



# Check Your Home

A guide to property maintenance  
for renters, landlords, and homeowners



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

The City of Manhattan cares about the availability of quality housing for renters, property owners and new home buyers. You may review a copy of the International Property Maintenance Code at the Risk Reduction Office, 2000 Denison Ave., or online at [publiccodes.cyberregs.com/icod/ipmc](http://publiccodes.cyberregs.com/icod/ipmc). City ordinances may be found at [CityofMHK.com/CodeofOrdinances](http://CityofMHK.com/CodeofOrdinances). For more information, call 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.

# About the Risk Reduction Division

Responsibilities of the Manhattan Risk Reduction Division include fire code, building code, property maintenance enforcement and zoning enforcement. Risk Reduction 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 needing 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.

Risk Reduction Division  
2000 Denison Ave.  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
785-587-4506  
[CityofMHK.com/riskreduction](http://CityofMHK.com/riskreduction)

# What's Going on Inside?

Check your home's interior to see if it is clean, safe, and well-maintained. Is it free of rodent and insect infestation?

## Walls and Ceilings

- Clean
- No holes
- No loose or peeling paint/wallpaper
- No cracked or missing plaster
- Dwelling appears to be structurally sound
- No visible insulation or wiring

## Electrical Equipment

- Adequate service provided
- Two 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-square-foot minimum opening area that is 48" or less above the floor in sleeping rooms, one window per habitable space, all windows open freely and have no damaged or broken glass



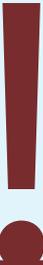
### Know How to Find the Following in an Emergency:

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

# Is Your Kitchen Up to Code?

Conduct a safety check of your kitchen for the following items:

- 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, and in good repair



Danger! During cold nights, there is a real 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 these common oversights or you'll likely attract roaches, mice and other unsavory roommates:

- Leaving dirty dishes in the sink and around the home
- Unrepaired 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

# Bathroom Compliance

All bathrooms must have:

- Moisture resistance and sanitary floors and walls
- Proper size window or mechanical ventilation
- At least one electrical outlet
- Assured privacy

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



Be aware of electrical appliances near plumbing fixtures. The result could be hazardous to your health.

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.

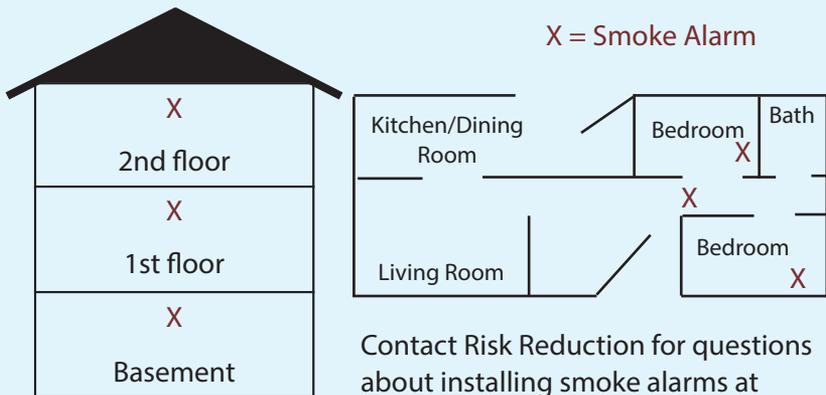
The Manhattan Risk Reduction Office, 785-587-4506, is available to answer questions regarding the International Property Maintenance Code.

# Smoke Alarms

Never underestimate the importance of properly working smoke alarms in your home. Test alarms and check batteries regularly.

- A smoke alarm shall be located in every sleeping room, directly outside every sleeping area, and on each story of the home.
- Place alarms on the ceiling between 4 and 12 inches from the wall or between 4 and 12 inches below the ceiling.
- Avoid placing alarms near bathrooms and kitchens where steam or cooking might accidentally trigger the alarm.
- Smoke alarms are required to be replaced every 10 years.

