

CITY OF PORT HURON

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR EXISTING RENTAL HOUSING

The provisions of this Article shall govern the minimum standards for residential rental structures and shall be known and adopted as the "Minimum Standards for Existing Rental Housing." Every residential rental property shall comply with the provisions of this Article.

1.0 Structure Exterior.

1.1 All exterior foundations, chimneys, walls, roof, windows and doors, shall be structurally sound, tight and free of defects which admit rodents, vermin, rain or allow dampness in the walls or interior portion of the building.

1.2 Stairs, Porches, and Railings.

(A) Every outside stair, porch, attachment, and railing shall be safe and capable of supporting the loads as required by the current Building Code. Three or more risers require a handrail and railing. There shall not be any missing or loose treads, decking or rails. Open railings shall be constructed such that a sphere four (4) inches in diameter cannot pass between them. Every railing shall be firmly fastened.

Existing stairs, porches and railings on the effective date of these guidelines, may be allowed if there is no hazard to the health and safety of the occupants and may be repaired with like kind construction. New or replacement shall meet the current Building Code.

(B) Handrails. Every flight of stairs more than three (3) risers high shall have handrails. The top of handrails shall not be placed less than thirty-four (34) inches nor more than thirty-eight (38) inches above landings and the nosing of treads. Handrails shall continue the full length of the stairs. The handgrip portion of the handrails shall not be less than one and one-quarter (1-1/4) inches nor more than two (2) inches in cross-sectional dimension. Handrails projecting from a wall surface shall have a space of not less than 1-1/2 inches between the handrail and the wall.

(C) Guardrails. Surfaces located more than thirty (30) inches above the floor or grade below shall have guardrails not less than thirty-six (36) inches in height. The top of guardrails for stairways, exclusive of their landings, may have a height of thirty-four (34) inches to match handrails. Exception: Properties in actual or proposed historic districts or with historic architectural significance are exempt from handrail requirements and spacing, and railing height requirements to match the original historic construction.

1.3 Exterior Doors All exterior doors shall be provided with a properly installed locking device in good repair that can be operated from the inside without a key and from the outside only with a key. Exterior doors must open and close easily. If storm doors exist, they must be in good repair, free from tears and missing panels.

- 1.4 Windows. Every window sash shall be supplied with glass window panes or an approved substitute, properly sealed within each frame. Sharp or jagged edges or missing panes shall not be allowed.
- 1.5 One window in every habitable room, other than fixed windows, shall be capable of being easily opened, except where other means of ventilation exists. All operable windows on the first floor and basement shall be secured with a locking device. If screens exist, they must be in good repair, free from tears or large holes.

2.0 Structure Interior.

- 2.1 Free from Water Seepage/Standing Water. Every building, cellar, basement and crawl space shall be maintained reasonably free from water seepage and/or standing water which is conducive to decay or deterioration of the structure.
- 2.2 Structural Members. The supporting structural members of every building shall be structurally sound and capable of supporting loads as required by the current Building Code. Material is not deteriorated, free from defect and rotted wood.
- 2.3 Interior Stairs and Railings. Every stair, attachment and railing shall be safe and capable of supporting the loads as required by the current Building Code. There shall not be any missing or loose treads, decking or rails. Open railings shall be constructed such that a sphere four (4) inches in diameter cannot pass between them. Existing stairs and railings on the effective date of these guidelines, may be allowed if there is no hazard to the health and safety of the occupants and may be repaired with like kind construction. New or replacement shall meet the current Building Code.
- 2.4 Handrails. Every flight of stairs, which is more than three (3) risers high, shall have handrails. The top of handrails shall not be placed less than thirty-four (34) inches nor more than thirty-eight (38) inches above landings and the nosing of treads. Handrails shall continue the full length of the stairs. The handgrip portion of the handrails shall not be less than one and one-quarter (1-1/4) inches nor more than two (2) inches in cross sectional dimension. Handrails projecting from a wall surface shall have a space of not less than one and one-half (1-1/2) inches between the handrail and the wall. Every handrail shall be firmly fastened and must be maintained in good condition.

