Check Your Home

A Guide for Renters & Homeowners

CITY OF MANHATTAN
KANSAS

This pamphlet is intended as an informal guide to the Property Maintenance Codes adopted by the City of Manhattan. We hope that all citizens will find this checklist useful in evaluating their housing needs and current housing situation.

Any property owner or current tenant may request a Property Maintenance Inspection from the Code Services office, 587-4506, free of charge.

The City of Manhattan cares about the availability of quality housing for renters and new home buyers.

You may review a copy of the *International Property Maintenance Code* at the Code Office, 2000 Denison Avenue. For more information, call the Code Services office, 785.587.4506.

This booklet is not an adopted legal instrument. Please refer to the official International Property Maintenance Code for precise definitions and requirements.

CITY OF MANHATTAN
KANSAS

City of Manhattan Code Services

Responsibilities of the Manhattan Code Services Division involve building code and property maintenance enforcement. Code Services further enhances the community by assisting in the following ways:

- Cooperating with citizens in improving and preserving homes and properties within the City of Manhattan. *Informed and involved citizens are crucial to the preservation and improvement process.*

- Conducting periodic inspections to help prevent housing deterioration. Inspectors often discover defects and items In need of repair that have gone unnoticed by property owners.

- Upholding municipal standards of housing safety and sanitation to promote proper maintenance among area homeowners, landlords, and tenants. This ongoing commitment contributes to the excellent quality of life found in the Manhattan community.

For Code Information and Enforcement, contact the City of Manhattan Code Offices, 785.587.4506
Visit us on the City's website, www.cityofmhk.com/code

☑ Where to Begin

First, Look at the Area Around Your Home or Rental Unit

Is the yard clean and well maintained?

Are there abandoned refrigerators or other appliances stored in the yard or alley?

Are weeds and grass cut so they are shorter than 12 inches?

Are sidewalks and driveways kept free of obstructions?

Are sheds, garages, fences, and walls maintained?

Be sure vehicles are parked on a driveway surface, are operable, and currently tagged (except those stored within enclosed structures.)

☑ Trash Cans

Trash containers need to be leak proof and have lids. Containers should be set at curbside on the scheduled trash day before 7:00 a.m. and removed as soon as possible after the trash is collected. The area must be cleaned of loose trash and spillage.

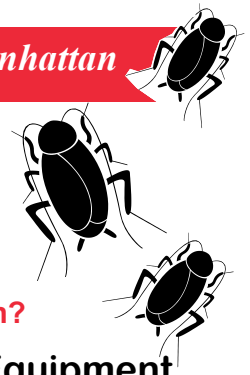
Questions? Call Code Services 785.587.4506
or email code@cityofmhk.com

☑ A Look at Your Home's Exterior

Is it well-maintained? Structurally sound? Weatherproof?

It is important to periodically check your home's foundation, chimneys, and weather-stressed structures. **A good place to begin your home inspection is outside**. As you walk around the perimeter of the building, take note of what you observe. Be sure to check the following items.

Address:	Easily read from the street
Walls:	Watertight and intact
Windows:	Operable, unbroken, watertight, and screened
Doors:	Watertight, hinges, and latches operable
Paint:	Weather resistant, not peeling
Steps:	Safe condition, handrails when more than four (4) risers
Decks:	Guard railings if deck is over 30 inches high
Porches:	Supports and railings are structurally sound
Foundation:	Structurally sound and free of defects such as cracking. Drainage should be directed away from the foundation
Roof:	Check for sagging excessive layers of shingles, curled or missing shingles, and limbs hanging over roof
Chimney:	Secure, check for cracks or movement; fire places should be checked annually
Gutters:	Functional and intact, discharge shall properly terminate away from structure, but not directed onto neighboring properties



What's Going On Inside?
Checking your home's interior

☑ **Is it clean, safe, and well-maintained?**
Is it free of rodent and insect infestation?

Walls and Ceilings

- Clean
- No holes
- No loose or peeling paint or wallpaper
- No cracked or missing plaster
- Dwelling appears to be structually sound
- No visible isulation or wiring

Electrical Equipment

- Adequate service provided
- Two (2) outlets per habitable space
- Wiring properly installed and maintained
- Equipment and appliances properly installed and safely maintained

☑ Floors, Doors, and Windows

Floors: Structurally sound, clean, and in good condition.

Doors: Easily opened from inside, not blocked.

Windows: One four (4) square foot minimum opening area in sleeping rooms, one per habitable space (except bathrooms), open freely, no damage or broken glass.

