



Allan Ekberg, Mayor

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning and Community Development Committee

FROM: Nora Gierloff, Community Development

BY: Joseph Mose, Code Enforcement Officer

CC: Mayor Ekberg

DATE: **March 1, 2022**

SUBJECT: Rental Housing Program Update

<u>ISSUE</u>

Review the Rental Housing Program current activity to better understand ongoing issues.

BACKGROUND

The Tukwila Code Enforcement team works to support a safe, inviting, and healthy environment for residents, businesses, and visitors by enforcing the parts of the Tukwila Municipal Code that relate to conditions on private property. Compliance is typically reached through promoting public awareness, communication, and collaboration. In difficult cases monetary penalties and or legal action may be required. In addition to general code enforcement, the team is also responsible for managing and administering the Residential Rental Business License and Inspection Program.

The City established the Program in 2010 to protect the public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the proper maintenance of rental housing. It does this by identifying and requiring correction of substandard housing conditions and by preventing conditions of deterioration and blight that could adversely impact the quality of life in the City of Tukwila.

In 2020 the Council adopted a resolution waiving rental license and inspection late fees due to the covid pandemic.

DISCUSSION

Briefing on current Code Enforcement activity:

Tukwila Municipal Code Chapter 8.45 establishes a system to enforce the development, land use, and public health regulations of the City. The Code Enforcement team utilizes established standard operating procedures to identify, track, and resolve violations. Attachment A illustrates these procedures.

As of February 28, 2022, code enforcement has 31 open enforcement cases related to rental housing, most of the cases are for overdue rental licenses and/or inspections.

Briefing on the Rental Housing Business Licensing and Inspection Program:

Tukwila Municipal Code Chapter 5.06 establishes regulations pertaining to rental housing licensing and inspection. Residential rental properties are required to obtain an annual rental business license. As of February 28, 2022, the Rental Housing Program has 4,256 registered rental units and 556 active rental licenses (one license per property). All program late fees for 2020 and for 2021 (through September 30, 2021) were waived in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As of February 28, 2022, 266 properties have yet to renew their 2022 rental licenses. Late fees begin March 1 at a rate of \$10 per month until the license is renewed.

Some of the most common maintenance items that we find during inspections are mechanical equipment improperly installed and maintained (water heater), plumbing system hazards found (water leaks) and missing or inoperable carbon monoxide or smoke detector(s). Examples of improvements from the Rental Inspection Program can be found in Attachment C.

Rental Inspections and Deadline Extension

In addition to annual licensing, all rental housing units in the city must pass an inspection every 4 years. Properties with up to 4 units may use a city inspector while all larger properties must use a private inspector who meets specific qualifications. The city may also inspect units in response to complaints and audit inspections submitted by private inspectors when inspection reports are in question.

During the first inspection cycle in 2010-2014 we had many more units fail than we do now after several rounds of inspections. In 2019, the city conducted 133 inspections, 52% passed; In 2020, we've conducted 29 inspections, 72% passed; in 2021, the city conducted 15 inspections, 53% passed. This shows that the program has been effective in improving housing quality in the City. With the pandemic hopefully ending we look forward to bringing many rentals into compliance.

Rental inspections performed by a city inspector were paused due to the pandemic. In March, with the reopening of city services to the public, the Rental Housing Program will begin scheduling rental inspections again. In response to the ongoing pandemic and social distancing requirements, staff has also developed a virtual rental inspection beta program to address inspection needs. (See Attachment B). 381 rental units are due for their next inspection this year and 937 units are due in 2023.

Due to the pandemic nearly all property owners postponed their inspections. In response to the large backlog of inspections that was created, staff proposed, and the Council granted a 2-year extension to all inspection deadlines. Extending all inspection deadlines eliminated the backlog and has allowed staff to focus on the properties that were the most overdue without an extension.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Residential Rental License and Inspection Program YTD revenue for 2022 is \$17,577; 2021 was \$51,805; 2020 revenue was \$55,123; and 2019 revenue was \$52,313.