Exception: Properties in actual or proposed historic districts or with historic architectural significance are exempt from handrail requirements, and spacing, and railing height requirements to match the original historic construction.

- 2.5 Bathroom, Lavatory and Kitchen Floors. Every bathroom, lavatory and kitchen floor shall be substantially impervious to water.
- 2.6 Sanitation. The occupant shall maintain the interior of his dwelling in a sanitary condition free from an accumulation of rubbish or garbage so as not to breed insects and rodents or produce dangerous or offensive gases or odors.

- 2.7 Insect and Rodent Harborage. Buildings shall be kept free from insect and rodent infestations. Where insects or rodents are found, (a) they shall be promptly exterminated by a safe and acceptable process; and (b) necessary precautions shall be taken to prevent reinfestation.
- 2.8 Interior Walls, Ceilings and Floors. All interior walls, ceilings and floors shall be structurally sound, in good repair, clean, painted or properly maintained.
- 2.9 Interior Doors. Every room intended to be used as a bedroom shall be supplied with a properly installed door with hardware and latch.
- 3.0 Fire Prevention.
- 3.1 Smoke Detectors: A smoke detector, either wired or battery operated, shall be placed on each floor/story of every unit and one (1) in the basement.
- 3.2 Fire Separation. All rental units within a multi-unit dwelling shall have a minimum of one (1) hour fire separation between them.
- 4.0 Electrical Facilities. The wiring system shall be safe and must meet the following minimum standards:
- 4.1 Entrances and Exits. At least two (2) entrances and/or exits shall be illuminated by an exterior light controlled by a readily accessible interior wall switch or external automatic controls.
- 4.2 Kitchen. The kitchen shall be provided with a minimum of two (2) duplex receptacles and one (1) permanent light fixture.
- 4.3 Bathrooms shall be provided with one (1) duplex receptacle and one (1) permanent light fixture.
- 4.4 All Other Habitable Rooms. All other habitable rooms shall be provided with two (2) duplex receptacles or one duplex receptacle and permanent light fixture controlled by a switch.
- 4.5 Basement. The basement shall have a minimum of one permanent light fixture in all enclosed areas that may be walked into.
- 4.6 Laundry Area. Laundry areas shall be provided with one (1) grounded duplex receptacle.
- 4.7 Stairwells. Stairwells shall be provided with one permanent lighting fixture which adequately illuminates each tread. Lighting fixtures shall be controlled by wall switches or a permanently illuminated system. Switches shall not be located where it is necessary to use darkened stair sections for their operation. Stairwells connecting finished portions of dwellings shall be provided multiple-switch control: One at the head, the other at the foot of the stairwell.

- 4.8 Service and/or Feeder. The service or feeder to an existing dwelling unit shall be a minimum of three-wire, one hundred ampere capacity. Service equipment shall be dead front, having no live parts exposed whereby accidental contact could be made. All plug type fuses shall be Type S.

Exception: An existing properly installed sixty ampere capacity, three-wire service and feeders of thirty ampere, two-wire are acceptable if adequate for the load being served.

5.0 Mechanical.

- 5.1 Every rental unit and residential structure shall have heating facilities that are properly installed and maintained and capable of heating all habitable rooms located therein to a temperature of seventy degrees (70°) Fahrenheit, even when the outside temperature is ten degrees (10°) below zero. A disconnect switch shall be provided on or adjacent to the equipment. Boilers or furnaces located in garages or rooms where combustible liquids are stored shall be eighteen inches above the floor.

Units with wall furnaces and multiple rental units sharing a single forced air furnace system properly installed prior to June 30, 2001, may continue to do so until replacement is required. Portable heating equipment employing a flame or using gasoline or kerosene as fuel are prohibited. All electric portable heating units must be plugged into an electric wall outlet without the use of an extension cord.

