

## **Village of East Alton Property Maintenance Inspection Occupancy Permit Program Guide**

The intent of the Village of East Alton Occupancy Inspection and Property Maintenance Program is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our citizens. We hope this guide will assist property owners, buyers, renters, realtors, property managers and other interested persons in understanding the inspection program. This guide will provide a brief explanation of what the inspector is checking and the reason.

**ADDRESS NUMBERS ON THE HOUSE:** Street address numbers shall be displayed on the house in a position easily observed and readable from the street. The numbers shall be Arabic figures at least 4 inches tall and each stroke shall be at least ½ inch wide.

**REASON:** Numbers that are easy to read are necessary to ensure rapid response in an emergency.

**OUTSIDE APPEARANCE:** The exterior of the dwelling unit and its surrounding area shall be maintained to provide a presentable appearance. Structural members shall be free of deterioration and capable of supporting loads imposed upon them. Weeds and grass shall be properly maintained and rubbish shall not be allowed to accumulate. No vehicle may remain on the premises in a major state of disrepair or disassembly.

**REASON:** A lack of maintenance to a structure and surrounding area poses a threat to public health, safety and welfare as well as undermining property values.

**ACCESSORY STRUCTURES:** Including detached garages, sheds, fences and walls shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.

**REASON:** These structures often have a lower maintenance priority than the primary structure. Proper maintenance of accessory structures eliminates the threat to public health, safety and welfare, as well as improving the neighborhood appearance.

**EXTERIOR OF STRUCTURE:** The exterior of a structure shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and sanitary so as not to pose a threat to the public health, safety or welfare. Exterior surfaces, including but not limited to, walls, doors, windows, door and window frames, cornices, porches, trim, balconies, decks and fences shall be maintained in good condition. Wood and metal surfaces shall be properly coated to provide weather resistance. Siding and masonry joints shall be maintained weather resistant and water tight.

**REASON:** Proper maintenance helps to prevent damage and decay of structural components and reduces the effects that tend to cause blighting in areas.

**FOUNDATION WALLS:** Foundation walls shall be maintained plumb and free from open cracks and breaks and be kept in such condition so as to prevent the entry of rodents and other pests. They shall be maintained in good condition and be capable of supporting the loads imposed on them by the structure.

**REASON:** Minor damage such as small cracks when left unrepaired will become major problems. Water entering through cracks can freeze and expand and increase damage caused to the foundation.

**ROOFS AND DRAINAGE:** The roof and flashing shall be sound, tight and not have defects that admit rain. Roof drainage shall be adequate to prevent dampness or deterioration in the walls or interior portion of the structure. Roof drains, gutters and downspouts shall be in good repair and free from obstructions. Roof water shall not be discharged in a manner that creates a public nuisance.

**REASON:** Even small leaks can cause thousands of dollars in damage to insulation, plaster, drywall and structural members of the building. Water runoff should be diverted away from the building to help prevent damage to foundations and other structural elements. Improper water runoff can cause water to collect and stand in low areas, on sidewalks, alleys or streets creating an ice hazard or flooding basements.

**STAIRWAYS, DECKS, PORCHES AND BALCONIES:** Every exterior stairway, deck, porch and balcony, and all appurtenances attached thereto, shall be maintained structurally sound, in good repair, with proper anchorage and capable of supporting the imposed loads.

**REASON:** Regular maintenance is required to keep stairs, decks, porches and balconies in good repair so they do not become a hazard to occupants, visitors or passers-by. Positive anchorage of elevated decks and exterior stairs that may be subject to collapse is especially important.

**HANDRAILS AND GUARDRAILS:** Every exterior and interior flight of stairs having more than 4 risers shall have a handrail on one side of the stair. Every open portion of a stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface which is more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below shall have guardrails. Handrails shall be no less than 30 inches high or more than 40 inches high measured vertically above the nosing of the tread or above the finished floor of the landing or walking surfaces. Guards shall not be less than 30 inches high above the floor of the landing, balcony, deck, ramp or other walking surface. Guards shall contain intermediate rails, balusters or other construction spaced so that a sphere of 4 inch diameter cannot pass through any portion of the guard. Horizontal rails or enclosures which form a ladder effect are not permitted.

**REASON:** Handrails and guardrails are meant to prevent falls. They must be securely fastened and in good condition to ensure they perform that function.