With a return of inspections, hopefully in March, revenue should increase in 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

Information and discussion only.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A. Code Enforcement Flowchart

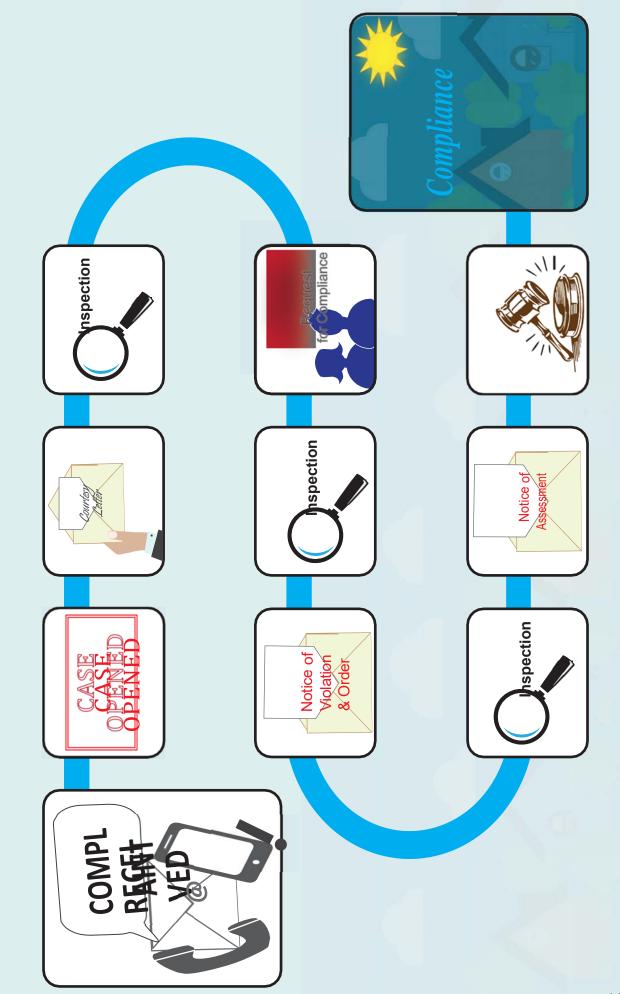
Attachment B. Virtual Rental Inspection Instructions

Attachment C. Before and After Inspection Photos



Department of Community Development CODE ENFORCEMENT-FLOWCHART

TUKWILA
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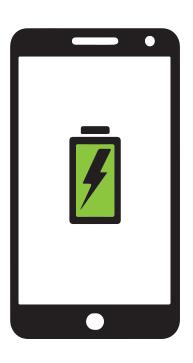
Residential Rental Business Licensing Program

A Basic Guide to Virtual Rental Inspections

Virtual inspections require a handheld device such as a smart phone or tablet and a reliable internet connection.



Ensure device is fully charged



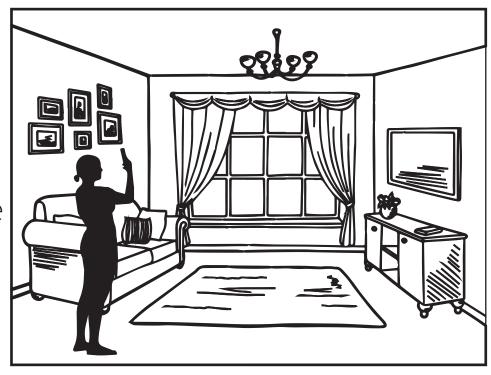




Walk around the outside of the rental unit. The inspector needs to see the yards and the exterior of the whole structure.

Once completed go inside the rental unit

Once inside, the inspector will need to see each room. Move around each room showing the inspector the walls, windows, window sills, ceiling, electrical outlets, and the floor.

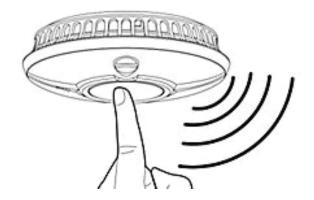


The inspector is looking for signs of mold, water damage, and other hazards.