- 5.2 Water Heating Facilities. Every rental unit shall be supplied with water heating facilities which are capable of heating water to such a temperature as to permit an adequate amount of water to be drawn at every required fixture, except toilets, at a temperature of not less than one hundred twenty degrees (120°) Fahrenheit as required for the reasonable use by occupants.

(A) Temperature and pressure relief valves shall be piped full size to within four inches of the floor.

(B) Water heaters located in garages or rooms where combustible liquids are stored shall be 18" above the floor.

- 5.3 Mechanical Rooms. The mechanical room cannot be located within or have access through a bedroom or a bathroom and shall have adequate combustion air available to supply the appliances within.

6.0 Sanitary Facilities. Each rental unit shall include the following minimum sanitary facilities within the rental unit:

- 6.1 Toilet. A toilet that is separate from the habitable rooms and affords privacy.

- 6.2 Lavatory. A lavatory in the same room with the toilet.

6.3 Bathtub or Shower. A bathtub or shower which affords privacy to the user. Every room with a tub or shower shall have a source of natural ventilation through an operable window to the outside or ventilation provided by a mechanical exhaust fan that is vented to the outside.

6.4 Kitchen Sink. A separate kitchen sink.

7.0 Utility Services.

All rental units shall have utility services in operation and properly connected. Any termination or interruption of water, sewer, gas or electric utility service by the utility for non-payment of utility bills shall be deemed to be caused by the person who contracted with the utility for the service. Neither an owner nor a tenant shall cause a utility service to be terminated, for non-payment or otherwise, without giving immediate notice to the other party of a rental agreement.

8.0 Space and Occupancy Requirements.

8.1 Minimum Ceiling Height. Habitable rooms shall have a ceiling height of not less than seven (7) feet six (6) inches. Kitchens, bathrooms, halls, toilet compartments and basement dwelling units shall have a ceiling height of not less than seven (7) feet. Exception: A ceiling height of less than seven (7) feet will be considered a built-in deficiency and shall be exempt from compliance, provided that such built-in deficiency was in compliance with a building code at the time of construction.

8.2 Required Space in Bedrooms. Every bedroom shall have an area of not less than seventy (70) square feet. The required floor area shall be increased at the rate of fifty (50) square feet for each additional occupant.

8.3 Bathroom and Toilet Access. In units with two (2) or more bedrooms, one bathroom or toilet must be accessible without going through a bedroom. (Exception: a unit that was built in compliance with the building code effective at the time of permitted construction.)

8.4 Means of Egress. Each bedroom shall have at least two means of egress that provide a continuous and unobstructed path of travel to a public way, such as one window and one door.

8.5 Minimum Window Size for Bedrooms.

All bedrooms must be equipped with one easily operable window with a minimum area of five (5) square feet a minimum height dimension of 24 inches, a minimum width of 20 inches, and a maximum sill height of 44 inches above the floor. (Exception: Windows in existing original bedrooms.)

9.0 Efficiency Unit. While conforming to all other provisions of these guidelines, each efficiency rental unit shall include:

- 9.1 A living area of not less than two hundred twenty (220) square feet with an additional one hundred (100) square feet for each occupant in excess of two (2).
 - 9.2 A kitchen sink; cooking appliance (not operated by gas), refrigeration facility and space to store, prepare and serve food.
- 10.0 Basement Dwelling Units. No basement space shall be used as a dwelling unit unless:
- 10.1 The floor and walls are impervious to leakage or underground and surface run-off water.
 - 10.2 The ceiling height throughout the unit is at least seven (7) feet.
 - 10.3 It is separated from heating equipment, incinerators, or other hazardous equipment by an approved partition with a minimum of one (1) hour fire separation rating.
 - 10.4 Two (2) independent means of egress are provided in accordance with the current Building Code, neither going through a furnace room.
- 11.0. Exceptions, Alterations. The City Manager shall have the authority to review and approve exceptions/alterations to housing code requirements based upon unusual hardship or circumstances.