

CITY OF PULLMAN

Administration/Finance

325 S.E. Paradise Street, Pullman, WA 99163

(509) 338-3208 Fax (509) 334-2751

admin@pullman-wa.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: John Sherman, City Supervisor

RE: Public Meeting on Rental Inspections

DATE: February 28, 2008

On January 8, 2008, the City Council set March 4 as the date for a public meeting on the rental inspection issue. The article in the *Pullman Community UPDATE* regarding the public meeting stated:

PUBLIC MEETING ON RENTAL INSPECTIONS

The City Council will hold a public meeting on the topic of rental inspections at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4. At the City Council meeting on January 8, the City Council discussed the issues of rental inspections and business registrations. The City Council opted to hold the issue of mandatory inspections in abeyance pending an appeal of the city of Pasco's program to the U.S. Supreme Court. Areas that are still active for discussion include the creation of a WSU off-campus housing office; the possible creation of a voluntary rental certification program by WSU, the city, or both; and strengthening of the current voluntary inspection program. The City Council will also consider whether rental housing will be required to participate under a proposed business registration program. The public meeting will be held in the City Council Chambers in conjunction with the regular City Council meeting.

Given that this is a public meeting at which public input will be provided, I think it is important to begin by once again providing a brief summary of the rental inspection issue. A voluntary rental inspection program has been in effect within the city of Pullman since 1982. Under this program a tenant, the owner, or the owner's agent may contact the building inspector or the fire inspector for an inspection of a rental unit. Various alternatives have been explored over the years for strengthening this voluntary approach. Alternatives explored have ranged from a voluntary certification program to a mandatory rental licensing and inspection program.

At the City Council meeting on September 25, 2007, a discussion was held on business registration and rental licensing. A public meeting was then held on these issues at the City Council meeting on November 27. At the City Council meetings on September 25 and November 27, 2007, a variety of approaches for addressing rental housing issues were identified by staff, individual City Councilmembers, and members of the public. The following is a brief summary of some of the suggested options:

1. Allow the rental market to correct itself.

Some argued that the market will correct itself because the supply of available rental units has now exceeded the demand. Individuals cite the current vacancy rate of 6 percent and argue that the market will correct itself. If you have substandard housing they argue that you will not be able to rent it unless you make needed repairs. It was also suggested that the newly formed Whitman County Landlord and Tenant Association might consider engaging in self-policing actions of problem rental properties.

2. Place an increased emphasis on the existing voluntary rental inspection program.

There was strong recognition that the existing voluntary inspection program can be very effective if it is utilized more. Under this voluntary inspection program a tenant, the owner, or the owner's agent may request the inspection of a rental unit. The building inspector or fire inspector can then legally enter the rental unit to make a determination with respect to code compliance. If deficiencies are found, then corrective actions can be required to bring the rental unit into code compliance. It was suggested that various measures should be undertaken to promote awareness of the voluntary inspection program.

3. Focus energy on the problem rental properties.

Much concern focused on the fact that the vast majority of landlords are good landlords and that the vast majority of rental properties are in good shape. The key is how to legally focus on rentals that are out of compliance with applicable building and fire codes. It was proposed that the city should work to develop a system that will address building safety issues without overburdening the landlords. Some of the specific suggestions that were made included more aggressively using the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings code and placing more attention on the enforcement of the recently revised nuisance ordinance. Legal issues were raised with respect to the ability to use these codes to gain access to suspect properties.

4. Consider creating a WSU off-campus housing office.

It was suggested that the creation of a WSU off-campus housing office would demonstrate the university's concern and commitment toward off-campus housing

issues. Information could be provided on landlord-tenant issues. The off-campus office could also provide training and track complaints.

5. Consider establishing a WSU housing certification program.

The issue was raised as to whether WSU was aware of other universities that had created a rental certification program. Under this approach the university would certify certain rental units as meeting its standards for being rented.

6. Create a voluntary City of Pullman Rental Housing Certification Program.

Under this approach the city would respond to requests for voluntary inspections. The program would provide for a cursory inspection of rental housing for basic, minimum, life-safety standards and the issuance of a certification. The concept is that participation would be voluntary, but that ASWSU would educate student renters on the program and encourage them to only rent certified units.

7. Require rental property owners and managers to register with the city.

Under this approach the owners and managers of rental properties would have to register with the city. This would allow the city to obtain emergency contact information.

8. Create a mandatory rental licensing inspection program (city of Pasco approach).

The city of Pasco has in place a mandatory rental licensing and inspection program. Information pertaining to the city of Pasco program was presented at the City Council meeting on September 25. On November 27 a similar draft ordinance for the city of Pullman was presented. The draft ordinance provided that, as a condition for the issuance of a license, the applicant would have to provide a certificate of inspection that all of the applicant's rental dwelling units complied with the standards of the Construction Code of the city of Pullman and did not present conditions that endangered or impaired the health or safety of a tenant. A few weeks after the City Council meeting on November 27 it was learned that the Columbia Basin Landlord's Association has filed a petition for writ of certiorari to the United States Supreme Court in the Pasco v. Shaw case on landlord certifications of habitability for licensing purposes.

At the City Council meeting on January 8, 2008, the City Council decided not only to set March 4 as the public hearing date for the discussion of rental inspection issue but also to narrow the list of options for consideration. The option of allowing the rental market to correct itself was rejected by the City Council. Although there has been a tremendous increase in off-campus apartment construction, there are still some very deficient properties on the market. The option of creating a mandatory rental licensing program at this time was also rejected by the City Council. City Attorney Laura McAloon advised the City Council that since the Pasco case had been appealed to the

U.S. Supreme Court it would not be advisable for the City Council to pursue this option until the matter was resolved. The City Council also expressed concerns about requiring inspections of newer properties that had been constructed to code.

The following is a summary of actions that have taken place since the January 8 City Council meeting with respect to the issues that the City Council has opted to carry forward for discussion at the March 4 public meeting on the rental inspection issue. Where appropriate the options that were discussed on January 8 have been combined or condensed.

1. **PLACE AN INCREASED EMPHASIS ON THE EXISTING RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM, THE ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING CODES, AND FOCUS ENERGY ON THE PROBLEM RENTAL PROPERTIES.**

At the joint meeting with ASWSU on February 20, 2008, we discussed the rental inspection issue. One of the issues that we requested feedback on was the strengthening of the current city of Pullman voluntary inspection program. ASWSU Senators suggested that we should significantly increase the awareness of the program. One specific suggestion was that we should staff a table at the ASWSU Housing Fair on March 4. Senior Building Inspector Greg Colvig is staffing the table. He will be providing handouts of the City of Pullman Safe, Healthy Housing Checklist and will be answering questions from tenants.