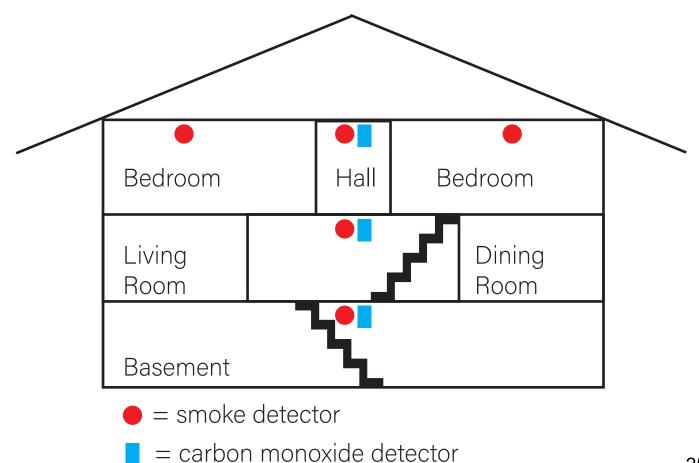
The inspector will also need to see all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

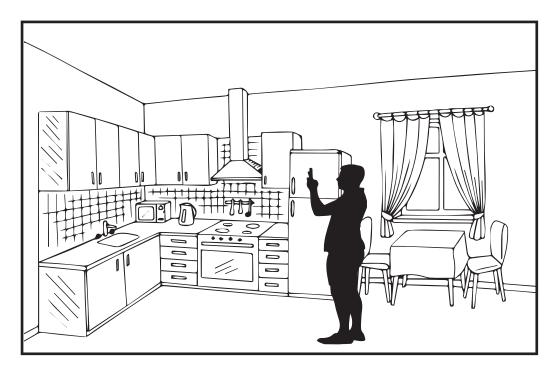
Be prepared to test each of the detectors as well. Press the test button on each smoke detector and each carbon monoxide detector.

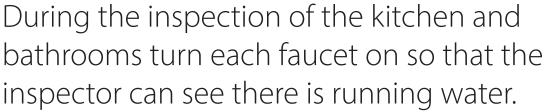


Please note that a functional smoke detector is required in each bedroom and on each story, immediately outside each sleeping area.

Carbon monoxide detectors are required on each story, immediately outside each sleeping area.









The inspector will also need to see under the sinks to ensure there are no leaks in the pipes





The inspector will also need to see the water heater, the circuit breaker box,



The inspector is checking for proper installation and potential safety hazards.



At the end of the inspection the inspector will let you know if the inspection passed or failed and you will be informed of any corrections that may be required.

Within a week or two you will get a copy of the inspection report

If you have questions, comments, or concerns regarding your virtual rental inspection please contact the Rental Housing Program by email at RentalHousing@Tukwilawa.gov or by phone at 206-431-2164.

Thank you for being a meaningful part of our community and for doing your part to maintain safe healthy housing in Tukwila.

File: RENT21-0024

Address: 1#### 35th Ave S 2PX

Violation/ Deficiency: Missing or inoperable smoke alarm

Date Inspected: November 12, 2021

History of Inspection:

- 1. On November 12, 2021, the listed property was inspected by the City and found an inoperable smoke alarm, in which is an immediate failed inspection.
- 2. On November 15, 2021, the tenant was able fix the smoke alarm with new batteries and sending a video clip testing the smoke alarm being functional.
- 3. After all deficiencies have been corrected, on November 15, 2021, an issued Certificate of Compliance and copy of the Rental Inspection Sheet is sent to the Owner of the property.





*Note: A video clip has been sent by the tenant, showing proof of the smoke alarm being functional and installed correctly.

Department of Community Development



Rental Housing Program

Presentation Overview

Background

Rental Housing Team

Rental Housing Inspection Procedures Tukwila Rental Highlights

Questions



Background

- The City established the Residential Rental Business License and Inspection Program in 2010.
- Protect the public health, safety and welfare by ensuring the proper maintenance of such housing, by identifying and requiring correction of substandard housing conditions, and by preventing conditions of deterioration and blight that could adversely impact the quality of life in the City of Tukwila.
- Tukwila Municipal Code Chapter 5.06 establishes regulations pertaining to rental housing license and inspection.