**CHIMNEY(S):** Shall be structurally safe and in good repair. Exposed surfaces of metal or wood shall be protected from weather and against decay and/or rust. Excessive rust, loose or missing mortar and cracked or missing bricks indicate problems.

**REASON:** They are frequently ignored until they become non-functional or are in danger of collapse. Exhaust gases are corrosive and cause chimneys to often deteriorate from the inside. Obstructed chimneys have caused many carbon monoxide deaths.

**DOORS:** All exterior doors, door assemblies and hardware shall be maintained in good condition. Deadbolt locks with a minimum 1 inch throw and operable with the turn of a knob or key are required in dwelling units, rooming units or housekeeping units that are rented, leased or let. A sliding bolt is not considered an acceptable deadbolt lock for this purpose. Locks at all entrances to dwelling units, rooming units and guestrooms shall tightly secure the door. All means of egress doors shall be readily openable from the side of egress without the use of keys, special knowledge or effort.

**REASON:** Door maintenance is crucial to the privacy, security and weather resistance they are intended to provide. Improperly locked doors, damaged or defective hardware, warped frames or doors can keep occupants from escaping a fire or other dangerous condition.

**WINDOWS/SCREENS (General):** Every window and skylight frame shall be kept in sound condition, good repair and weather tight. All glazing materials shall be maintained free from cracks and holes. Every window, other than a fixed window, shall be easily openable and capable of being held in position by window hardware. Operable windows in whole or in part within 6 feet above ground level shall be equipped with sash locking devices. Every door, window or other outside opening required for ventilation of habitable rooms, shall be supplied with tightly fitting screens of not less than 16 mesh per inch from April 1 through October 1.

**REASON:** Properly maintained windows prevent weather elements from entering the dwelling. Damaged glass presents a hazard to occupants. Security of the occupants requires locking windows. Windows which are propped open with sticks or other objects can fall causing injuries to fingers and hands if bumped. In the event of fire, occupants are at risk if windows cannot be secured quickly and easily in an open position. Screens prevent insect infestation. Insects in food preparation areas can cause contamination to food and cause human illness.

**SUMP PUMP DISCHARGE:** Water from sump pump shall be discharged to the exterior of the dwelling and not into the sanitary sewer system.

**REASON:** The sanitary sewer system is already over-burdened with storm water infiltration and all additional ground water must be kept out. Provisions must be made to direct sump water away from the foundation and building elements.

**OUTSIDE GFCI PROTECTION:** All electric receptacles on the exterior shall be Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protected.

**REASON:** GFCI receptacles provide a degree of safety for people using portable handheld tools, gardening appliances, electric lawn mowers and trimmers, etc. A GFCI device is designed to protect people from electrocution.

**GARAGE GFCI RECEPTACLES:** Receptacles in garages and other accessory structures are required to be GFCI protected.

**REASON:** Protect people from electrocution. See Outside GFCI Protection above.

**FIRE SEPARATION FROM ATTACHED GARAGE:** The living area and its attic shall be separated from the attached garage by at least ½ inch drywall applied to the garage wall. The drywall shall run from the floor to the roof sheathing line or the garage ceiling shall be covered with ½ inch drywall.

**REASON:** This separation will delay the spread of smoke and fire into the living area and provide additional time for occupants to escape from the dwelling unit. It also gives the fire department a chance to prevent fire from destroying the entire building.

**RATED DOOR BETWEEN LIVING AREA AND GARAGE:** The door or doors separating the living area of the dwelling unit and the attached garage shall be solid core wood at least 1-3/8 inch thick, a 20-minute fire-rated door or metal insulated exterior door and be self-closing.

**REASON:** These doors will delay the spread of fire and smoke into the living area and provide additional time for occupants to escape from the dwelling. It also gives the fire department a chance to prevent the fire from destroying the entire building.

**GAS APPLIANCE(S) IN GARAGE:** Heating and cooling appliances located in a garage shall be protected from being hit by vehicles. If the appliance generates a glow, spark or flame capable of igniting gasoline vapors, it shall be installed so the burners, burner ignition devices, or heating elements are at least 18 inches above the garage floor.

**REASON:** Prevent damage to appliances and their fuel source. Vapors from gasoline leaking from a vehicle or fuel container can be ignited by the appliance ignition source. Raising the ignition source at least 18 inches above the garage floor provides some degree of safety.

