# CITY OF CRESTON, IOWA
# RENTAL HOUSING REGULATORY
# AND
# INSPECTION PROGRAM

**THIS INFORMATION SHEET CORRESPONDS TO CHAPTER 147.15 CRESTON CODE OF ORDINANCES.**

**PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS ENUMERATED**

These minimum conditions and responsibilities of persons for maintenance of structures, equipment and exterior property shall govern.

1. Responsibility. Owners shall be responsible to maintain structures and exterior property in compliance with these requirements while the occupants are to be responsible for keeping in a clean, sanitary and safe condition which they occupy and control.

2. Vacant Structures and Land. Shall be maintained in a clean, safe, secure and sanitary condition as provided herein so as not to cause blighting problems adversely affecting the public health or safety.

**Exterior Property Areas**

1. Grading and Drainage. Area to be maintained to prevent erosion and accumulation of stagnant water.

2. Rodent Harborage. Proper precautions to be taken to eliminate rodent harborage and prevent infestation.

3. Exhaust Vents. Vents shall not be discharged directly upon abutting, adjacent public or private property.

4. Accessory Structures. To be maintained, structurally sound and in good repair.

**Exterior Structures**

1. General. The exterior 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.

2. Premises Identification. To have placed address numbers on the buildings that are plainly legible from the street. These numbers shall be contrasting with background and a minimum of four (4) inches in height.

3. Structural Members. Shall be maintained free from deterioration and capable of safely supporting the imposed loads.

4. Exterior Walls. Shall be free from holes, breaks and loose or rotting materials; and maintained, weatherproofed and proper surface-coated to prevent deterioration.

5. Roofs and Drainage. Shall not have defects that admit rain with drainage to prevent dampness, deterioration with drains, gutters and downspouts maintained and not discharged in a manner to create a nuisance.

6. Decorative Features. Shall be maintained in good repair with proper anchorage and in a safe condition.

7. Overhang Extensions. Shall be maintained in good repair with proper anchorage and in a safe condition with periodic application of weather coating materials.

8. Stairways, Decks, Porches and Balconies. Shall be maintained structurally sound, in good repair, with proper anchorage and capable of supporting imposed loads.

9. Chimneys and Towers. Shall be maintained structurally safe and sound and in good repair with exposed surfaces protected from the elements and against decay or rust.

10. Handrails and Guards. Shall be firmly fastened and capable of supporting normally imposed loads and maintained.

11. Windows, Skylights and Door Frames. Shall be kept in sound condition, good repair and weather-tight with glazing free from cracks and holes, easily openable, and capable of being held in position by window hardware.

12. Insect Screens. From April 1st to October 31st, outside openings required for ventilation shall be supplied with tightly fitting screens. Every storm door shall have a self-closing device in good working condition.

13. Doors. Shall be maintained in good condition with locks at unit's entrances being tightly secured. Doors that are equipped with a deadbolt shall be operated from the inside only by the turning of a knob and shall have a lock-throw of not less than one (1) inch. A sliding bolt shall not be acceptable, and the lock shall be operable without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge or effort.

14. Basement Hatchways. Shall be maintained to prevent the entrance of rodents, rain and surface drainage water.

15. Guards for Easement Windows. Every basement window that is openable shall be supplied with protection against the entry of rodents.

16. Building Security. Doors, windows or hatchways for units shall be provided with devices designed to provide security for the occupants and property within.

17. Windows. A unit's operable windows located in whole or part within six (6) feet of ground level shall be equipped with sash-locking devices.

18. Basement Hatchways. If the hatchway provides access to a unit, it shall be equipped with devices that secure the unit(s) from unauthorized entry.

**Interior Structure**

1. General. Shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and in a clean, sanitary condition. Occupants shall keep that part of the structure which they occupy in a clean and sanitary condition. The owner of multi-family unit(s) shall maintain the shared or public areas of the structure(s) and exterior in a clean and sanitary condition.

2. Structural Members. Shall be maintained structurally sound and capable of supporting the imposed loads.

3. Stairs and Walking Surfaces. Shall be maintained in sound condition and good repair

4. Handrails and Guards. Shall be firmly fastened and capable of supporting normally imposed loads and maintained.

**Handrails and Guardrails**

1. General. Every exterior and interior flight of stairs having more than four (4) risers shall have a handrail on one side of the stair and every open portion of a stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface which is more than thirty (30) inches above the floor or grade below shall have guards. Handrails shall not be less than thirty (30) inches high or more than forty-two (42) inches high measured vertically above the nosing of the tread or above the finished floor of the landing or walking surface. Guards shall not be less than thirty (30) inches high above the floor of the landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface.