☑ Know How to Find the Following:
In case of emergency!

- Main water shut-off valve
- Main electrical disconnect
- Circuit breaker or fuse panel
- Main gas valve/heating system disconnect

Questions? Call Code Services 785.587.4506
or email code@cityofmhk.com

☑ Is Your Kitchen Up to Code?

Conduct a safety check of your kitchen

- A kitchen sink in every dwelling unit
- The kitchen sink is equipped with hot and cold running water
- Faucets, drains, and pipes are free of drips and leaks
- Wastewater drain pipe and water supply lines are free of cross connections
- No direct connection between private and City of Manhattan water supply
- Kitchen has at least two electrical outlets
- Floor surface is clean and sanitary
- Floor is in good repair

DANGER!

During cold nights there may be a temptation to turn on the burners of a gas stove. Don't do it! You and others within the structure can be overcome with carbon monoxide fumes.

Avoid:

- Leaving dirty dishes in the sink and around the home
- Un-repaired cracked floor covering
- Allowing stoves and refrigerators to harbor food bits/grime
- Leaving garbage in open containers
- Accumulation of grease and dirt on walls and ceilings

Avoid These Common Oversights or You'll Likely Attract Roaches, Mice, and other Unsavory Roommates

☑ Overcrowding

Zoning Requirements

No more than four (4) residents per dwelling unit, unless all are related.

☑ Occupancy Requirements

- A bedroom must have at least 70 square feet.
- The number of persons occupying a dwelling unit shall not create unsafe or unhealthy conditions.
- Ceiling height must be generally at seven (7) feet minimum.
- Attic ceilings or top “half-stories” must be at least seven (7) feet high over one third of the required area.
- Each dwelling unit must have separate access to a hall, landing, stair, or street.
- No habitable room, except a kitchen, shall be less than seven (7) feet in any dimension.

Questions?
Call Code Services 785.587.4506
or email code@cityofmhk.com

☑ All Bathrooms Must Have:

- Moisture resistant and sanitary floors and walls
- Proper size window or mechanical ventilation
- No passageway through bathroom
- At least one electrical outlet
- Assured privacy

BE AWARE OF ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES NEAR PLUMBING FIXTURES!
The Result Could Be Hazardous to Your Health!

☑ These Bathroom Plumbing Fixtures Must Be in Good Working Condition:

- A bathtub or shower with reliable hot and cold running water
- A lavatory/sink with reliable hot and cold running water
- A toilet (should not run constantly)
- A light
- No cross-connection of waste pipe and water supply lines
- No dripping faucets or leaks in drains or pipes

If you have questions or concerns about the condition of the plumbing/electricity in your rented home or apartment, call the landlord first and arrange for repairs. The Manhattan Code Office 785.587.4506 is available to answer questions regarding the International Property Maintenance Code.

Year Round Apa
Maintenanc

January

- Keep garage doors closed
- Remove outdoor holiday lighting
- Remove any Christmas trees (natural trees can be recycled for fish habitats. Check the City's website for information)
- ***Test smoke detectors***

February

- Change furnace filters
- Keep garage doors clo unnecessary heat loss
- Clean closets, attics, a burning appliances for
- ***Practice home fire ev***

April

- Flush the sump pump drain line
- Clean gutters and downspouts
- Trim tree limbs/shrubs
- Air out the home
- ***Test smoke detectors***

May

- Change furnace filter
- Check for damaged, lo shingles
- Trim shrubs away from
- Test the main water sh and opening it

July

- Conserve energy, use your oven sparingly
- Plan ahead and cook several meals at once (freeze extra meals)
- Trim shrubs around heat pump
- Clean/change window AC unit filter
- ***Test smoke detectors***

August

- Change furnace filter
- Check furnace and wat operation
- Have gas fueled applia necessary
- Inspect and service ga

October

- Have chimneys cleaned to ensure they are not blocked by birds nests or debris
- Make and practice a fire escape plan
- Clean out roof and gable vents
- ***Test smoke detectors***
- ***Change batteries in smoke detector***

November

- Change furnace filter
- Clean floor register gril
- Check water pipes for f ensure they won't
- Lubricate automatic ga
- ***Practice home fire ev***

partment/Home
ce Schedule

ers
s closed to prevent
loss
s, and area around fuel
for safety
e evacuation plan