It was also suggested that we should promote awareness of the inspection program during this time of year when leases are expiring and new leases are being signed. In order to address this suggestion we are placing an article in the April edition of the *Pullman Community UPDATE*. The article will state:

The city of Pullman seeks to ensure safe and healthy housing. If you have concerns about whether or not your house or apartment is code compliant, you may call 338-3287 to check for a building code violation or 332-8172 to check for a fire code violation. The city also provides a safe, healthy housing checklist on its web page. Just go to the city web page, click on community links, and then on housing. The city web page is <http://www.pullman-wa.gov>.

With respect to the city of Pullman placing an increased emphasis on the enforcement of existing codes, Senior Building Inspector Greg Colvig has met with city of Pasco officials about their programs. Based on his conversations with the city of Pasco, he is now placing increased emphasis on the following sections of the building code:

115.1 Conditions. Structures or existing equipment that are or hereafter become unsafe, insanitary or deficient because of

inadequate means of egress facilities, inadequate light and ventilation, or which constitute a fire hazard, or are otherwise dangerous to human life or the public welfare, or that involve illegal or improper occupancy or inadequate maintenance, shall be deemed an unsafe condition. Unsafe structures shall be taken down and removed or made safe, as the building official deems necessary and as provided for in this section. A vacant structure that is not secured against entry shall be deemed unsafe.

115.2 Record. The building official shall cause a report to be filed on an unsafe condition. The report shall state the occupancy of the structure and the nature of the unsafe condition.

3401.2 Maintenance. Buildings and structures, and parts thereof, shall be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition. Devices or safeguards which are required by this code shall be maintained in conformance with the code edition under which installed. The owner or the owner's designated agent shall be responsible for the maintenance of buildings and structures. To determine compliance with this subsection, the building official shall have the authority to require a building or structure to be reinspected. The requirements of this chapter shall not provide the basis for removal or abrogation of fire protection and safety systems and devices in existing structures.

The increased emphasis on these particular sections of the building code will help us in our efforts to focus on the problem rental housing.

2. CONSIDER CREATING A WSU OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING OFFICE.

During the months of January and February, Mayor Glenn A. Johnson and I have met with key WSU officials to discuss the housing issue options pertaining to WSU. The following are the key individuals with whom we have discussed the WSU Off-Campus Housing Office:

President Elson S. Floyd

Greg Royer, Vice President Business & Finance

Mel Taylor, Executive Director Real Estate & External Affairs

Michael J. Tate, Vice President Student Affairs, Equity/Diversity

Milton Lang, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs, Equity/Diversity

We have had discussions about the possible creation of a WSU Off-Campus Housing Office at City Council meetings as well as in meetings with WSU officials. We are hopeful that WSU will proceed with the creation of the office.

In a meeting that we had with President Floyd and Vice President Royer in January, both President Floyd and Vice President Royer stated that they supported pursuing the concept. In a February meeting that we had with WSU officials to discuss housing issues, we were informed by Vice President Tate that WSU had not yet committed to all the logistical and financial issues relating to establishing the Off-Campus Housing Office.

At this point in time I feel it is fair to summarize that WSU definitely has interest in exploring the concept of creating an Off-Campus Housing Office but that such an office will probably not be created until funding and staffing issues have been resolved. For its part, the City Council has been very supportive of the creation of a WSU Off-Campus Housing Office. For example, the minutes of the City Council meeting on January 8 state:

Councilmember Heath stated she was happy that WSU is willing to help establish an off-campus housing office and thanked Mel Taylor and Lynn Meyers for their efforts. Councilmember Heath stated she thought that the options the City should use to address the housing issues are the off-campus housing office so the tenants have a resource to focus energy on problem properties and to explore involving national chapters for improving Greek housing.

Councilmember Paul stated the City should continue to use current regulations and simplify the information and that the off-campus housing office should be a joint effort between WSU and the City of Pullman.

Councilmember Benjamin asked if the off-campus housing office was a joint effort would it hinder some of the authority. Mayor Johnson responded. Councilmember Paul stated that he thought the off-campus housing office could address a variety of problems. Mel Taylor stated that the off-campus housing office was in the very initial stages so many of the issues have not been addressed yet.

The possibility of WSU creating an off-campus housing office was also discussed at the joint meeting between the City Council and ASWSU on February 20. The minutes from the meeting state:

Councilmember Heath stated she was pleased to hear WSU is open to developing a housing office to provide information to students and stated that students need to educate themselves on the issue as well.

In summary, the concept of creating a WSU off-campus housing office is supported by WSU in concept but issues relating to staffing and funding will have

to be addressed before the concept can be implemented. Vice President Tate said the off-campus housing office will be tied into the university district office. The university district is a concept that President Floyd raised in our meeting with him in January.

3. **CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A VOLUNTARY HOUSING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.**

In our meetings we WSU officials in January and February we discussed the concept of a rental certification program that would be conducted through WSU, the city of Pullman, or both. At our meeting with WSU officials in February we were informed by Vice President Tate that WSU had considered the various options and that the university had decided that they supported the creation of a “WSU Preferred Housing List”.

According to Vice President Tate, under this concept WSU will recognize owners of rental property who are “doing the right thing.” This would be a voluntary licensing program for those rental property owners who want to be included on the “WSU Preferred Housing List.” He said that WSU might choose to exclude from an inspection requirement all properties that have been constructed within the last 10 years. The intent is to target the older housing that pre-dates current building codes. He said they also want to include not only building and fire code compliance but occupancy code compliance as well.

The intent is to market to students and parents that the “WSU Preferred Housing List” means something. They would promote the list at events such as *Alive!* They would also make the list available on “Face Book” and at other locations.

As was the case with the WSU Off-Campus Housing Office, I think it is fair to say that the “WSU Preferred Housing List” concept is a work in progress. I personally think it is commendable that WSU is taking an active role in trying to improve conditions on College Hill through a variety of existing programs as well as these current proposals. Rather than turning their backs on College Hill housing issues, they are taking steps to try to improve conditions on the hill.

4. **REQUIRE RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS AND MANAGERS TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY.**

As was previously noted, we still need additional staff research before we can recommend that you set a date for the public meeting on the business registration issue. However, it would be appropriate to take public input relative to including rental housing within a business registration program.

The concept of registering rental properties has received strong support from the City Council. A 2007 adopted City Council goal stated:

Explore implementing a business registration program, including rental housing, so that the city can obtain needed emergency contact information and charge only a fee that will cover the administrative expenses of the business registration program.

In addition to the 2007 adopted City Council goal, individual City Councilmembers have since made statements of support. For example the minutes of the January 8, 2008, City Council meeting state:

Councilmember Bloom stated that the inspection program seems to be the best way to protect citizens but if that is not available that the City should use a combination of methods to address the issues such as the voluntary certification program, the off-campus housing office, and registering of all businesses and rental properties.

Councilmember Heath stated she is in favor of registering owners.

In summary, the concept of including rental housing within a business registration program has been supported by the City Council in the past but the exact details of such a proposed program have not yet been finalized.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the public meeting is to receive input from the public with respect to the rental inspection issue. At the conclusion of the public meeting the City Council may want to provide direction to staff as to how you want us to proceed. As has been previously noted, details have not yet been worked out with respect to all the rental inspection proposals. However, we are hopeful we can are on track to implement whatever the City Council chooses to implement before the beginning of the fall 2008 semester.