**ELECTRICAL FACILITIES – General:** Every dwelling unit shall be served by a three-wire, 120/240 volt, single-phase electrical service having a rating of not less than 60 amperes. The size and usage of appliances and equipment shall serve as a basis to determine the need for additional facilities. Any service replaced or requiring substantial repair shall be replaced with a minimum amperage service of 100 amps. There shall not be any unused openings in any fuse or circuit breaker panel and all circuits shall be labeled. Sufficient working space in front and to the sides of every panel shall be provided. Circuits may not be rated for more than 20 amps unless dedicated to an appliance requiring higher amperage.

**REASON:** Today, even with the modest appliance user, services of 60 amps can be easily overloaded. Overloading as well as over fusing to avoid frequent blown fuses or tripped breakers is the largest potential cause of fires. Three-wire 120/240 volt service is intended to allow for the use of higher voltage appliances such as air conditioners, clothes dryers and ranges. An unused opening in a panel exposes people to live electricity. Circuits must be labeled so occupants may de-energize specific circuits for repairs or in an emergency. Working space provides safe and ready access to the panel. Improperly rated circuits may not provide overload protection and may cause a fire.

**ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:** Electrical equipment such as wiring, switches, receptacles, light outlets shall be maintained in good repair. Damaged or missing cover plates shall be replaced, frayed wiring repaired or replaced, open splices properly repaired.

**REASON:** Damaged, improperly installed or otherwise unsafe electrical equipment must be immediately repaired and made safe to eliminate the chance of death or severe injury from live components or fire.

**RECEPTACLE REQUIREMENTS:** Every habitable space in a dwelling shall have at least two separate and remote receptacle outlets.

**REASON:** Minimizing the use of extension cords is the primary reason for the requirement for two remote outlets.

**USAGE OF EXTENSION CORDS:** Usage of extension cords shall be minimized. The amount of electrical current an extension cord can safely carry is limited by the size of its conductors. Because this is not generally known, extension cords are commonly overloaded. Extension cords are more susceptible to damage than permanent wiring methods.

**REASON:** Overloading extension cords causes them to heat up to the point where they can cause burns to people, as well as melt the insulating cover, short circuit and cause a fire. Damage to cords can also cause shorts and poor connections creating the possibility of a fire or a shock hazard. They can also become a tripping hazard to occupants.

**LAUNDRY AREA:** Every laundry room or area requires at least one grounded type receptacle. If an ungrounded system is in use, this laundry receptacle shall be grounded to the grounding terminal bar in the service panel or main switch.

**REASON:** Appliances used in laundry areas require a grounded conductor for safe operation. Grounding these appliances reduces the risk of electrical shock if a person comes into contact with a defective appliance.

**WATER HEATING FACILITIES:** Water heating facilities shall be properly installed, maintained and capable of providing an adequate amount of water to be drawn at every required sink, lavatory, bathtub, shower and laundry facility at a temperature of not less than 110°F (43°C). A gas burning water heater shall not be located in any bathroom, toilet room, bedroom or other occupied room normally kept closed, unless adequate combustion air is provided. An approved combination temperature and pressure (T&P) relief valve and relief valve discharge pipe shall be properly installed and maintained. The required discharge pipe shall be no smaller in diameter than the outlet of the T&P valve and shall discharge to within 6 inches of the floor. If galvanized pipe is used, there shall be no threads at the discharge end. Discharge pipes shall not extend below the floor into a crawl space.

**REASON:** If the water heater malfunctions, steam and scalding water may be released through the temperature and pressure relief valve. If a discharge pipe is not installed, persons in the vicinity of the water heater could be seriously injured. The discharge pipe carries any steam or hot water to within 6 inches of the floor to preclude this problem. Because it is important to know of a water heater problem, one must be able to observe steam and/or water coming from the discharge pipe.

**HEATING UNIT AND WATER HEATING VENTING:** All fuel burning equipment and appliances shall be connected to an approved chimney or vent. *Exception: fuel burning equipment and appliances which are labeled for unvented operation.*

**REASON:** Proper venting ensures that the exhaust gases are removed from the building, permitting proper operation of the appliance and protecting occupants from carbon monoxide (CO). CO is a colorless, odorless gas that is dangerous to health and can cause death or serious injury. Properly fastened connections keep flue gases in the vent pipe so they are exhausted from the building to the outside air. Improper draft causes rapid deterioration of the vent pipes because of the corrosive nature of exhaust gases. Vent pipes too close to combustibles may cause a fire.