March

- Test smoke detectors and batteries
- Check garage, remove potential fire hazards (paint, oil-based/petroleum based products)
- Repair weather damaged windows and doors
- ***Conduct a tornado drill-plan ahead!***
- ***Community Spring Clean-Up***

er
d, loose, or missing siding/

from siding
r shut-off valve by closing

June

- Keep windows covered during the day to keep indoor temperature down (dark draperies and window blinds are efficient options)
- Trim shrubs around air conditioner
- Check windows for easy operation
- ***Practice home fire evacuation plan***

er
water heater for proper

ppliances cleaned, if

e garage door

September

- Check your home for weather-stripping, attic insulation, and broken windows
- Clean out garage and outdoor sheds (remove anything that might freeze in unheated areas)
- Prepare your home for cooler weather
- ***Conduct a tornado drill-plan ahead!***

er
grills
for freezing, take steps to

c garage door mechanism
e evacuation plan

December

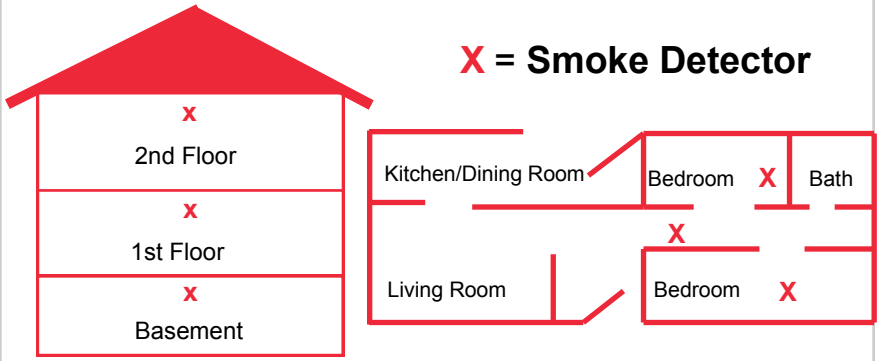
- Check all chimneys for proper drafting
- Check water pipes for freezing, leaks, etc.
- Check all electrical holiday decorations and lights; use only out-door approved decorations and extension cords for exterior lighting
- ***www.cityofmhk.com/code***

☑ Smoke Detectors

Never underestimate the importance of a properly working smoke detector in your home; check the batteries regularly

- A basic smoke detector shall be located in **every** sleeping room and between every sleeping area and the rest of the house
- Place detectors on the ceiling or on the wall mounted between four (4) and twelve (12) inches from the ceiling
- Avoid placing detectors near bathrooms and kitchens where steam or cooking smoke might accidentally trigger the detector
- In addition to the above requirements, at least one (1) detector shall be installed on every level of the home.

Diagram of smoke detector locations as required by Manhattan's Property Maintenance Code



☑ Remember to Check the Basement

If the Basement is Occupied

- Must have emergency egress and windows (approved size for bedrooms)
- It has an exterior door or emergency egress window in **each** bedroom that is at least four (4) square feet (openable) in area with no more than 48 inches from finished floor to sill.
- Are the WALLS waterproof?
- Is there any CROSS-CONNECTION of wastewater and fresh water pipes?
- Faucet on sinks and tub higher than the basin rim?

☑ Check the Stairway for Safety

- Is it well lit?
- Are the handrails/guardrails secure and in good condition?
- Are the steps sturdy and solid?

☑ **Water Heater:** Properly vented, a temperature and pressure relief valve installed with extension tube, and proper combustion air.

☑ **Heating system:** Capable of maintaining habitable rooms at 65° F, ducts and vents in good condition, proper combustion air – not to be taken directly from sleeping rooms or bathrooms.

☑ **Keep flammables away from the heating system and away from the water heater!**

☑ **Electrical System:** Properly grounded, extension cords should not be used as permanent wiring. Electrical panels need to be covered and labeled. Fuses and breakers must be properly sized to handle the electrical demands of the household.