The ATTACHMENTS section that follows provides additional information for your consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

Public Meeting on Rental Inspections

The Pullman City Council will hold a public meeting on rental inspections at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 4. At the city council meeting on Jan. 8, the council discussed rental inspections and business registrations. The council opted to hold the issue of mandatory inspections pending an appeal of the city of Pasco's program to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Areas that are still active for discussion include the creation of a WSU

off-campus housing office; the possible creation of a voluntary rental certification program by WSU, the city or both; and strengthening of the current voluntary inspection program. The city council will also consider whether rental housing will be required to participate under a proposed business registration program. The public meeting will be held in the council chambers with the regular city council meeting. ■

Seventh Annual Cougar Pride

Preparation is underway for the seventh annual Cougar Pride Days at Washington State University and within the Pullman community. A vital part of this event is the continuing cooperation between the city of Pullman and WSU. This 10-day spring cleanup and celebration will be held March 26-April 6. Pullman residents along with university students, staff and faculty take part in various activities, from garden maintenance and mulch spreading outside to dusting and sweeping inside buildings.

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend the opening ceremony

**Cougar
Pride
Days 2**

*The best Irish stew is served at the
Pullman Senior Center!*

Annual Irish Stew Luncheon
March 13 • 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Tickets: \$5

Menu: Irish stew, salad, hot bread, pie and coffee

Proceeds support the Pullman Senior Citizens Association.

Purchase tickets from senior members at Pullman Senior Center or at the door: 325 SE Paradise, city hall, 338-3307. ■



Think Spring!

It has been a hard winter that has taken the max. We would like to request you all the gravel that we placed on the street into the street so that we can pave. Thanks for your cooperation in this area.

Upcoming Parks and Recreation Activities

Jump Rope for Kids

Grab your jump rope and get ready for an exciting six weeks! You will learn all kinds of jump rope skills, including single rope, Double Dutch and group routines. This program is intended for all skill levels, from beginner to advanced. So don't worry if you have never jumped before. As long as you are willing to try, this program is for you! Youth ages 5-14 are welcome to join instructor **Lindsey Jensen** on Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m., March 17-April 28. Ropes, not included in the program fee, can be purchased from the instructor for \$5. Fee: \$39.



for children ages 1-9 on Saturday, March 22. Ages 1-4 will start at 10 a.m., and ages 5-9 will begin at 10:10 a.m. There will be lots of prizes, thousands of eggs and special surprise guests. For more information, call the Pullman Parks and Recreation office at 338-3227.

Credit Matters — For Today's Youth

Let us help to educate your high school child on why credit matters. The foundation for an empowering future is learning that credit, if well managed, is a privilege not to be abused and can provide many benefits. **Moll Schoenbachler** of First Horizon Home

Weakside Help! Refresher Course

With the upcoming NCAA basketball tournaments, refresh your basketball knowledge with hoop glossary terms, basketball jargon, and offensive and defensive strategies. No experience necessary. Come fill out your brackets! Individuals ages 16 and older are welcome to join **Megan Vining**, recreation coordinator, on Monday, March 17, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Fee: \$10.

Looking to Purchase a Home?

Attention all first-time home buyers: In today's changing market, it is very important to understand the purchasing process. From interest rates to homeowners insurance, all the topics

Home Alone and Personal Safety

What do I do when I am in charge?

Rental Inspec- 11.
tion Discussion

Mayor Johnson announced that a discussion is scheduled on rental inspections. City Supervisor Sherman reviewed the issue and suggested a number of options that were developed by City staff, the public, and Councilmembers. City Attorney McAloon presented an update on the City of Pasco's rental inspection program and the legal challenge it is facing. City Supervisor Sherman reported on various staff actions that have taken place since the November 27 public meeting on the issue. Public Works Director Workman described changes made to the City's process and documentation for the general life and safety inspections. Mayor Johnson suggested that the general life and safety inspections be cross referenced with the fire department's inspections. Public Works Director Workman responded. Councilmember Bloom asked if the general life and safety inspection forms include an area where an individual can request an inspection on specific items. Public Works Director Workman responded. Councilmember Bloom asked how tenants in the City obtain owner or agent information on rental properties. Public Works Director Workman responded. Councilmember Bloom stated that the inspection program seems to be the best way to protect citizens but if that is not available that the City should use a combination of methods to address the issues such as the voluntary certification program, the off-campus housing office, and registering of all businesses and rental properties.

Councilmember Heath stated she was happy that WSU is willing to help establish an off-campus housing office and thanked Mel Taylor and Lynn Myers for their efforts. Councilmember Heath stated she thought that the options the City should use to address the housing issues are the off-campus housing office so the tenants have a resource to focus energy on problem properties and to explore involving national chapters for improving Greek housing. Councilmember Heath stated she is in favor of registering owners.

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Councilmember Benjamin asked if the off-campus housing office was a joint effort would it hinder some of the authority. Mayor Johnson responded. Councilmember Paul stated that he thought the off-campus housing office could address a variety of problems. Mel Taylor stated that the off-campus housing office was in the very initial stages so many of the issues have not been addressed yet.

City Supervisor Sherman reviewed the options that the City Council wish to pursue and suggested that the next public meeting take place in late February or in early March which would be after the joint meeting with ASWSU. Councilmember Heath stated that March would work best for her. The City Council concurred that the next public meeting should be conducted in March.

City Council minutes February 20, 2008

Housing Issues 2. City Supervisor Sherman presented the staff report that described the rental inspection history, the current inspection program, and the four alternatives chosen by the City Council for potential rental inspection programs. City Supervisor Sherman stated that a public meeting would be conducted on March 4 on the issue. Senator Cifuentes stated he was concerned with an inspection program because it would increase housing costs and that the City should work on improving existing programs. He asked what the rental inspection fee would be. City Supervisor Sherman, Finance Director Woo, and Councilmember Heath responded. Senator Hung asked if there is any way to provide more public information about the City's current safety inspection program. City Supervisor Sherman responded. Councilmember Paul stated that spring is a good time to provide public information because many leases are signed by students during the spring. Councilmember Weller stated that it is important to provide education and information to students. Councilmember Heath stated she was pleased to hear WSU is open to developing a housing office to provide information to students and stated that students need to educate themselves on the issue as well.

Shawn Hoey, Director of Campus Relations, provided information on the upcoming "Housing Fair" and asked if the City would like to have a booth at the "Housing Fair". Mayor Johnson stated the City would be happy to provide inspections forms for students. Senator Hussaini asked how to educate campus residents who are about to leave the resident halls and rent off-campus. Director of Campus Relations Hoey responded. Senator Lambert asked for clarification that the "slumlord" ordinance was the same as the Pasco program. City Supervisor Sherman and Mayor Johnson responded. Mel Taylor described the plan for the University District housing office and stated that students have rights and they should exercise them. Milton Lang stated that WSU wanted to partner with the students and that it would be proactive on these types of issues to help provide students with a good experience at WSU. Senator Driscoll asked if the inspections could take place prior to students signing leases. Mayor Johnson responded. President Webster stated that students need to know that the City isn't the

enemy and the best timing for providing public information on the issue is when students are leaving for the school year prior to them signing new leases.