**Rubbish and Garbage**

1. Accumulation. There shall be no accumulation of rubbish or garbage.

2. Disposal of Rubbish. Every occupant shall use approved covered containers so as to dispose in a clean and sanitary manner.

3. Disposal of Garbage. Every occupant shall dispose of garbage in a clean and sanitary manner in covered, leak-proof containers.

**Extermination**

1. Infestation. Structures shall be kept free from insect and rodent infestation and exterminated if found.

2. Owner. Shall be responsible for extermination prior to renting or leasing.

3. Single Occupant. Shall be responsible for extermination on the premises of a one-family dwelling.

4. Multiple Occupancy. The owner shall be responsible for extermination in public or shared areas. The occupant shall be responsible for extermination if caused by failure to prevent infestation.

5. Occupant. Shall be responsible for continued rodent and pest-free conditions.

**Light, Ventilation and Occupancy Limitations**

1. General. These provisions shall govern the minimum conditions and standards for light, ventilation and space for occupying a structure.

2. Responsibility. Owner shall provide and maintain light, ventilation and space conditions in compliance with these requirements and no person shall occupy any premises that do not comply with this code.

3. Alternative Devices. In lieu of the means for natural light and ventilation prescribed, artificial light or mechanical ventilation is permitted.

**Light**

1. Habitable Spaces. Every exterior-facing wall in a habitable space shall have at least one (1) window of approved size facing directly to the outdoors or to a court with a minimum glazed area of five percent (5%) of the floor area.
2. Common Halls and Stairways. Multi-family occupancies shall be lighted at all times with at least a sixty (60) watt incandescent bulb or equivalent energy saving bulb, for each two hundred (200) square feet of floor area with a spacing not greater than thirty (30) feet.
3. Other Spaces. Shall be provided with natural or artificial light sufficient to the maintenance of sanitary conditions and the safe occupancy of the space and utilization of the appliances, equipment and fixtures.

**Ventilation**

1. Habitable Spaces. Shall have at least one (1) openable window in every exterior-facing wall of a habitable room equal to fifty percent (50%) of the minimum required glazed area.
2. Bathrooms and Toilet Rooms. Shall comply with ventilation requirements for a habitable space, except that a window shall not be required in such spaces equipped with a mechanical ventilation system discharged to the outdoors or to a properly vented attic.
3. Clothes Dryer Exhaust. Shall be independent of all other systems by exhausting in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
4. Privacy. Units shall be arranged to provide privacy and be separate from other adjoining spaces.
5. Minimum Room Widths. A habitable room, other than a kitchen and bathroom, shall not be less than seven (7) feet in any plan dimension.
6. Minimum Ceiling Heights. Habitable spaces, hallways, corridors, laundry areas, bathrooms, toilet rooms and habitable basement areas shall have a clear ceiling height of not less than seven (7) feet.

**Bedroom Regulations**

1. Area for Sleeping Purposes. Every bedroom occupied by one (1) person shall contain at least seventy (70) square feet of floor area and every person more shall be an additional thirty (30) square feet per occupant.
2. Water Closet Accessibility. Every bedroom shall have access to at least one (1) water closet and one (1) lavatory. Every bedroom in a dwelling unit shall have access to at least one (1) water closet and lavatory located in the same story as the bedroom or an adjacent story.
3. Prohibited Occupancy. Kitchens and non-habitable space shall not be used for sleeping purposes.
4. Overcrowding. Dwelling units shall not be occupied by more occupants than permitted by the minimum area requirements.

**Minimum Square Feet**

1. Efficiency Units. A unit occupied by only one (1) occupant shall have a clear floor area of not less than one hundred fifty (150) square feet and a unit occupied by two (2) occupants shall have a clear floor area of not less than two hundred twenty (220) square feet and three (3) occupants shall have a clear floor space of not less than three hundred twenty (320) square feet. The unit shall be provided with a working space of thirty (30) inches in front of the kitchen sink, cooking appliance and refrigerator. The unit shall have a separate bathroom containing a toilet, lavatory and a tub or shower. The maximum number of occupants shall be three (3).

| Space | 1-2 Occupants | 3-5 Occupants | 6 or more Occupants |
|---|---|---|---|
| Living Room | No Requirements | 120 sq ft | 150 sq ft |
| Dining Room | No Requirements | 80 sq ft | 100 sq ft |
| Kitchen | 50 sq ft | 50 sq ft | 60 sq ft |
| Bedrooms | Shall comply with Section | | |

**Plumbing Facilities and Fixture Requirements**

1. General. This section shall govern the minimum plumbing systems, facilities and plumbing fixtures to be provided.
2. Responsibility. The owner shall provide and maintain such plumbing facilities and plumbing fixtures in compliance with these requirements.