**COMBUSTION AIR:** A supply of air for complete combustion of the fuel and for ventilation of the space containing the fuel burning equipment shall be provided for the fuel burning equipment.

**REASON:** In existing structures, adequate combustion air provisions are often lacking or have been blocked, covered or otherwise defeated. Incomplete burning of fuel can cause higher levels of CO, malfunctions of the appliances and a risk of fire or explosion.

**GAS SHUTOFF:** Each heating unit, water heater or other gas burning appliance shall be provided with a shutoff valve separate from the appliance. It shall also be located in the same room as the appliance and no further than 6 feet from the appliance. Shutoff valves shall also be installed upstream from the union, connector or quick disconnect device it serves. The shutoff valve shall be easily accessible.

**REASON:** The shutoff valve allows individual appliances to be shut down for repairs or replacement without affecting the operation of another appliance. It also allows for rapid shut down in the event of a fuel leak, equipment problem, fire or other emergency situation.

**GAS PIPING:** Fuel gas line inside the structure can not be copper tubing. Only iron pipe and approved CSST system piping are allowed.

**REASON:** Gas and impurities in the system corrode copper tubing and fittings on the inside where it is not visible. This corrosion flakes off and can damage your systems, and also may eventually lead to leaks in the piping causing a fire and/or explosion hazard.

**SANITARY DRAINAGE SYSTEM:** All plumbing fixtures shall be properly connected to either a public sewer system or to an approved private sewage disposal system. Every plumbing stack, vent, waste and sewer line shall function properly and be kept free from obstructions, leaks and defects.

**REASON:** It is essential to the health of the occupants and the public that drains and sewers be properly maintained. Leaks can also cause structural damage to a building as well as damage to floors, plaster and other building elements.

**KITCHEN GARBAGE DISPOSAL:** If a disposal is installed, it must be maintained in good repair and operating order.

**REASON:** An inoperative disposal can cause plumbing problems and contribute to unsanitary conditions in a food preparation area.

**DUCT SYSTEMS:** Duct systems shall be maintained free of obstructions and shall be capable of performing the required functions. Exhaust ducts for bathrooms, toilet rooms, kitchens and clothes dryers shall be maintained and shall exhaust moisture laden air to the outside of the building.

**REASON:** Moisture laden air can cause unseen damage to structural and other building elements if improperly discharged into an attic, crawl space or other interior space of the building.

**CLOTHES DRYER EXHAUST:** Dryer exhaust systems shall be independent of all other systems, shall convey the moisture to the outdoors and shall terminate on the outside of the building. Exhaust duct terminations shall be in accordance with the dryer manufacturer's installation instructions. Screens shall not be installed at the duct termination. Exhaust ducts shall not be connected with sheet-metal screws or fastening means which extend into the duct. Exhaust ducts shall be equipped with a backdraft damper. Exhaust ducts shall be

constructed of minimum 0.016-inch-thick rigid metal ducts, having smooth interior surfaces with joints running in the direction of airflow. Flexible transition ducts used to connect the dryer to the exhaust duct system shall be limited to single lengths, not to exceed 8 feet in length and shall be listed and labeled in accordance with UL 2158A. Transition ducts shall not be concealed within construction.

**Exception:** This section shall not apply to listed and labeled condensing (ductless) clothes dryers.

**REASON:** Proper dryer venting installation helps to prevent buildup of lint, allows the appliance to operate properly, and directs moisture-laden air out of the structure to prevent decay and deterioration to the structure and its elements.

**SMOKE DETECTORS:** A minimum of 1 smoke detector is required in each bedroom, 1 outside and within 15 feet of each sleeping area, and one on each level of the building including the basement. Smoke detectors should not be installed in crawl spaces or attics. The smoke detector shall have fresh batteries and sound when tested manually or with artificial smoke. (*New construction or substantial remodeling/renovating requires 110 volt hardwired and interconnected smoke detectors with backup batteries.*)

**REASON:** The smoke detector is an effective life saving device. It is widely accepted that the majority sleep with the bedroom door closed, thus creating the need for detectors inside the bedrooms for the early detection of fires starting within the bedroom. Detectors in the immediate vicinity of sleeping areas and on each level provide the early warning necessary for persons to escape a fire starting in other locations.

**CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS:** CO detectors are required within 15 feet outside of sleeping areas on each level that has a bedroom in every residence having any type of fuel-fired heating equipment, i.e., furnace, fireplace, range. A CO detector is also required in any residence that has an attached garage or other hazard the code official may warrant a CO detector to be required.

