement or cellar space shall be let or used as a dwelling or rooming unit unless:

1. The floor and walls are impervious to leakage of underground and surface runoff water and are free from dampness;

5.4 – Foundation Secure & Free of Visible Decay (RH, 2-208 B):

B. Piers, columns, posts and other below grade foundation members shall be securely placed and free from decay and breaks.

Additional Explanation – All piers, columns, posts and other below grade foundation members that are accessible or visible must be inspected. A unit or property with non-accessible or non-visible components is considered compliant if, in the inspector’s professional judgement, there are no indications that a condition exists which would require a structural engineer to examine the structure further for safety concerns. If any condition exists which indicates to the inspector that an examination by a structural engineer is warranted, the property is not considered compliant until the structure or condition is reviewed by a structural engineer and, if necessary, remediated.

Additionally, this regulation should be interpreted to include decks, porches and balconies. Similarly, if any condition exists which indicates to the inspector that an examination by a structural engineer is warranted, the property is not considered compliant until the structure or condition is reviewed by a structural engineer and, if necessary, remediated after securing the appropriate building permits from the Community Planning and Development Department.

Section 6 – Trash

6.1 - Regular Trash Removal; Free of Excessive Odors & Accumulation (RH, 2-214 D-F):

D. Solid waste shall be removed from the premises at a frequency that reduces offensive odors and prohibits excessive accumulation that would attract pests or allow solid waste to fall out of the container.

F. Solid waste shall not be strewn about any part of the dwelling, or on the ground surrounding any dwelling including any basement or cellar floor or premise thereof.

Additional Explanation - The inspector must check for any existing signs of non-compliance at the time of inspection (e.g. odors or accumulation). If a property is free of signs of non-compliance at the time of inspection, it is considered compliant. For the purposes of these inspections, no further documentation or verification is required. Common areas and the exterior of the property should be clear of any solid waste outside of appropriate waste receptacles.



Section 7 – Pest Control

7.1 - Free of Pest Infestation (RH, 2-215 A):

- A. Every occupant, operator, or owner of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall be responsible as determined by the manager (*of DDPHE*) for the extermination of any insects, rodents or other pests therein or on the premises.

Additional Explanation – The inspector must check for any existing signs of infestation at the time of inspection. If a property is free of signs of infestation at the time of inspection, it is considered compliant. If there is minor evidence of pests (e.g. old mouse dropping in an unfinished basement) the property may still be considered compliant if the inspector can verify that the property has an active pest control plan capable of addressing the pest problem. If there is evidence of a pest infestation and the property/unit has no active pest control plan, the property is considered non-compliant. It does not matter whether the landlord or tenant is responsible for the pests/infestation. Properties with common outdoor pests found on the exterior of the grounds that present a hazard to tenants (e.g. wasp nests near entrances or recreational areas and no pest control plan) are considered non-compliant.

7.2 – Regular Pest Removal & Control Devices as Necessary (RH, 2-215 C):

- B. Birds, insects, rodents, and other pests shall be removed from control devices and the premises at a frequency that prevents their accumulation, decomposition, or the attraction of pests.

Additional Explanation - The inspector must check for any existing signs of non-compliance at the time of inspection. If a property is free of signs of non-compliance at the time of inspection, it is considered compliant.

Section 8 - Required Utilities, Equipment & Services

8.1 - Capable of Maintaining Minimum Room Heating Temperature of 70°F (RH, 2-207 B 1):

1. Every dwelling and dwelling unit shall have heating facilities that are installed in an approved manner and are maintained in sound condition and good repair, and are capable of safely and adequately heating all habitable rooms, bathrooms and water closet compartments located therein to a temperature of at least seventy degrees Fahrenheit (70F) at a distance three (3) feet above floor level, when the temperature outside is minus five degrees Fahrenheit (-5F). Such heating equipment shall be operated as reasonably necessary to maintain a temperature in all habitable rooms of seventy degrees Fahrenheit (70F).

Additional Explanation – Heating facility means a permanent, non-mobile source of heat, not including a space heater, oven or other appliance not designed for regularly heating entire rooms. For the purpose of these inspections, an inspector must check that the heating facilities are functioning, and hot air is exiting the vents or heat is emanating from the furnace. If the heating facilities are functioning properly and heat is being provided, the unit/property is considered compliant. Measurement of room temperature as specified in the regulation text is not required unless the outside air temperature at the time of inspection is minus five degrees Fahrenheit (-5F).



Section 9 – Safe and Sanitary

9.1 - Safe & Sanitary for Human Habitation (DRMC, 27-21):

It is unlawful for any person to occupy and for any owner or operator of a dwelling or dwelling unit to allow any person to occupy any dwelling or dwelling unit that is not maintained in a safe and sanitary manner. The board shall adopt and the manager (of DDPHE) promulgate rules and regulations that establish safety and sanitary standards applicable to all dwellings and dwelling units as necessary to protect public health and the safety of the people and promote the general welfare.

Additional Explanation - Inspectors should note anything not covered elsewhere on the checklist that, in their professional judgement, constitutes an unsafe or unsanitary condition for human habitation. A property is considered non-compliant if anything is noted in this section. Conversely if nothing is noted, the property is considered compliant.



Definitions

For the purposes of these inspections, the following terms have the following meanings:

Accessible: In the opinion of the inspector, is capable of being approached or entered safely without difficulty, fear or danger.

Aesthetic: Ornamental, not required for the operation of essential systems and components of a building.

Basement: That portion of a building which is partly or completely below grade.

Balcony: Exterior floor projecting from and supported by a structure without additional independent supports.

CDPHE: The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

DDPHE: The Denver Department of Public Health.

Deck: Exterior floor system supported on at least two opposing sides by an adjoining structure and/or post, piers, or other independent supports.

DRMC: The Denver Revised Municipal Code.

Dwelling Unit or Unit: A single unit providing complete, independent living facilities, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

Egress: A means of exiting.

EPA: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Exterior Wall: An outside wall of a building, either above or below grade.

Grounding Wire: A device that establishes an electrical connection to the earth.

Habitable Purpose: Used for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces.

Residential Rental Property: Any building(s), structure(s), or accessory dwelling unit(s) rented or offered for rent as a residence. Residential rental property does not include on-campus college housing, facilities licensed pursuant to article I of chapter 26 of the DRMC, or facilities licensed pursuant to article II or article III of chapter 33 of the DRMC.

Sound Condition and Good Repair: Replacement or major remedial work is not recommended.



Unsafe: In the inspector's opinion, a condition of an area, system, component or procedure that is judged to be a significant risk of injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted residential construction standards.

Visible: Easily observed during the walk-through survey portion of the inspection.