Landlord Responsibilities:

- **All housing must comply with the International Property Maintenance Code as adopted by the City of Manhattan**
- Common areas shared by two (2) or more units must be kept clean
- Eliminate rats, insects, and other pests (maintain regular upkeep and pest control)
- In case of emergencies or questions relating to the property, the owner/agent must provide tenants with the property manager's name, home address *(not a P.O. Box),* and telephone number
- Occupants must be notified of all exits
- Avoid overcrowding your leased property. Check housing designations for each property before renting.
- Reliable hot and cold running water supply available to all tenants
- Thirty (30) day written notice to all tenants before assessing any rental fee increase
- All security deposits must be returned within thirty (30) days of lease termination
- Inventory of the premises must be conducted with the tenant and recorded in writing
- Written inventories must be signed by both tenant and landlord and completed within five (5) days of occupancy
- Both parties are to keep copies of the signed inventories
- Establish rules about pets before the contracts are signed

Tenant Responsibilities:

- **Keep your home clean**; including floors and walls
- Yard should be maintained and rubbish free. City ordinance No. 4958 states “It shall be unlawful for the occupant or owner of any property within the city to allow any of the following items to remain on the property outside a dwelling or other enclosed structure for longer than **48 hours**, in any location visible from streets or sidewalks adjacent to the property: appliances, bedding, bottles, boxes, broken glass, cans, cardboard, cartons, furniture manufactured for indoor use only, household appliances, jars, lumber and building supply materials that are not neatly stacked, machine parts, motor vehicle parts, pallets, paper, plumbing fixtures, rags, scrap metal, tire rims, tires, water heaters or any other item constituting a nuisance under section 21-12 (2).”
- Dispose of trash in garbage cans rather than streets or yards
- Prevent vandalism in your neighborhood
- Keep exits and stairways free of furniture, baby strollers, bicycles, etc.
- Store flammable liquids safely away from the home
- Allow owner access to make repairs at reasonable times
- Comply with all agreed upon rules and those brought to your attention in writing
- Use appliances, electrical fixtures (including smoke detectors) and plumbing fixtures as the manufacturer intended
- Inventory of premises within five (5) days of occupancy. Keep a written copy that has been signed by both landlord and tenant.

☑ Before Remodeling or Making Repairs:

Make sure that the property owner or property manager has approved your remodel/repair plans

- Be sure that your plans meet the requirements for housing, building, and zoning. Obtain any required permits.

- Secure advice and estimates from reliable licensed tradespersons. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) of Northeast Kansas is a reliable resource in checking the reliability and references of potential contractors. The BBB of Northeast Kansas can be reached by writing to them at 501 Southeast Jefferson, Ste. 24, Topeka, KS 66607 -1190. You may also contact them by calling 785.232.0454 or via email at topekabbb@kansasone.com.

- Beware of “cut rate” repairs; they may cost you more than you save over the long-term.

- Secure legal advice before contracts are let or before arranging loans for the repairs.

- Make financial arrangements that fit your particular financial situation.

- It is a good idea to gather more than one damage and repair estimate as well as multiple estimates of costs to remodel and project completion time frame.

☑ Helpful Names and Numbers:

Call Code Services (587.4506) for:
Existing Housing Inspections
Building Permits/Demolition Permits
Mobile Home Permits

Call Customer Services (587.2480) for:
Water Service
City Parking Permits
Block Party Permits
Pet Licensing

Call Human Resources (587.2440) for:
Fair Housing

Call the Zoning Inspector (587.2412) for:
Occupancy (per Dwelling Unit) Issues, Parking and Driveway Requirements, Fence Requirements

Call Local Private Contractors for:
Bulk Item Pick Up/Dumpsters
Brush Removal
Recycling Programs
Tire Removal

Additional Resources

- Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act Information
  www.hcci-ks.org
  785-234-0217 or 785-539-6666
- Office of Consumer and Tenant Affairs (KSU students)
  www.k-state.edu/osas/cta
  785-532-6541
- Ft. Riley Housing Services Office (Military Personnel)
  785-239-2405

Call the Code Office for:

- Housing inspections on existing structures
- Nuisance inspections (tall grass, inoperable vehicles, trash, etc.)
- Contractor and Trade licenses
- Building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, moving, curb cut, demolition and mobile home permits
- Construction plans needing review
- Construction inspections

Call Zoning (587.2412) for:

- Parking requirements
- Cars parked on grass in front yards
- Overcrowded rentals (too many unrelated people in one dwelling)
- Sign and fence setback requirements
- Building setback requirements (distance that must be maintained between the building and adjoining property lines)
- Flood plain information
- Zoning and rezoning (what sort of structure may be built in a given area or how existing structures may be used)
- Annexation and Platting

PROTECT YOUR POSSESSIONS

Get Renter's Insurance

Your landlord has insurance for the building you live in, not for the possessions inside.

Contact an insurance agent for more information about Renter's insurance or visit the City's website.

Code Services
785.587.4506
www.cityofmhk.com/code

CITY OF MANHATTAN
KANSAS