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



Contact Risk Reduction for questions  
about installing smoke alarms at  
785-587-4506

# Carbon Monoxide Alarms

If there are fuel-burning appliances or fireplaces present or if the home has an attached garage, carbon monoxide alarms are required. At least one carbon monoxide alarm is required near the sleeping areas.



**CAN'T BE  
SEEN**



**CAN'T BE  
SMELLED**



**CAN'T BE  
HEARD**



**CAN BE  
STOPPED**

Credit: CDC

# Overcrowding

According to zoning requirements, no more than four residents per dwelling unit are allowed, 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 6 feet, 8 inches minimum.
- Attic ceilings or top “half-stories” must be at least 6 feet 8 inches 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 or bathroom shall be less than seven feet in any dimension.

# Check the Basement

If the basement is occupied:

- It must have at least one exterior door or emergency escape window that is at least four square feet (openable) and be no more than 48 inches from finished floor to bottom of sill
- Each bedroom must also have an exterior door or emergency escape window

## Stairway Safety

- Well lit
- Handrails/guardrails secure and in good condition
- Steps are sturdy and solid

## Water Heater

- The water heater should be properly vented,
- Have a temperature and pressure relief valve installed with extension tube
- Have proper combustion air

## Heating System

- The heating system should be capable of maintaining habitable rooms at 65 degrees, have ducts and vents in good condition, and have proper combustion air — not to be taken directly from sleeping rooms or bathrooms
- Flammable and combustible items should be kept away from heating appliances

## Electrical System

- Electrical System must be 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

# Year-Round Home Maintenance Schedule

## January

- Keep garage doors closed
- Remove outdoor holiday lighting
- Remove any Christmas trees (natural trees can be recycled for fish habitats). Check [CityofMHK.com](http://CityofMHK.com) for more information
- Test smoke and CO alarms

## February

- Change furnace filters
- Keep garage doors closed to prevent unnecessary heat loss
- Clean closets, attics and areas around fuel-burning appliances for safety
- Practice home fire evacuation plan and test smoke and CO alarms

## March

- Remove potential fire hazards (paint, oil-based/petroleum-based products)
- Repair weather damaged windows and doors
- Conduct a tornado drill - plan ahead
- Community Spring Cleanup
- Test smoke and CO alarms

## April

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

## May

- Change furnace filters
- Check for damaged, loose or missing siding or shingles
- Trim shrubs away from siding
- Test the main water shutoff valve by closing and opening it
- Test smoke and CO alarms

## June

- Keep windows covered during the day to keep indoor temperature down
- Trim shrubs around air conditioner
- Check windows for easy operation
- Practice home fire evacuation plan and test smoke and CO alarms

## July

- Conserve energy; use your oven sparingly
- Plan ahead and cook several meals at once
- Trim shrubs around heat pump
- Clean/change window AC unit filter
- Furniture Amnesty Day (final Friday)
- Test smoke and CO alarms

## August

- Change furnace filters
- Check furnace and water heater for proper operation
- Have gas-fueled appliances cleaned, if necessary
- Inspect and service garage door
- Test smoke and CO alarms

## 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
- Test smoke and CO alarms

## October

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

## November

- Change furnace filters
- Clean floor register grills
- Check water pipes for freezing; take steps to ensure they won't
- Lubricate automatic garage door mechanism
- Practice home fire evacuation plan and test smoke and CO alarms

## December

- Check all chimneys for proper drafting
- Check water pipes for freezing, leaks, etc.
- Check all electrical holiday decorations and lights; use only outdoor approved decorations and extension cords for exterior lighting
- Test smoke and CO alarms

# Around Your Home

First, look at the area around your home or rental unit:

- The yard is clean and well maintained
- There are no abandoned refrigerators, furniture or other appliances stored in the yard or alley
- Weeds and grass are cut (less than 12 inches high)
- Sidewalks and driveways are free of open or displaced cracks
- Sheds, garages, fences, and walls are well maintained
- All vehicles are parked on a driveway surface, are operable, and currently tagged (except those stored within enclosed structures)

### Trash

Trash containers need to be leak proof, have lids and have the company name and phone number if owned by a trash company. Containers should be set at curbside on the scheduled trash day and removed as soon as possible after the trash is collected. The area must be cleaned of loose trash and spillage.