**REASON:** Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless deadly gas produced by both properly and improperly operating devices. Early warning is the key to preventing serious illness or even death from carbon monoxide. This became an Illinois State Law in 2007.

**INGRESS AND EGRESS:** A safe, continuous and unobstructed path of travel shall be available from within the dwelling unit to exit doors.

**REASON:** Furniture or other items must be kept out of common hallways and exit paths. Improperly locked doors can keep occupants from escaping a fire or other dangerous condition.

**INTERIOR SURFACES:** All interior surfaces, including windows and doors, shall be clean, sanitary and in good condition. Flaking or peeling paint, cracked plaster, rotted wood, holes or other defective surfaces shall be repaired.

**REASON:** The interior of a dwelling must be properly maintained so as not to affect the occupant's health and safety.

**INTERIOR STRUCTURE:** The interior of a structure and equipment therein shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and in a sanitary condition. All structural members shall be maintained structurally sound, and be capable of supporting the imposed loads.

**REASON:** The interior of a dwelling must be properly maintained so as not to affect the occupant's health and safety. It must protect the occupants from the exterior environment. Improper original construction, unapproved additions and repairs, water damage, deferred maintenance and overloading of structural members will result in structural damage and failure.

**INTERIOR DOORS:** Every interior door shall fit reasonably well within its frame and shall be capable of being opened and closed by being properly and securely attached to jambs, headers or tracks as intended by the manufacturer of the attachment hardware.

**REASON:** The ability of a door to function as the manufacturer intended is one of the key elements in being able to properly exit a building. In addition to contributing to building egress, doors are also key elements in providing for security and privacy; therefore, all interior doors should be kept in a state of repair that will allow them to function effectively.

**GARBAGE AND RUBBISH:** All exterior property and premises, and the interior of every structure shall be free from any accumulation of rubbish or garbage. The owner of every dwelling shall supply an approved leakproof, covered outside garbage container.

**REASON:** Unsanitary houses and premises contribute to the spread of disease, infestations of insects and rodents and adversely affect the health of occupants and the public. Rubbish and garbage improperly stored in hallways and stairs creates a tripping hazard and could impede egress in an emergency such as a fire.

**INFESTATION & EXTERMINATION:** All structures shall be kept free from insect and rodent infestation. All structures in which insects or rodents are found shall be promptly exterminated by approved processes that will not be injurious to human health. The owner of any structure shall be responsible for extermination within the structure prior to renting or leasing the structure. The occupant of a one-family or of a single-tenant nonresidential structure shall be responsible for extermination on the premises.

**REASON:** Nuisance insects such as flies, flees, bees, cockroaches and silverfish as well as wood destroying insects such as termites, carpenter ants, and powder-post beetles shall be exterminated promptly to avoid unsanitary conditions and structural damage to the premises.

**KITCHEN RUNNING WATER (LEAK?):** Faucets, sprayer and under sink plumbing will be checked for leaks or improper installation.

**REASON:** Plumbing fixtures which do not operate adequately can cause water damage and increase the possibility of disease to the occupants.

**BATHROOM RUNNING WATER (LEAKS?):** Bathroom basin faucets, under counter top plumbing and toilets will be checked for leaks or improper installation.

**REASON:** Leaks or improper installation can cause water damage and increase the possibility of disease to the occupants.

**KITCHEN GFCI RECEPTACLES:** Any electrical outlet serving a kitchen countertop or within 6 feet of a sink shall be GFCI protected.

**REASON:** Many countertop appliances are ungrounded, and the use of water and other liquids with them on grounded surfaces creates a hazard of shock or electrocution to persons.

**BATHROOM GFCI RECEPTACLES:** Every bathroom shall have at least one electrical outlet and it shall be GFCI protected.

**REASON:** This outlet serves the many grooming and personal hygiene appliances used in the bathroom. This receptacle must be GFCI protected to provide protection to the occupants from shock or electrocution. It also prevents the need to use extension cords from unprotected outlets elsewhere in the dwelling.

