



SHORT-TERM RENTAL Inspection Checklist

**Inspection Services
Department**
831 Massachusetts Ave.
617-349-6100

The following is for informational purposes only. The footnotes and reference codes and standards below reference current codes, which may be periodically change, supplemented or updated. All new codes and code changes legally adopted by the State of Massachusetts or City of Cambridge shall be applicable regardless of whether this document is updated.

General

- Minimum floor area, ceiling height, and dimensions for all habitable rooms and sleeping rooms in the short-term rental unit. ¹ [780 CMR 51.00 R304 and R305]
- Minimum glazing area for daylight in sleeping rooms and other habitable rooms rented. ² [780 CMR 51.00 R303.1]
- Minimum quantity of accessible, operable windows for fresh air, or adequate mechanical ventilation. ³ [780 CMR 51.00 R303.1]
- Location of mechanical intake openings compliant with the building code requirement for separation distance from noxious contaminants. [780 CMR 51.00 R303.4.1 and R303.4.2]
- Residential uses are allowed in the zoning district in which the short-term rental unit is located. [per STR Ordinance]
- General cleanliness and tidiness of the short-term rental unit and common areas of the premises for purposes of safety and sanitation; In addition, the dwelling shall be free of rodent and insect infestation. [105 CMR 410.351]

Life Safety Systems

- Smoke & carbon monoxide detectors – in correct locations, operable; log of when batteries last replaced [780 CMR 51.00 R314 and R315]
- Check for general fire hazards: exposed wiring, presence of extension cords on appliances, etc. [105 CMR 410.351]

Egress & Interior Conditions

- Each dwelling unit must have at least two egress doors leading to the public way that comply with all Building Code requirements and that have readily openable hardware not requiring a key or special knowledge. Each side of the exterior door must have a code compliant, level landing. [780 CMR 51.00 R311.2]
- All egress passageways and doors from the short-term rental portions of building/unit and rented room(s) are free and clear from obstruction to the public way [780 CMR 51.00 R311.1]
- Egress from a habitable floor (including basements and attics) that does not have an egress door to the public way or a yard, must be by ramp or stairway [780 CMR 51.00 R311.4]
- Every habitable room and sleeping room that is rented must have an emergency escape and rescue opening directly onto the public way, or yard or court that leads to the public way. Emergency escape and rescue openings must meet the requirements of the Building Code for minimum opening area [5.7 sq.ft. net clear opening, except 1) at grade level or below grade level the opening may be 5.0 sq. ft. clear, and 2) at double hung windows net clear opening may be 3.3 sq. ft.] and dimensions [minimum net clear opening dimensions of 20" by 24" in either direction]; and maximum sill height [44"] above finish floor, including window wells below grade and bulkhead doors. [780 CMR 51.00 R310]
- Hallway and stairway clearances for width and height shall be subject to review and approval for safety by the Inspectional Services Department where the stair width and tread depth is less than the Building Code required minimum or the stair risers are greater than the Building Code required minimum [780 CMR 51.00 R311.6 and R311.7]
- Hardware on all exit doors from the unit is Building Code compliant, able to be operated from the inside in one motion without the use of a key or special code or knowledge. Locking hardware on doors of rental bedrooms shall also meet the aforementioned standard. [780 CMR 51.00 R311.2]
- Handrails and Guardrails are provided, including at rooftop access (if provided) [780 CMR 51.00 R311.7 and R312.1]
- Lighting – provided in common stairways and hallways, and at egress doors with motion activation or on timeclock [780 CMR 51.00 R303.6]



SHORT-TERM RENTAL Inspection Checklist

**Inspection Services
Department**
831 Massachusetts Ave.
617-349-6100

- Tripping Hazards [105 CMR 410.500]
- The path to the exterior door cannot require travel through a garage. [780 CMR 51.00 R311.1]

Heating Systems & Other Utilities

- Operable and able to provide minimum/maximum temperature during winter months to all spaces in rental portion of unit [during heating season: minimum 68 degrees daytime and 64 degrees evenings, maximum 78 degrees] [105 CMR 410.200 and 410.201] [780 CMR 51.00 R303.8]

Windows

- At least one operable window provided in each sleeping room or habitable room that is rented. Where adequate mechanical ventilation is provided, windows need not to be operable. ³ [780 CMR 51.00 R303.1-R303.5]
- For a rented room on a floor level in which there is only one egress door, one window in the room must be an emergency escape and rescue opening, with minimum opening dimensions and sill height. Bulkhead enclosures which serve as emergency egress must comply with minimum open area and other applicable requirements. Window wells shall provide the code minimum egress area with ladder or steps if required. [780 CMR 51.00 R310]
- Operable windows and doors used for ventilation provided with insect screens [105 CMR 410.280 and 410.551 and 410.552]