CITY OF PULLMAN SAFE, HEALTHY HOUSING CHECKLIST

CALL: 338-3287 for building code violations *or*

332-8172 for fire code violations.

This is a general safety checklist for houses or apartments. The list is not all-inclusive but is based on a current edition of the Washington State Building Code. The building code requires a building to comply with the codes in effect at the time it was built. The actual rules for the building you live in may be different than this list; that is if your building was built in the 1960s the building should comply with the codes in effect at that time which may not be the same as the codes for building today. In particular, bedrooms in all housing built after 1969 and all bedrooms in older buildings that were created after 1969 are required to have egress windows complying with the building code in effect at that time. However, WAC 212-10 does require that all rental units be protected by a properly installed and maintained smoke detector, regardless of when it was built; the occupant is responsible for maintenance of the smoke detector. If you believe there is an unsafe condition in your house or apartment contact the building owner, their agent, the city building inspector or the city fire inspector.

- The bedroom(s), living room and dining room in an apartment should have openings to the outside to provide fresh air. This could be a door, window or a mechanical ventilation system.
- The electrical boxes should have a cover over the wires.
- When you use an electrical outlet or switch it should not spark or shock you.
- The pipes used to vent the products of combustion (smoke) from the furnace or water heater should have tight joints.
- Fuel burning furnaces or water heaters need oxygen for combustion to take place. An excellent source of oxygen is the air in a building. The room housing these appliances should be large enough to supply the needed air, have openings into a large room, have openings to the outside of the building, or have air piped directly into the appliance.
- Fuel burning furnaces or water heaters should not be located in bedrooms or bathrooms.
- Fuel burning furnaces or water heaters should not be accessed from bedrooms or bathrooms.
- Furnaces, wall heaters, room heaters, woodstoves, gas stoves and water heaters are required to have a clear space from walls or ceilings. The required clear space is often on a label on the side of the appliance. If there is not a label, you may check with the building inspector or fire inspector for the required clearance.
- All apartments are required to have a door opening into a hallway or the outside. Generally a dwelling or apartment is only required to have one exit.
- The support walls and posts should be plumb and straight.
- The beams supporting the floors or roofs should be level and straight.
- Bedrooms should have a window or door for occupants to escape or be rescued if the need arises.
- Each house or apartment should have a kitchen with a sink.
- Each house or apartment should have a separate bathroom containing a toilet, lavatory, tub or shower.
- The sink, lavatory and tub or shower should have hot water.
- The roof and walls should not leak water.
- An address number or letter should be on each unit.
- Each house or apartment should have a heating system.
- The area outside of each bedroom should have a smoke detector.

SMOKE DETECTORS

- Smoke detectors are powered either by battery, household electrical wiring, or wiring with battery backup.
- Smoke detectors in dwelling units built after December 31, 1980, receive the primary power source from the household electrical wiring.
- Each sleeping area has at least one smoke detector.
- Sleeping areas that are separate should have at least one smoke detector per area.
- The smoke detector battery is operational and the smoke detector is clean

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RENTERS

For your comfort, safety and security while renting a Pullman residence, the following recommendations may apply.

- Locate or purchase a **fire extinguisher**. Fire extinguishers are coded to reflect the type of fire they can put out. Some multipurpose extinguishers can be used on more than one type of fire.
- Change the batteries in your **smoke detectors** every six months, and make sure the detectors are clean and functional.
- Locate all possible **exits** in case of fire or other emergency. Make and practice an emergency exit plan.

- **Renters' insurance**, available from any local insurance agent, is well worth the small premium. Such insurance can provide protection for your personal property against such perils as fire, theft, and vandalism and may help to protect you in case of a liability lawsuit against you. Some student's parents may have a homeowners' insurance policy that could cover some, but not all of your personal items.
- **During winter break**, do not shut off your heat source. Instead, set your thermostat to 50° to protect against frozen pipes and potential water leaks from broken pipes.
- **During all absences from your residence**, be sure to lock and secure your doors in order to minimize your chances of theft or burglary.

LANDLORD-TENANT ISSUES

Illegal Provisions in Rental Agreements

The following are illegal provisions in rental agreements. If you find any of these provisions in your lease agreement, **DO NOT SIGN YOUR LEASE!** Call the WSU Housing Hotline: 335-9574.

- Any provision waiving any right given to tenants by the Landlord-Tenant Act.
- Any provision requiring that tenants give up their right to defend themselves in court against a landlord's accusations.
- Any provision limiting the landlord's liability in situations where the landlord would normally be responsible.
- Any provision limiting the landlord to enter the rental unit without proper notice.
- Any provision requiring a tenant to pay for all damage to the unit, even if it is not caused by tenants or their guests.
- Any provision stating the tenant will pay the landlord's attorney fees under any circumstances if a dispute goes to court.
- Any provision allowing the landlord to seize a tenant's property if the tenant falls behind in rent.

Refundable Deposits

Under the Landlord-Tenant Act, the term "deposit" can only be applied to money which can be refunded to the tenant. If a refundable deposit is being charged, the law requires the following:

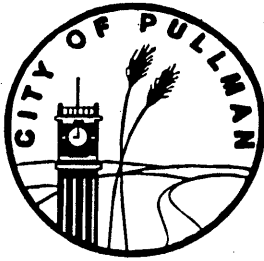
- The rental agreement must be in writing.
- It must say what each deposit is for and what the tenant must do in order to get the money back.
- The tenant must be given a written receipt for the deposit.
- A checklist or statement describing the condition of the rental unit must be filled out. Landlord and tenant must sign it, and the tenant must be given a signed copy.
- The deposits must be placed in a trust account in a bank or escrow company. The tenant must be informed in writing where the deposits are being kept.

How to Handle a Complaint Against a Landlord or Tenant

Residential Landlord-Tenant Dispute: In a 1985 decision (State v. Schwab), the Washington Supreme Court ruled that a violation of the Landlord-Tenant Act is not a *per se* violation of Washington State's Consumer Protection Act. As a result, the Attorney General's Office Consumer Protection Division is prohibited from acting as a private attorney on an isolated residential landlord-tenant complaint. If your complaint demands immediate legal action, you should consider private legal action in Small Claims Court (no attorney necessary) if your claim is under \$4,000. If your complaint involves more than \$4,000, you should seek a private attorney. You might also consider arbitration.