**Required Facilities**

1. Dwelling Units. Shall contain its own tub or shower, lavatory, toilet and kitchen sink, which shall be maintained in a sanitary and safe working condition. The lavatory shall be placed in the same room as the toilet or in close proximity. A kitchen sink shall not be used as a substitute for the required lavatory.
2. Rooming Houses. At least one (1) toilet, lavatory and tub or shower shall be supplied for each four (4) rooming units.
3. Hotels. Where private toilets, lavatories and baths are not provided, then one (1) toilet, lavatory and tub or shower having access from a public hallway shall be provided for each ten (10) occupants.

**Toilet Rooms**

1. Privacy. Bathrooms shall provide privacy and shall not constitute the only passage to a hall or other space or exterior. A door and interior locking device shall be provided for all common or shared bathrooms in a multiple dwelling.
2. Location. Bathrooms serving hotel units, rooming units or dorm units shall have access by transversing not more than one (1) flight of stairs and shall have access from a common hall or passageway.

**Plumbing Systems and Fixtures**

1. General. All plumbing fixtures shall be properly installed and maintained in working order, kept free from obstructions, leaks, defects and capable of performing its function.
2. Fixture Clearances. Plumbing fixtures shall have adequate clearance for usage and cleaning.
3. Plumbing System Hazards. If a hazard is found, the Code Official shall require the defects to be corrected to eliminate the hazard promptly.

**Water System**

1. General. Every fixture shall be properly connected to an approved water system and shall be supplied with hot or tempered and cold running water as per the Plumbing Code.
2. Contamination. The water supply shall be maintained free from contamination and all water inlets for plumbing fixtures shall be located above the flood-level rim of the fixture.
3. Supply. Shall be installed and maintained to provide a supply of water to fixtures in sufficient volume and pressures adequate to enable the fixtures to function properly, safely and free from defects and leaks.
4. Water Heating Facilities. Shall be properly installed, maintained and capable of providing an adequate amount of water to be drawn at every required fixture at a temperature of not less than one hundred ten degrees (110°) Fahrenheit. A gas-burning water heater shall not be located in any bathroom, bedroom or other occupied room normally kept closed unless adequate combustion air is provided. An approved combination temperature and pressure-relief valve discharge pipe shall be properly installed and maintained on water heaters.

**Sanitary Drainage System**

1. General. All plumbing fixtures shall be properly connected to either a public sewer system or to an approved private sewage disposal system.
2. Maintenance. Every plumbing stack, vent, waste and sewer line shall function properly and be kept free from obstructions, leaks and defects.

**Storm Drainage**

1. General. Drainage of roofs and paved areas, yards and courts and other open areas on the premises shall not be discharged in a manner that creates a public nuisance.

**Mechanical and Electrical Requirements**

1. General. The provisions of this chapter shall govern the minimum mechanical and electrical facilities and equipment to be provided.
2. Responsibility. The owner of the structure shall provide and maintain mechanical and electrical facilities and equipment in compliance with these requirements.

**Heating Facilities**

1. Facilities Required. Heating facilities shall be provided in structures as required by this section.
2. Residential Occupancies. Dwellings shall be provided with heating facilities capable of maintaining a room temperature of sixty-five degrees (65°) Fahrenheit in all habitable rooms and bathrooms. Cooking appliances or portable heating units shall not be used to provide space heating to meet the requirement.
3. Heat Supply. Every owner is to furnish and maintain heat to occupants at a temperature of not less than sixty-five degrees (65°) Fahrenheit in all habitable rooms and bathrooms.
4. Room Temperature Measurement. Shall be measured three (3) feet above the floor near the center of the room and two (2) feet inward from the center of each exterior wall.

**Mechanical Equipment**

1. Mechanical Appliances. Shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe working condition.
2. Removal of Combustion Products. All fuel-burning equipment and appliances shall be connected to an approved chimney or vent (exception for labeled and unvented).

3. Clearances. All required clearances to combustible materials shall be maintained.
4. Safety Controls. Shall be maintained in effective operation.
5. Combustion. A supply of air for complete combustion of the fuel and for ventilation of the space containing the fuel-burning equipment shall be provided.
6. Energy Conservation Devices. Shall not be installed unless labeled for such purpose and the installation is specifically approved.