## **LIGHT & VENTILATION**

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:** The owner of the structure shall provide and maintain light, ventilation and space conditions in compliance with these requirements. Every habitable space shall have at least one window of approved size facing directly to the outdoors or a court. The minimum total glazed area for every habitable space shall be 8 percent of the floor area of such room. Every common hall and common stairway in residential occupancies (*other than 1 & 2 family*) shall be lighted at all times with at least a 60-watt standard incandescent light bulb for each 200 square feet of floor area or equivalent illumination, provided that the spacing between lights shall not be greater than 30 feet. Every habitable space shall have at least one openable window. The total openable area of the window in every room shall be equal to at least 45 percent of the minimum glazed area required.

**REASON:** Minimum light and ventilation requirements address the need for safety and health. Minimum lighting provisions reduce the chances of injury due to falls and helps deter crime. Lighting and ventilation of habitable spaces provides the necessary fresh air, cooling breezes to promote good physical and mental health.

**BATHROOM VENTILATION:** An openable window or mechanical ventilation system shall be installed in each bathroom or toilet room. If a mechanical vent is used, it shall exhaust moisture-laden air to the exterior of the building. Such vents shall not terminate in the attic, crawl space or soffit areas.

**REASON:** Failure to remove moisture-laden air from the building will result in deterioration to the structure as well as possibly cause severe mold damage.

# OCCUPANCY LIMITATIONS

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:** Dwelling, hotel, housekeeping, rooming and dormitory units shall be arranged to provide privacy and be separate from other adjoining spaces. A habitable room, other than a kitchen, shall not be less than 7 feet in any plan dimension. Kitchens shall have a clear passageway of not less than 3 feet between counter fronts and appliances or counter fronts and walls. Habitable spaces, hallways, corridors, laundry areas, bathrooms, toilet rooms and habitable basement areas shall have a clear ceiling height of not less than 7 feet. All spaces to be occupied for food preparation purposes shall contain suitable space and equipment to store, prepare and serve foods in a sanitary manner. There shall be adequate facilities and services for the sanitary disposal of food wastes and refuse, including facilities for temporary storage.

**REASON:** Privacy is a fundamental psychological need. Every person needs a space to relax, sleep and dress that is separate from public or common rooms. Walls, corridors and doors should be arranged to offer the occupants their private space. The code establishes a minimum dimension space to prevent the use of inadequately sized rooms. Narrow rooms do not allow for the installation of furniture without unduly obstructing passageways through the rooms. Kitchens require only 3 feet of clearance because they are not expected to be occupied for long periods of time, or by a large number of persons at any one time. Kitchens must be provided with stoves, ovens, refrigerators, freezers, cabinets, countertops and drawers in sufficient quantity and in a condition that the occupants can store their food safely and at appropriate temperatures to protect the food. All should be constructed and maintained so that it can easily be cleaned. Containers for refuse and garbage should be constructed and maintained to prevent insect and rat infestations.

**BEDROOMS:** This section will be explained in several parts, beginning with room size (for occupancy load), window size (for egress requirements), window requirements, electrical requirements and ending with basement sleeping room and miscellaneous requirements.

**ROOM SIZE:** Each bedroom will be measured to determine size so the occupant load for that room and the dwelling can be determined. A bedroom shall be at least seventy (70) square feet to occupied by one person. Fifty (50) square feet per person is required for a bedroom occupied by more than one person.

**REASON:** Permits comfort and safety for occupants. Prevents overcrowding which can contribute to disease spread, loss of privacy and excessive wear and abuse to the dwelling.

*Example 1: Room is 8' x 9' = 72 sq. ft. = 1 occupant*

*Example 2: Room is 12' x 10' = 120 sq. ft. = 2 occupants*

*Example 3: Room is 8' x 12' = 96 sq. ft. = 1 occupant*

*Example 4: Room is 12' x 15' = 180 sq. ft. = 3 occupants*

**WINDOW SIZE:** Windows are measured to ensure the normal opening area of the window is large enough for a person to crawl through in an emergency. This normal opening area is the open space available when one sash is moved completely away from the other. An example would be raising the bottom sash as high as the window will allow. The open area is what is then measured. This open area shall be at least 5.7 square feet for basement and second floor windows, and at least 5 square feet for ground floor windows. Many existing dwelling units do not meet these requirements but we do not make you replace the windows.

**REASON:** Fatal fires often occur while persons are sleeping. A person may be delayed in noticing a fire, those awakening may be slow to react, the room may be filled with smoke and/or dark, and many other factors may compromise the means of egress from the dwelling. The window in the bedroom may be the only available means of escape and therefore, it must be large enough to permit rapid escape.