For a copy of the Landlord-Tenant Act, Title 59 RCW:
<http://www.atg.wa.gov/LandlordTenant/default.aspx>
 For more information regarding Landlord-Tenant issues:
www.tenantsunion.org
<http://tenant.net>
www.law.cornell.edu/topics/landlord_tenant.html
<http://www.offcampusliving.wsu.edu>

If you've a housing problem, the following are FREE Services. Call:
 WSU Housing Hotline (509) 335-9574
 Student Legal Services (WSU students only) (509) 335-9539
 WA Attorney General Consumer Issues (800) 551-4636
 Human Rights Commission (discrimination) (509) 338-3208
 The Dispute Resolution Center of Spokane (509) 326-8029



City of Pullman
Public Works Department
MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Mark Workman MW
RE: Rental Housing Inspection
DATE: November 15, 2007

The policy of the City of Pullman for several years has been for Building Department personnel to provide cursory life safety inspections of rental units when requested to do so by tenants. Typically the landlord is then notified of any deficiencies found and the necessary corrections are made. Landlords are usually easy to work with in this regard and often only a phone call is required, although occasionally a more aggressive approach is necessary. When warranted, rental units have been posted as unsafe to occupy and tenants temporarily relocated until deficiencies have been corrected. Historically we have averaged in the neighborhood of 10 inspection requests per year although this year that number has increased to more like 20 requests. It should also be noted that many inspection requests appear to simply be tenants looking for an excuse to break their lease where life safety issues are not found and squalor living conditions are of the tenant's own making.

A more comprehensive rental inspection program was previously pursued a few years ago following a suggestion made at a joint City Council/ASWSU meeting on October 17, 2000. An in-depth effort was undertaken to try to develop a rental inspection program that would be acceptable to ASWSU, landlords, and even the College Hill Association. The best product we could come up with was the Pullman Rental Housing Certification Program, which would provide for cursory inspection of rental housing for basic, minimum, life-safety standards and the issuance of a certification. The concept was that participation would be voluntary, but that ASWSU would educate student renters on the program and encourage them to only rent certified units, thus pressuring landlords to participate. However, on January 8, 2002 I reported to the Council that landlords were adamantly opposed to the City of Pullman implementing any form of rental housing certification program, that ASWSU staff was disheartened with the landlord's position, and that the College Hill Association's position was that the City should have a

mandatory annual inspection program that also included parking, density, and noise. The program was not pursued further from that time. As background, a copy of my memorandum for the January 8, 2002 meeting is attached.

If the Council's desire is to implement a mandatory rental inspection program in conjunction with a business license program, the previously developed Pullman Rental Certification Program may be a good place to start. A copy of that program as previously developed is attached. Code references and a few standards will need to be updated, an appeal process will probably need to be developed, and other adjustments will be necessary to reflect the mandatory nature of a revised program. A copy of the checklist developed for this program is also attached for reference.

To try to quantify the scope of this issue, one of the Building Department personnel surveyed various sources, including property managers, to try to determine the number of rental units in Pullman. From the major property managers we counted a total of 5,404 rental units in a total of 503 separate buildings. In addition, it was estimated that 35% of all rental units in Pullman are personally managed, as opposed to professionally managed. This would translate into a total of approximately 8,300 rental units in Pullman in maybe 2,000 buildings. This does not include limited care facilities such as Bishop Place and Avalon Care Center, which are inspected by the state of Washington, and housing for senior citizens (Kenwood Square, Pioneer Square, and Ridge Pointe Apartments) which are not inspected. This also does not include WSU housing.

Senior Building Inspector Greg Colvig recently visited Pasco to observe their rental inspection program. Attached is a memorandum from Greg providing in some detail what he learned about the Pasco system. He also further elaborates on what we currently do in Pullman. Pasco's program is much more far reaching and intrusive than anything Pullman has had. Since the mid 1980s, Protective Inspections has worked with contractors, building designers, homeowners, and property managers in a professional, friendly, and non aggressive manner to foster code compliance. Adoption of a more aggressive, "strictly business", property maintenance inspection program with stiff penalties for non compliance will definitely be a change in our style of code enforcement that will no doubt be met with push back from the building/rental community. As you read Greg's observations of the Pasco system, it is interesting to consider how you would feel about someone from the City coming to your house to perform a property maintenance inspection.



City of Pullman
Public Works Department
MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Mark Workman MW
RE: Rental Housing Certification
DATE: January 8, 2002

At a joint City Council/ASWSU meeting on October 17, 2000, an ASWSU senator described substandard living conditions in some of the apartment houses on College Hill and asked that the city consider some kind of inspection and certification program. The Daily News subsequently supported the implementation of such a program in an editorial article. The City Council then adopted as a goal in 2001 to "pursue the voluntary rental inspection program with ASWSU and WSU for all private and public rental housing". City staff then began the process of trying to develop a program to address this goal.

At the March 16, 2001 meeting of the Rental Housing Committee of the Pullman Chamber of Commerce, Planning Director Pete Dickinson summarized the program as it was envisioned at that time and received input from committee members. On April 20, 2001 Building Inspector Greg Colvig and I attended a similar meeting, along with Pete Dickinson, to further discuss the proposed program. One of the suggestions that came out of that meeting was that once the program was better finalized another meeting be held with the landlords and that ASWSU representatives be included.

Over the ensuing summer and fall, significant fine-tuning of the proposed program was made which involved City Supervisor John Sherman, City Attorney Tom Kingen, Fire Protection Officer Rich Dragoo, Planning Director Pete Dickinson, Building Inspector Greg Colvig, and me. The result of this effort was a policy named the Pullman Rental Certification Program. If implemented, the program would provide for cursory inspection of rental housing for basic, minimum, life-safety standards and then, once it is assured that these standards have been met, the issuance of a certification to that effect. Items that would be addressed include exits, escape/rescue windows, corridors, stairways, guardrails, structural safety, weather protection, glazing, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, smoke detectors, light and ventilation, heating, sanitation, kitchens, fire resistive construction, wall and ceiling penetrations, and premise identification. This final draft document was then circulated to landlords and ASWSU with copies to WSU administration and to the College Hill Association. A copy of this document is attached for reference.

As had been suggested, a meeting was scheduled for December 3rd that primarily involved landlords and ASWSU to further discuss the proposed program and to try to resolve concerns.

The meeting was well attended and lasted almost 2 hours. A copy of the sign-in sheet and a summary of the comments expressed is attached for reference. Also attached is a copy of a letter from Toni Koubourlis of Apartment Rentals that she sent to me because she was not going to be able to attend that meeting. Attached as well is a copy of a petition which was distributed during the meeting. In general, the landlords were adamantly opposed to the City of Pullman implementing any form of rental housing certification program, although there was support for some type of similar program being administered by ASWSU. It was thought that ASWSU would be a good conduit for students to report concerns and for facilitating landlords correcting problems where that was warranted. However, subsequent phone conversations with ASWSU staff indicate that they were somewhat disheartened by the meeting and may not be equipped to administer such a program on an ongoing basis. I think ASWSU was hopeful that the landlords would view the proposed program as more of a benefit as opposed to an intrusion.