**Electrical Facilities**

1. Facilities Required. Every occupied building shall be provided with an electrical system in compliance with the requirements of this section.
2. Service. The size and usage of appliances and equipment shall serve as a basis for determining the need for additional facilities in accordance with the Electrical Code. Dwellings shall be served by a three-wire (3), 120/240 volt, single-phased electrical service having a rating of not less than sixty (60) amps.
3. Electrical System Hazards. Where a hazard is found to the occupants or the structure by reason of inadequate service, improper fusing, insufficient receptacle and lighting outlets, improper wiring or installation, deterioration or damage, or for similar reasons, the Code Official shall require the defects to be corrected immediately to eliminate the hazard.

**Electrical Equipment**

1. Installation. All electrical equipment, wiring and appliances shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe and approved manner.
2. Receptacles. Every habitable space in a dwelling unit shall contain at least one (1) separate and remote receptacle outlet. Every laundry area shall contain at least one (1) grounded-type receptacle or a receptacle with a ground-fault circuit interrupter. Every bathroom shall contain at least one (1) receptacle. Any new bathroom outlet shall have ground-fault circuit interrupter protection.

**Elevators, Escalators and Dumbwaiters**

1. General. Shall be maintained to sustain all imposed loads, to operate properly and to be free from physical and fire hazards with current certificate of inspection displayed and available for public inspection.
2. Elevators. In buildings equipped with more than one (1) passenger elevator, at least one (1) elevator shall be maintained in operation at all times when the building is occupied.

**Duct Systems**

1. General. Shall be maintained free of obstructions and shall be capable of performing the required function.

**Fire Safety Requirements**

1. General. The provisions of this chapter shall govern the MINIMUM conditions and standards for fire safety relating to structures and exterior premises, including fire safety facilities and equipment to be provided. The State Fire Marshal may impose additional provisions.
2. Responsibility. The owner shall provide and maintain such fire safety facilities and equipment in compliance with these requirements.

**Means of Egress**

1. General. A safe, continuous and unobstructed path of travel shall be provided from any point in a building or structure to the public way.
2. Aisles and Corridors. The required width of aisles and corridors shall be thirty-six (36) inches within dwelling units and multi-family dwellings. Aisles and corridors shall be unobstructed.
3. Locked Doors. All means of egress doors shall be readily openable from the side from which egress is to be made without need for keys, special knowledge or effort.

4. Emergency Escape Openings. Required emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys or tools. Bars, grills, grates or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings provided the minimum net clear opening size complies with the Building Code and such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool or force greater than which is required for normal operation of the escape and rescue opening.

**Fire-Resistance Ratings**

1. Fire-Resistance-Rated Assemblies. The fire resistance rating of the walls, fire stops, shaft enclosures, partitions and floors shall be maintained.
2. Opening Protection. Required opening protectives shall be maintained in an operative condition. All fire and smoke-stop doors shall be maintained in operable condition. Fire doors and smoke barrier doors shall not be blocked or obstructed or otherwise made inoperable.

**Fire Protection Systems**

1. General. Existing residential rental units not already provided with single-station smoke alarms shall be provided with approved single-station dual-sensor smoke alarms.
2. Smoke Alarms. Approved single- or multi-station smoke alarms shall be installed and maintained in existing single- and multi-family dwelling units, duplexes, congregate residences and hotel/lodging house guest rooms regardless of occupant load in each sleeping room and immediately outside of sleeping areas and on each story including the basement.
3. Responsibility. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that smoke alarms are installed and working in each sleeping room, immediately outside of sleeping areas and on each story including the basement. The owner is responsible for replacing smoke alarms that become outdated (smoke alarm types below) or fail. It is also the owner's responsibility to visibly mark on the outside of each smoke alarm the date installed (or best estimate if the install date is not known).

   Tenants must sign that smoke alarms are functioning upon renting the unit. It is then the occupant's responsibility to ensure that batteries are replaced when necessary.

   There are three (3) types of smoke alarms with batteries:

1. Smoke Alarms that are powered by long-lasting batteries and are designed to replace the entire unit according to the manufacturer's instructions, usually 8-10 years.
2. Standard type battery-powered smoke alarms – these batteries need to be replaced at least once per year and the whole unit should be replaced every 8-10 years.
3. Hard-wired battery back-up smoke alarms – the batteries need to be checked monthly and replaced at least once per year. The entire unit should be replaced every 8-10 years.

   Failure to adhere to these responsibilities is a violation of City Code.

4. Fire Extinguishers. Multi-family dwellings shall have a 2A10BC-rated fire extinguisher located within seventy-five (75) feet of each dwelling unit's main entrance. Extinguishers shall be checked and tagged by a qualified service person annually.