### Recycle

The following locations accept donations of used goods. Contact each one for hours and details.

#### Clothing & Household Items

- Goodwill, 421 E. Poyntz Ave.
- Seven Dolors Budget Shop, 728 Colorado St.
- Grand 'Ol Trunk, 1304 Pillsbury Dr.
- Manhattan Emergency Shelter, 416 S. 4th St.

#### Building Materials & Large Appliances

- Habitat ReStore, 514 Pillsbury Dr.

#### Cleaning Supplies & Paint

- Household Hazardous Waste, 6245 Tuttle Creek Blvd.

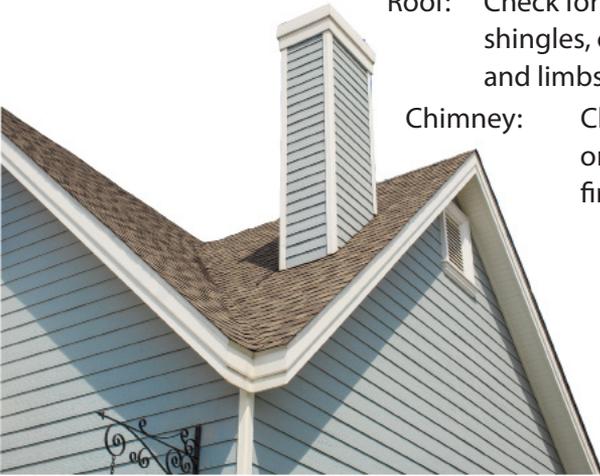
# Your Home's Exterior

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 notes of what you observe. Be sure to check the following items:

- Address: Numbers easy to read from the street
- Walls: Watertight and intact
- Windows: Operable, unbroken, watertight, and screened
- Doors: Watertight with operable hinges and latches
- Paint: Weather resistant, not peeling
- Steps: Must be in safe condition and have handrails if there are more than four risers
- Decks: Must have guard railings if the deck is more than 30 inches high
- Porches: Supports, floor, and railings must be structurally sound and in good repair
- Foundation: Must be structurally sound and free of open cracks, and drainage should be directed away from the foundation.

Roof: Check for sagging, excessive layers of shingles, curled or missing shingles, and limbs hanging over the roof

Chimney: Check for cracks or movement. Inspect your fireplaces annually.



## 14 LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES

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- All housing must comply with the International Property Maintenance Code
- All rental owners must register their property with the Risk Reduction Division at [cityofmnhk.com/rentalregistration](http://cityofmnhk.com/rentalregistration)
- Common areas shared by two or more units must be kept clean
- Maintain regular upkeep and pest control (eliminate rats, insects, and other pests)
- 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
- Smoke alarms must be installed and functioning
- Avoid overcrowding your leased property: check housing designations for each property before renting
- Reliable hot and cold running water supply must be available to all tenants
- A 30-day written notice must be issued to all tenants before assessing any rental fee increase
- If a security deposit is to be returned to the tenant, it must be returned within 30 days of lease termination
- Establish rules about pets before the contracts are signed

### Take an inventory

- 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 5 days of occupancy.
- Both parties are to keep copies of the signed inventories.

- Keep your home clean, including floors and walls.
- Dispose of trash in garbage cans, not in streets or yards
- Keep exits and stairways free of furniture, baby strollers, bicycles, etc
- Store flammable liquids safely in approved containers
- 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 alarms) and plumbing fixtures as the manufacturer intended
- Take an inventory of the premises within five days of occupancy and keep a written copy that has been signed by both landlord and tenant

### Maintain your yard

Yards should be maintained and rubbish free. According to city ordinance, the following items are not allowed to remain outside a dwelling for more than 48 hours in any location visible from streets or sidewalks:

- 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

# Before Remodeling or Making Repairs

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

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

## Find a licensed contractor

The City of Manhattan maintains an online contractor license database with all currently licensed contractors in the City of Manhattan. View the database at [CityofMHK.com/Contractors](http://CityofMHK.com/Contractors). Call 785-587-4506 to verify any of the information in the database.