**WINDOW REQUIREMENTS:** The window shall be easily opened and capable of being held in position by window hardware.

**REASON:** Windows with inoperative or missing hold-open hardware are sometimes propped open with sticks or other items. These items can be bumped and cause the window to fall causing bodily injury or entrapment in the window opening. Additionally, a window not easily secured in an open position can prevent the rapid escape in the event of a fire.

**ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS:** There shall be 2 separate and remote receptacles in each bedroom.

**REASON:** To minimize or eliminate the use of extension cords. Misuse of extension cords is a fire hazard. See Usage of Extension Cords on Page 5 of this guide.

**WATER CLOSET ACCESSIBILITY:** Every bedroom shall have access to at least one water closet and one lavatory without passing through another bedroom and located in the same story or an adjacent story.

**REASON:** Persons should not have to pass through a room used as a bedroom to access a water closet and lavatory. Occupants should be able to use bathroom facilities without compromising their modesty or the privacy of the occupants in a bedroom. The same level or adjacent level requirement is a widely accepted minimum standard for the convenience of occupants.

**ACCESS FROM BEDROOMS:** Bedrooms shall not constitute the only means of access to other bedrooms or habitable spaces and shall not serve as the only means of egress from other habitable spaces.

**Exception: Units containing only one bedroom.**

**REASON:** Every occupant must be provided with privacy in his or her sleeping room. The need for privacy may lead to barricaded or locked doors in certain situations. Therefore, it is possible that the only means of egress could be blocked in case of fire or other emergency. Even without an emergency, free movement of the occupants is severely impaired.

**PROHIBITED OCCUPANCY:** Kitchens and nonhabitable spaces shall not be used for sleeping purposes.

**REASON:** The code prohibits using kitchens, interior public areas and nonhabitable spaces from being used as sleeping areas because such spaces do not provide for privacy or safety. There may not be adequate light, ventilation, fire exits or sufficient habitable space. This also prevents overcrowding of a structure.

**DETERMINATION OF NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS ALLOWED:** The total number of occupants allowed in a dwelling unit is the number of occupants permitted for each bedroom in the dwelling. *(There are different regulations for rooming units, boarding houses, hotels and dormitories which will not be addressed in this guide. If you have this type of property, please check directly with the Code Enforcement Officer or Inspector for proper information.)*

**Example:**    *Bedrm #1 - 7' x 10' = 70 ft<sup>2</sup> = 1 occupant*  
                  *Bedrm #2 – 13' x 9' = 117 ft<sup>2</sup> = 2 occupants*  
                  *Bedrm #3 – 8' x 12' = 96 ft<sup>2</sup> = 1 occupant*  
***Total number of occupants allowed in this dwelling = 4***

**BASEMENT SLEEPING ROOM REQUIREMENTS:** If a basement room is to be used for sleeping purposes, it shall have an openable window with a clear open area of 5.7 square feet and a sill height of not more than 44 inches above the floor; or it shall have a door in the room opening directly to the outside of the structure. If the window is below grade and does not meet the 5.7 square foot clear open area, the room will not be considered a legal sleeping room. The occupancy permit will be stamped: “NO BASEMENT SLEEPING ROOMS PERMITTED”.

**REASON:** Without an easily accessible alternate means of egress the danger of being killed or severely injured due to fire or other emergency is too much to risk.

**MISCELLANEOUS:** Additional GFCI requirements – Crawl space at or below grade level; unfinished portions of basements; any outlet within 6 feet of the outside edge of a wet bar sink. Additionally, outlets shall not be installed face-up in the work surfaces or countertop surrounding the wet bar. Hydro massage bathtubs are required to be GFCI protected as well as any outlets within 5 feet of the inside wall of the tub.

**REASON:** Provides for protection from electrocution of the occupants.

**POOLS:** Swimming pools, spas and hot tubs located outdoors have specific requirements for barriers, alarms and electric facilities. If your dwelling unit has an outdoor pool, spa or hot tub, please ask for a detailed explanation concerning these requirements.

**REASON:** Barrier and alarm requirements are established to provide protections against potential drowning or near-drowning by restricting access to pools, spas and hot tubs. The electrical requirements are established to provide protection from electrocution.

We hope this guide has provided help in preparing for your property maintenance and occupancy inspection. Please feel free to ask the inspector any question you may still have concerning any inspection item. Our goal is to help you ensure that your property is safe and ready for occupancy or sale.