At this time, I have little hope of being able to put together a program that will be agreeable to all interested parties. As noted, the landlords strongly oppose a City of Pullman-administered program. Alex Hammond, representing the College Hill Association, has expressed their position that the city should have a mandatory annual inspection program; that the program should also address issues such as parking, density, and noise; and that the cost for the program should be recovered from the landlords which, supposedly, would then be passed on to the renters. A copy of a letter from Mr. Hammond further detailing this position is also attached for reference.

My personal opinion is that the overwhelming majority of landlords in Pullman do a good job of providing rental properties. The overly substandard properties and irresponsible landlords are a small percentage by comparison. Developing a far-reaching program that will affect all landlords may be an excessive response to addressing the problem. Any inspection program that is used to any significant extent, whether voluntary or mandatory, will exceed our current capabilities. Such a program will quickly lead to the need for more staff (inspectors and administrative support) as well as office space, vehicles, equipment, etc. I'm not sure this investment is warranted. The real problem seems to be in getting renters that are living in substandard housing to report it so we can address the problems through the avenues currently available to us, such as our existing building codes. Seeing as how the majority of renters are students, perhaps there is a way we can work with ASWSU to accomplish this.

Chapter 1

TITLE AND SCOPE

Title

Sec. 101. These regulations shall be known as the "The Pullman Rental Certification Program," may be cited as such, and will be referred to herein as "this Policy."

Purpose

Sec. 102. The purpose of this Policy is to provide minimum standards to safeguard life or limb, health, property, safety, and welfare of the general public and the owners and occupants of rental housing.

Scope

Sec. 103. The provisions of this Policy shall constitute the minimum standards to obtain a certificate of inspection for rented or leased buildings and structures used as dwellings and apartment houses as defined in this Policy.

Where in any specific case, different sections of this Policy specify different materials, methods, of construction or other requirements; the most restrictive shall govern. Where there is a conflict between a general requirement and a specific requirement, the specific requirement shall be applicable.

Maintenance

Sec. 104. All buildings or structures containing rental housing and all parts thereof shall be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition. All systems, devices or safeguards which were required by the code under which the building was constructed shall be maintained in conformance with the requirements of that code. The owner or his designated agent shall be responsible for the maintenance of buildings and structures. To determine compliance with this section, the Building Inspector may cause any structure to be reinspected. Compliance with earlier requirements does not necessarily mean a building or structure will conform to the requirements of this Policy for issuance of a certificate.

Alternate Materials, Designs, and Methods of Construction

Sec. 105. The provisions of this Policy are not intended to prevent the use of any material, design or method of construction not specifically prescribed by this Policy, provided any alternate has been approved and its use authorized by the Building Inspector.

The Building Inspector may approve any such alternate, provided he finds that the proposed design is satisfactory and complies with the provisions of this Policy and that the material and method of work offered is, for the purpose intended, at least the equivalent of that prescribed in this Policy in suitability, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability, safety and sanitation.

The Building Inspector shall require that sufficient evidence or proof be submitted to substantiate any claims that may be made regarding use of an alternate. The details of any action granting approval of an alternate shall be recorded and entered in the City of Pullman Public Works Protective Inspections Division address files.

Modifications

Sec. 106. Whenever there are practical difficulties involved in carrying out the provisions of this Policy, the Building Inspector may accept compliance alternatives or grant modifications for individual cases, provided that the Building Inspector shall first find that a special individual reason makes the strict letter of this Policy impractical and that the compliance alternative or modification is in conformity with the intent and purpose of

this Policy and that such compliance alternative or modification does not lessen health, life and the intent of any fire safety requirements or any degree of structural integrity or violate the code in effect at the time the building or structure was certified for occupancy. The details of any action granting modifications or the acceptance of a compliance alternative shall be recorded and entered in the files of the City of Pullman Public Works Department Protective Inspections Division address file.

Chapter 2

ADMINISTRATION

Administration

Sec. 201. The Building Inspector is hereby authorized to implement the provisions of this Policy. The Building Inspector shall have the power to render interpretations of this Policy and to adopt and enforce rules and supplemental regulations to clarify the application of its provisions. Such interpretations, rules and regulations shall be in conformance with the intent and purpose of this Policy.

Inspections

Sec. 202. When a written request is made to the Building Inspector for a compliance inspection of a rented or leased dwelling unit by a tenant, owner or the owner's agent the Building Inspector shall endeavor to schedule an inspection within 5 working days of receiving the request. Where a tenant makes a request, the owner shall be given notice. It is the duty of the person making the request to provide access to and means for the inspection. Inspection of at least 5% of the units of a multi-unit building or complex may be deemed as sufficient for certification of the entire building or complex if in the opinion of the Building Inspector the inspected units are representative of all units.

1. A copy of the report shall be served on the owner as per section 205. Owners of buildings failing to meet the criteria of this policy shall receive a report of the deficiencies. A report in accordance with this policy may be in addition to any other enforcement action authorized by law.
2. If a building meets the criteria of this policy a certificate of inspection shall be issued to the owner as per section 206. Issuance of a certificate of inspection shall not be a defense to any other enforcement action by a jurisdictional agency.

Service Of Notice And Orders

Sec. 205. Except where specifically provided otherwise in an individual code which is part of the City of Pullman Construction Code, notices required by this Policy shall be provided by either:

1. delivering a copy personally to the person entitled to the notice; or
2. leaving a copy of such notice in a conspicuous place on the premises and mailing a copy of such notice to the person entitled to notice, or addressed to their place of business or house address.

Appeal

Sec. 206. The denial of a certificate of inspection may be appealed to the Public Works Director.

Certificate of Inspection

Sec. 207. After the Building Inspector inspects a rental dwelling unit and finds no failure to meet the minimum standards of this Policy or other laws that are enforced by the City of Pullman, the Building Inspector shall issue a certificate of inspection that shall contain the following:

1. The dwelling unit number or letter.
2. The address of the building.
3. The name and address of the owner.

4. The number of bedrooms in the dwelling unit inspected.
5. The date of the inspection.
6. A statement the dwelling unit has been inspected for compliance with the requirements of this Policy.
7. A statement that the certificate does not constitute a continuing approval of the condition of the unit(s) covered.
8. A statement on the certificate that every unit has not been inspected if more than two units are covered and that some units may vary in condition and status.
9. A statement that the certificate does not cover accessory or appurtenant spaces and other facilities or equipment utilized by the property owner.

Issuance of a certificate of inspection shall not be construed as an approval of a violation of the provisions of this Policy, statutes of the state, or other ordinances of the City of Pullman or other uniform codes. Certificates presuming to give authority to violate or cancel the provisions of this Policy or other ordinances of the City of Pullman shall not be valid.

Chapter 3

DEFINITIONS

Definitions

Sec. 301. For the purpose of this Policy, certain terms, phrases, words and their derivatives shall be construed as specified in this chapter. Words used in the singular include the plural and the plural the singular. Words used in the masculine gender include the feminine and the feminine the masculine.

Where terms are not defined, they shall have their ordinary accepted meanings within the context in which they are used.