Bathrooms

- At least one working bathroom with water closet, lavatory, and shower or bathtub [780 CMR 51.00 R306]
- Water temperature of fixtures - both hot and cold water must be provided [hot water temperature between 110°-130° F] [105 CMR 410.190]
- No Loose tile or other finishes on floors and walls, no loose accessories [105 CMR 410.500]
- Bathtub and shower floors and walls must be finished with non-absorbent surfaces to Building Code required minimum distance above finish floor level [6 feet above floor] [780 CMR 51.00 R307.2]
- One operable window and/or adequate mechanical ventilation^{2&3} [780 CMR 51.00 R303.3]
- Safety glazing shall be provided at all hazardous locations (labelled as such), including but not limited to all shower or bathtub glass surrounds, doors with glass panels, sidelites and transoms adjacent doors [780 CMR 51.00 R308]

Kitchen (if provided for short-term rental)

- Provide a sink with hot and cold running water [hot water temperature between 110°-130° F] [105 CMR 410.100]
- Refrigerator, if provided, is turned on and cooled to code required temperature [maximum 41° F for refrigerator, maximum 0° F for freezer] [105 CMR 410.351]

Helpful Tips:

- *make sure all light switches and outlets have cover plates on them*
- *avoid storing combustible items (such as paper and books) in front of electrical outlets*
- *portable space heaters cannot be the primary means by which a space is heated to the code required temperatures*
- *do not store items of any sort in egress hallways and stairwells; keep clutter out of egress paths*
- *keep a functional fire extinguisher in a visible and readily accessible location within the dwelling unit*
- *keep refuse placed outside in containers with lids*
- *replace smoke and carbon monoxide alarm batteries every six (6) months*
- *insect screens can be half height or full height, but should be permanently installed, and not the temporary adjustable type*



SHORT-TERM RENTAL Inspection Checklist

**Inspection Services
Department**
831 Massachusetts Ave.
617-349-6100

¹ Dimensional Standards – Minimum Requirements (unless noted otherwise) (from 105 & 780 CMR)

- unit or room: No room or area in a dwelling may be used for habitation if more than ½ of its floor-to-ceiling height is below the average grade of the adjoining ground and is subject to chronic dampness.
- dwelling unit: 150 sq. ft.net area of floor space for first occupant and 100 sq. ft. net area for each additional occupant (floor space calculated on total habitable room area (i.e. exclude fixed cabinets, closets etc.); in addition, at least one habitable room shall be at least 120 sq. ft. gross floor area
- ceiling height: 7 ft. ceiling height; sloped ceiling min. 5' height and maximum 50% of required space
- sleeping room: 7 ft. clear in any plan direction; 70 sq. ft. net area for first occupant and where more than one occupant min. 50 sq. ft. net area per occupant
- living spaces: 7 ft. clear in any plan direction
- kitchen: 3 feet clear passage between counter/appliance and wall
- doors:
- doors inside the dwelling unit shall provide a nominal 30" clear width and 6'-6" clear height
 - doors used for egress from the dwelling unit : the primary egress door shall be side-hinged and provide a minimum clear width of 32" and 6'-6" clear height; the secondary egress door can be side-hinged or sliding and provide a minimum clear width of 28" width and 6'-6" clear height
 - doors providing access to bathrooms in existing buildings may be 24" in nominal width (however same height as above)

² Minimum Glazing Area (from 105 & 780 CMR)

All habitable rooms must have aggregate glazing area of not less than 8% of the floor area of the room, or a combination of 4% of the floor area plus artificial illumination of 6 foot candles over the area of the room at 30" above the floor level.

³ Minimum Ventilation & Exhaust Air Quantities (from 105 & 780 CMR)

Windows, skylights, doors or transoms in exterior walls or roofs that can be easily opened to a minimum of 4% of the floor area of the room, or mechanically ventilated with 0.35 air changes per hour (for individual room), or mechanically ventilated with 15 cfm (for whole house ventilation system). Skylights may not allow rain to pour in.

Kitchens require 100 cfm intermittent mechanical exhaust or 25 cfm continuous mechanical exhaust

Bathrooms require 50 cfm intermittent mechanical exhaust or 20 cfm continuous mechanical exhaust

Reference Codes and Standards

Massachusetts Residential Code 9th Edition 780 CMR 51.00

International Residential Code 2015

International Building Code 2015

International Existing Building Code 2015

Massachusetts Public Health Code 105 CMR 410: Minimum Standards of Fitness for Habitation (State Sanitary Code, Chapter 2)

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards as required by the Cambridge Fire Department