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](mailto:topekabbb@kansasone.com).

Contact Risk Reduction for:

- Inspections of construction, existing structures, and nuisances
- Fire Inspections
- Building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, moving, curb cut, demolition and mobile home permits
- Construction plans needing review
- Contractor and trade licenses
- Occupancy (per dwelling unit) issues
- Parking and driveway requirements
- Fence requirements
- Sign and setback requirements

785-587-4506 • [riskreduction@cityofmhk.com](mailto:riskreduction@cityofmhk.com)

Contact Customer Service for:

- Water service
- City parking permits
- Block party permits
- Pet licensing

785-587-2480 • [customerservice@cityofmhk.com](mailto:customerservice@cityofmhk.com)

Call the Community Development Department for:

- Floodplain information
- Zoning and rezoning (what type of structure may be built in a given area or how existing structures may be used)

785-587-2412

Call local private contractors for:

- Bulk item pickup/dumpsters
- Brush removal
- Recycling programs
- Tire removal

## 18 CONTACT INFORMATION

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### Call Local Service Organizations:

- Housing and Credit Counseling (Landlord-tenant issues)  
785-234-0217 • [HCCI-KS.org](http://HCCI-KS.org)
- KSU Off Campus Housing Support (Issues affecting K-State students)  
785-532-6432 • [K-State.edu/Legal](http://K-State.edu/Legal)
- Fort Riley Off-Post Housing Office  
785-239-2405 • [FtRileyHousing.com](http://FtRileyHousing.com)

### Call Disability Rights Organizations:

- Fair Housing First (Learn about requirements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA)  
888-341-7781 (voice/TTY) • [FairHousingFirst.org](http://FairHousingFirst.org)
- ADA Information Line (Get information or file a complaint)  
800-514-0301 (voice) •  
800-514-0383 (TTY) • [ADA.gov](http://ADA.gov)
- Regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (Information, guidance, and training)  
800-949-4232 (voice/TTY) • [ADATA.com](http://ADATA.com)

### Spring Cleanup

Each year, the City of Manhattan sponsors a Spring Cleanup event in late March or early April to assist homeowners with yard cleanup. The City will pick up limbs and properly bagged yard debris for free. Visit [CityofMHK.com/SpringCleanup](http://CityofMHK.com/SpringCleanup) for details on dates and specific requirements.

### Furniture Amnesty Day

On the last Friday in July, donate furniture or browse donations to take home up to five pieces of furniture at no cost. This is an excellent way to get rid of furniture you don't want, or pick up furniture for your home for free. Find information at [CityofMHK.com/Furniture](http://CityofMHK.com/Furniture).

# Renters insurance

Your landlord's insurance policy covers damage to the building you live in, but not your personal property. If a disaster happens, you are responsible for



replacing all of your personal items that were stolen or damaged. In addition, your insurance policy might not cover injuries or accidents that occur in your home, even if they weren't your fault. That leaves you responsible for any medical bills or court judgments against you.

Many insurance companies offer renters insurance policies for just a few dollars a month. There are a variety of plans available that can cover losses due to theft, vandalism, damage from windstorms and hail, damage from explosions, fire and smoke damage, and many other hazards. Additional coverage is available for sewer backups, flooding and plumbing problems.

## Take an inventory

When considering renters insurance, it is helpful to take inventory of your belongings so you really know what they are worth. This will also aid in determining the amount of coverage you need.

After taking an inventory, go through the renters insurance checklist to prepare for a meeting with an insurance agent, then contact the Kansas Insurance Department for more information about local companies, and premium quotes.

## Resources

[ProtectYourPossessions.com](http://ProtectYourPossessions.com)

[KSInsurance.org](http://KSInsurance.org)



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