ADDITION is an extension or increase in floor area or height of a building or structure.

ALTER or ALTERATION is any change, addition or modification in construction or occupancy.

APARTMENT HOUSE is any building or portion thereof that contains three or more dwelling units.

BUILDING CODE is the currently adopted Uniform Building Code promulgated by the International Conference of Building Officials, as adopted by the City of Pullman as amended from time to time.

BUILDING INSPECTOR is the deputized Building Inspector designated by the City of Pullman Director of Public Works to carry out the provisions of this policy.

BUILDING SERVICE EQUIPMENT refers to the plumbing, mechanical, electrical and elevator equipment including piping, wiring, fixtures and other accessories which provide sanitation, lighting, heating, ventilation, cooling, refrigeration, fire-fighting and transportation facilities essential for the habitable occupancy of the building or structure for its designated use and occupancy.

COMPLIANCE ALTERNATIVE is conformance with the intent of this Policy, using means, materials or design features which can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Building Inspector to perform in a manner equivalent to those specifically required by this Policy.

DWELLING is any building or portion thereof that contains not more than two dwelling units.

DWELLING UNIT is any building or portion that contains living facilities including provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation for not more than one family or a congregate residence for 10 or less persons.

ELECTRICAL CODE is the National Electrical Code promulgated by the National Fire Protection Association, as adopted by the City of Pullman as amended from time to time.

EQUIVALENCY is meeting the intent of this Policy by means other than those detailed in specific code provisions.

EXISTING BUILDING is a building or structure erected prior to the adoption of the current City of Pullman Construction Code and has been issued a Certificate of Occupancy or has been legally occupied.

EXIT is a continuous and unobstructed means of egress to a public way and shall include intervening doors, doorways, gates, corridors, exterior balconies, ramps, stairways, fire resistive stair enclosures, courts, and yards.

HISTORIC BUILDING is a building or structure deemed of importance to the history, architecture or culture of the City of Pullman or the Palouse area by an appropriate local, state or federal governmental jurisdiction.

HOT WATER is at least 99° F

IMMINENT HAZARD is a condition which could cause serious or life threatening injury or death at any time.

OCCUPANCY is the purpose for which a building, or part thereof, is used or intended to be used.

RENTAL HOUSING is any sleeping room, dwelling unit or collection of dwelling units offered for rent or lease.

REHABILITATE is to return a building or structure to a state of utility through additions, alterations or repairs. As applied to historic structures, it includes the preservation of those portions or features that are of historical, architectural and cultural value.

REPAIR is the reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing building.

STATE BUILDING CODE is the Uniform Building Code, the Uniform Mechanical Code, the Uniform Fire Code and the Uniform Plumbing Code, and related Standards and Amendments pursuant to the State Building Code Act, Chapter 19.27 RCW as adopted from time to time.

U.C.B.C. GUIDELINES are the *Uniform Code for Building Conservation Guidelines*(U.C.B.C.) published by the International Conference of Building Officials. The Building Inspector may use the information contained in these guidelines to assist in the application of the provisions of this Policy. (These guidelines were developed as the *Rehabilitation Guidelines* published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.)

UNIFORM CODE FOR THE ABATEMENT OF DANGEROUS BUILDINGS is the currently adopted Uniform Code For The Abatement Of Dangerous Buildings published by the International Conference of Building Officials and as adopted by the City of Pullman as amended from time to time.

Chapter 4

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

General

Sec. 401.

1. **General.** Existing buildings or structures within the scope of this Policy shall meet the minimum standards set forth in this chapter, as well as any specific occupancy requirements set forth in this Policy. Buildings and structures undergoing a change of occupancy or a change in the character of its use shall meet the requirements of the Building Code. Buildings or structures shall meet the minimum level of performance specified in this chapter through compliance with the specific provisions of this Policy. The Building Inspector may accept compliance alternatives specified in the U.C.B.C. Guidelines or other documents deemed appropriate.
2. **Heights and Areas.** The heights and areas of existing buildings or structures shall be acceptable, provided the requirements of this chapter are satisfied. Requirements for buildings and structures undergoing a change of occupancy shall be as provided in the State Building Code.

Life Safety

Sec. 402.

1. **General.** The provisions of this section shall be deemed as meeting the intent of the building code for existing buildings, provided that none of the life safety features required by the code under which the building was constructed will be reduced below the level established by that code or equivalent provisions of the currently adopted Building Code. Exit system capacity and the arrangement of exits shall comply with the requirements of the Building Code. Exit systems complying with section 403 shall be deemed as meeting the intent of the Building Code for existing buildings, provided that an exit system evaluated under the provisions of this Policy is judged by the Building Inspector to be at least equivalent to the exit system which was required by the code under which the building was constructed or equivalent provisions of the currently adopted building code. Exit system capacity may be evaluated using the procedures included in the U.C.B.C. Guidelines.

Exits

Sec. 403. Every dwelling unit shall have access directly to the outside or to a public corridor or exit balcony. All elements of the exit system shall be of sufficient size, width and arrangement to provide safe and adequate means of egress. Every required exit shall have access to a public way, directly or through yards, courts or similar spaces, and such access shall be permanently maintained clear of any obstruction which would impede egress.

In an apartment house every floor above the first story and basements shall have at least two separate exits except that second stories and basements with an occupant load of less than 10 may have only one exit. The Building Inspector may approve alternate methods of exiting.

Escape/Rescue Windows or Doors

Sec. 404. Every sleeping room below the fourth story is required to have at least one openable window or door approved for escape or rescue. Escape/rescue windows or doors shall meet the requirements of the Building Code in force when the bedroom was created. When a sleeping room was constructed or converted

prior to the adoption of the 1970 Uniform Building Code or is not in conformance with the code in force at the time of construction, the escape/rescue windows or doors may be approved by the Building Inspector if, in the Building Inspector's opinion, said escape/rescue windows or doors meet the purpose of this Policy.

Corridors

Sec. 405. Corridors serving as a part of the exit system for an occupant load of 10 or more in an apartment house shall have walls and ceilings of not less than one-hour fire-resistive construction. Walls and ceilings in existing buildings surfaced with wood lath and plaster or 1/2-inch-thick gypsum wallboard may be permitted in lieu of one-hour fire-resistive construction, provided the surfaces are in good condition.

Door openings into such corridors shall be protected by a tight-fitting smoke and draft-control assembly having a fire-protection rating of not less than 20 minutes when such opening protection was required by the code under which the building was constructed. Door closing devices, door gaskets and other requirements imposed by the code under which the building was constructed shall be maintained. When the building was constructed under a code which did not require 20 minute smoke and draft-control assemblies, doorway openings shall be protected by doors having a fire-protection rating of not less than 20 minutes or by a minimum 1 3/8-inch-thick solid-bonded wood-core door or an equivalent insulated steel door equipped with door gaskets. In such case, the frames need not have a fire-resistive time period. Doors shall be maintained self-closing or shall be automatic closing by activation of a smoke detector.