Rental Housing Team



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Department of Community Development

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Rental Housing Program Admin



Code Enforcement Officer/Rental House Inspector
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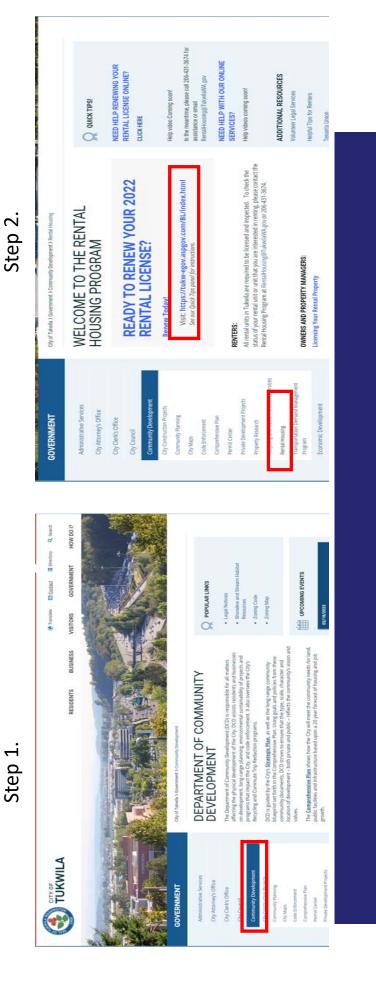


Rental Housing Inspection Procedures

- Residential rental properties are required to obtain an annual rental business license.
- All rental housing units in the City must pass an inspection every 4
- larger properties must use a private inspector who meets specific Properties with up to 4 units may use a City inspector while all qualifications.

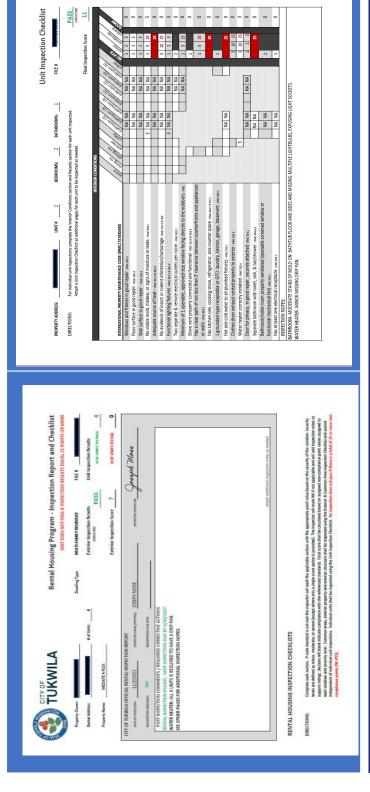


Rental Housing Inspection Procedures



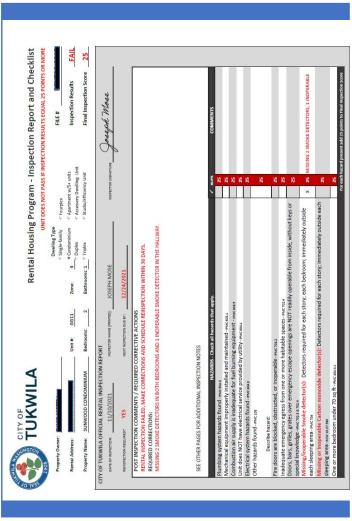


Rental Housing Inspection Sheet



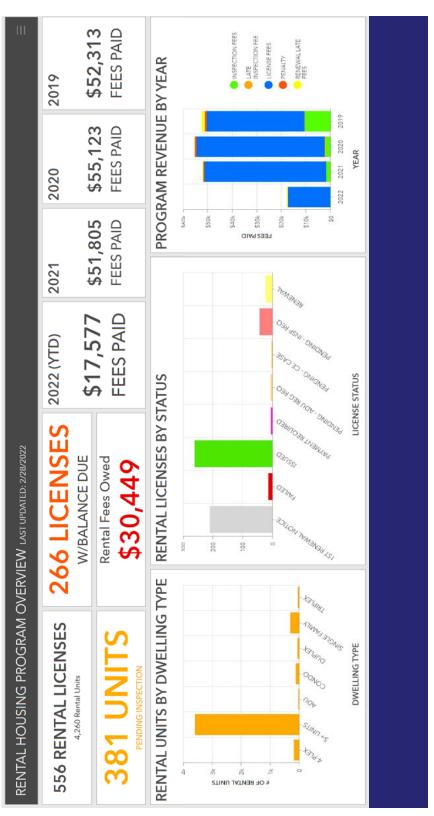
Rental Housing Inspection Sheet







Tukwila Rental Highlights



Rental Housing Programs

Questions?