Transoms and openings other than doors from corridors to rooms shall be protected as required by the Building Code. When the code under which the building was constructed permitted unprotected transoms or other unprotected openings, other than doors, such transoms or openings shall be covered with a minimum of 3/4-inch-thick plywood or 1/2-inch-thick gypsum wallboard or equivalent material on the room side. Openings with fixed wired glass set in steel frames are permitted in corridor walls and ceilings.

Existing corridor walls, ceilings and opening protection not in compliance with the above may be continued when the building is protected with an approved automatic sprinkler system throughout. Such sprinkler system may be supplied from the domestic water-supply system, provided the system is of adequate pressure, capacity and sizing for the combined domestic and sprinkler requirements.

Stairways

Sec. 407. Existing winding or spiral stairways may be accepted as one exit from a building, provided that a complying handrail is located at the stair's outside perimeter. A winding or spiral stairway may not be the principal exit when used in conjunction with a fire escape as a second exit. Exit width shall comply with the building code. Circular stairways complying with the building code shall be acceptable as an exit.

The largest tread run within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8 inch. The greatest riser height within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8 inch. Every stairway shall have at least one handrail.

Guardrails

Sec. 408. All unenclosed floor and roof openings, open and glazed sides of stairways, landings and ramps, balconies or porches which are more than 30 inches above grade or floor below, and roofs used for other than service of the building shall be protected by a guardrail.

Existing guardrails, other than guardrails located on the open side of a stairway, which are at least 36 inches in height, shall be permitted to remain. Guardrails lower than 36 inches in height shall be augmented or corrected to raise their effective height to at least 36 inches. Guardrails for stairways, exclusive of their land-

ings, may have a height, which is not less than 30 inches measured above the nosing of treads. When approved by the Building Inspector, the spacing between existing intermediate railings or openings in existing ornamental patterns may be accepted.

Structural Safety

Sec. 409. A building or structure or its individual structural members that exceed the limits established by the Uniform Code For The Abatement Of Dangerous Buildings, shall be replaced or strengthened in order that the building, structure or individual structural members will comply with the requirements of the Building Code for new construction.

Weather Protection

Sec. 410. Every building shall be weather protected so as to provide shelter for the occupants against the elements. The roof of every building or structure shall provide weather protection for the building. All devices which were provided or are required to prevent ponding or flooding or to convey the roof water shall be capable of fulfilling that purpose.

Glazing

Sec. 411. The installation or replacement of glass shall be as required for new construction by the Building Code.

Electrical

Sec. 412. All dwelling units shall be provided with electrical service in accordance with the electrical code. The electrical service, lines, switches, outlets, fixtures and fixture coverings and supports in every building or structure shall be in good repair and conform to all applicable laws in effect at the time of installation. Broken, loose, frayed, inoperative, defective or missing portions shall be repaired or replaced.

Plumbing

Sec. 413. Leaking drain or supply lines shall be repaired or replaced. All unsafe conditions shall be corrected. Any cross connections or siphonage between fixtures shall be corrected.

Mechanical

Sec. 414. Mechanical systems shall have any unsafe conditions corrected. Fuel burning appliances are prohibited in sleeping rooms except direct vent appliances installed pursuant to their listing.

Smoke Detectors

Sec. 415. Every dwelling unit and every guest room used for sleeping purposes shall be provided with smoke detectors in conformance with WAC 212.10.

Light and Ventilation

Sec. 416. All habitable rooms shall be provided with natural light by means of exterior glazed openings. Such openings shall be openable to permit the flow of natural ventilation, or spaces shall be equipped with mechanical ventilation. Where mechanical ventilation is used, it shall meet the requirements of the Building Code.

Heating

Sec. 417. Dwelling units and guest rooms shall be provided with heating facilities capable of maintaining a room temperature of 70° F at a point 3 feet above the floor in all habitable rooms.

Sanitation

Sec. 418. Every dwelling unit shall have a separate bathroom with an operating water closet, lavatory and bathtub or shower.

Every water closet, bathtub or shower shall be installed in a room that will afford privacy to the occupant. A room with a water closet located adjacent to a kitchen shall be separated from the kitchen by a tight fitting door.

All plumbing fixtures shall be connected to a sanitary sewer or to an approved private sewage disposal system. All plumbing fixtures shall be connected to an approved system of water supply and provided with hot and cold running water necessary for its normal operation. All plumbing fixtures shall be of an approved glazed earthenware type or of a similarly nonabsorbent material.

Kitchen

Sec. 419. Every dwelling unit shall have a kitchen with a sink, refrigerator, cooking appliance, and a minimum 22"X30" counter for food preparation. Each of the above must have a minimum 30-inch working space at the front.

Fire Resistive Construction

Sec. 420. All fire resistive assemblies are required to be in place and not be compromised.

Walls and Ceilings

Sec. 421. The common walls and ceilings separating dwelling units shall not have membrane penetrations other than required for plumbing pipes and electrical outlets, light fixtures and switches.

Premises Identification

Sec. 422. Minimum 3 ½ inch tall address numbers shall be provided on all apartment houses and dwellings in such a position as to be plainly visible and legible from the street fronting the property. A number or letter on or adjacent to the entry door shall identify each dwelling unit in an apartment house.



RENTAL HOUSING CHECKLIST



CHECKLIST

- ___ An address number is on or at each apartment house
- ___ An address number or letter is on the dwelling unit
- ___ Vents from fuel burning appliances have tight joints and do not leak.
- ___ Fire and/or smoke dampers are in place and in working order
- ___ Fuel-burning appliances have the required clearances to combustibles.
- ___ The heating system is operational.
- ___ Required fire assemblies are in place and not compromised.
- ___ All habitable rooms have exterior openings for ventilation or mechanical ventilation.
- ___ All toilets and other plumbing fixtures are operational and maintained in a sanitary condition.
- ___ Each dwelling unit has a separate bathroom containing a water closet, lavatory, and tub or shower.
- ___ Each dwelling unit has a kitchen with a sink, cooking appliance, refrigeration facilities and counter top.
- ___ The sink, lavatory and tub or shower have hot water.
- ___ Toilet rooms are separated from the kitchen by a tight fitting door.
- ___ There are no unsafe electrical conditions such as live wires, open junction boxes or sparking switches.
- ___ The required number of exits are provided as per the applicable building code.
- ___ Exit pathway surfaces are free of tripping hazards.
- ___ Exit widths are maintained.
- ___ Exit paths and exit doors are signed as per the applicable building code.
- ___ Handrails are in good repair.
- ___ Guard rails are in good repair.
- ___ All bedrooms have a window for occupant escape/rescue.
- ___ Each sleeping area has at least one smoke detector.
- ___ The smoke detectors are operational.
- ___ Fire suppression systems are maintained and inspected by the fire department.
- ___ Fire alarms are operational and inspected by the fire department.
- ___ Structural elements are plumb, do not show signs of overloading.
- ___ ~~All residential buildings are required to be~~ weather tight.

The is