

ARTICLE XII. - IDENTIFICATION AND INSPECTION OF RENTAL DWELLING UNITS

DIVISION 1. - GENERALLY

Sec. 13-191. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Conditions which immediately affect safe, decent and sanitary living conditions of persons occupying a residential rental dwelling unit include items that violate fire safety; lack of or poor condition of sanitary facilities; absence of adequate heating systems or equipment; items which affect the safe operation of electrical and mechanical systems; items which affect structural integrity of the building and/or the ability of the building envelope to keep out weather, or one (1) or more other conditions that if not corrected would be reasonably expected to become conditions that affect the safe, decent and sanitary living conditions of the occupants.

Disqualifying violation includes those conditions which affect safe, decent and sanitary living conditions of persons occupying a residential rental dwelling unit, or other conditions that violate the provisions of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, or multiple building code violations that indicate in their totality that the dwelling unit is not being properly maintained.

Dwelling unit means a building or structure or part thereof that is used for a home or residence by one (1) or more persons who maintain a household.

Multiple-family complex means any structure, consisting of ten (10) or more dwelling units under common ownership and occupied for valuable consideration. The term "multiple-family complex" shall not include mobile homes under common ownership in a mobile home park or subdivision; nor shall such term include single-family detached dwellings, duplex dwellings, or townhouse dwellings under common ownership.

Owner means the person or entity shown on the current real estate assessment books or current real estate assessment records of the city or the fee simple titleholder of the property if ownership has changed since such tax assessment records were last updated.

Residential rental dwelling unit means a dwelling unit that is leased or rented to one (1) or more tenants. However, a dwelling unit occupied in part by the owner thereof shall not be construed to be a residential rental dwelling unit unless a tenant occupies a part of the dwelling unit which has its own cooking and sleeping areas, and a bathroom, unless otherwise provided in the zoning ordinance by the local governing body.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

DIVISION 2. - RENTAL INSPECTION DISTRICTS

Sec. 13-192. - Factors for establishing rental inspection districts.

After holding a duly advertised public hearing as required by Code of Virginia, § 36-105.1:1.C.1., city council finds that within the inspection districts described in section 13-193 herein below:

- (1) There is a need to protect the public health, safety and welfare of the occupants of dwelling units inside the designated rental inspection districts;
- (2) The residential rental dwelling units within the designated rental inspection districts are either:
 - (a) Blighted or in the process of deteriorating, or
 - (b) The residential rental dwelling units are in the need of inspection by the code compliance administrator to prevent deterioration, taking into account the number, age and condition of residential dwelling rental units inside said rental inspection districts, and
- (3) The inspection of residential rental dwelling units inside the rental inspection districts is necessary to maintain safe, decent and sanitary living conditions for tenants and other residents living in the rental inspection districts.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

Sec. 13-193. - Rental inspection districts established.

Based upon the findings of city council as set forth in section 13-192 hereinabove, the following areas are included and hereby declared to be rental inspection districts (RID) which are subject to the requirements of this article.

District 1: RID #1



District 2: RID #2



District 3: RID #3



Maps showing the rental inspection districts described in this section are hereby adopted as a part of this article, and shall be available for public inspection in the codes compliance office. Said districts are hereinafter referred to collectively as "rental inspection districts" or "inspection districts".

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

Sec. 13-194. - Applicability.

The provisions of this article shall apply to residential rental dwelling units located within the districts identified in section 13-193 of this article and shall further apply to certain structures located outside of such districts but meeting the requirements of section 1-6(c) herein below.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

DIVISION 3. - INSPECTION

Sec. 13-195. - Inspection and certificate required.

- (a) The owner of each residential rental dwelling unit located in an inspection district shall obtain and permit an initial inspection and subsequent inspections of such residential rental dwelling unit as provided in this section and section 13-196. Inspections under this article shall be conducted by the department of codes compliance who is charged with the enforcement of this article. If the unit to be inspected is occupied at the time of a required inspection, it shall be the duty of the owner thereof to notify the occupants of such inspection and make the residential rental dwelling unit available for inspection.
- (b) If inspection reveals that a residential rental dwelling unit has no disqualifying violations, the department of codes compliance shall issue a forty-eight-month certificate of compliance for such unit. However, if one (1) or more violations of the property maintenance provisions of the building code are found that do not constitute a disqualifying violation, the existence of such non-disqualifying violations shall be noted on the forty-eight-month certificate of compliance together with the date by which such non-disqualifying violations must be remedied, which date shall be determined by the department of codes compliance and which date shall be reasonable. The issuance of a certificate of compliance shall not be evidence of a lack of any and all building code violations, and shall not prevent the department of codes compliance from conducting follow-up inspections regarding building code violations in the residential rental unit, whether or not the violations affect the safe decent and sanity

occupancy of said unit. If a follow-up inspection reveals that the owner has failed to remedy the noted violations by specified date, the department of codes compliance shall issue a notice of violation, revoke the forty-eight-month certificate of compliance and the unit shall thereafter be subject to annual inspections pursuant to section 13-196.

- (c) If inspection of a residential rental dwelling unit reveals one (1) or more disqualifying violations, the department of codes compliance shall not issue a certificate of compliance until the disqualifying violations are satisfactorily remedied. However, the department of codes compliance may issue a temporary certificate of compliance if in the opinion of the department, such disqualifying violations do not constitute an immediate threat of injury to the occupants of such residential rental dwelling unit. If conditions warrant, however, the department of codes compliance may require that the residential rental dwelling unit be vacated or remain unoccupied until brought into compliance, pursuant to his authority under Code of Virginia, (1950), as amended, § 36-98, et seq., the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. Upon compliance, the department of codes compliance shall, as provided in section 13-196 of this article, issue an annual certificate of compliance.
- (d) No annual inspection pursuant to this article shall take place more than one time each year, calculated from the date of the first inspection, should additional inspections be necessary to achieve compliance. However, nothing in this article shall modify the authority of the department of codes compliance to conduct any other inspections, as allowed under the provisions of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, and inspections for obtaining a certificate of compliance under this article do not supplant or preclude any other inspection authorized under the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.
- (e) Unless a current certificate or temporary certificate of compliance is in force for a residential rental dwelling unit in accordance with the provisions of subsection 13-196(a)(1) of this article, and such certificate remains in effect, no owner of such unit shall permit any person to occupy such unit as a tenant or otherwise.
- (f) A building or structure meeting the definition of a residential rental dwelling unit but located outside of an inspection district shall nevertheless be subject to the terms of this article on the following basis: City council makes a separate finding for said individual residential rental dwelling unit that:
 - (1) There is a need to protect the public health, welfare and safety of the occupants of that individual residential rental dwelling unit;
 - (2) The individual residential rental dwelling unit is either:
 - a. Blighted, or

- b. In the process of deteriorating; or
- (3) There is evidence of violations of the building code that affect the safe, decent and sanitary living conditions for occupants of such individual residential rental dwelling unit.

Upon said finding by the city council, said residential rental dwelling unit shall be subject to this article, notwithstanding its location outside the inspection districts.

- (g) Should the owner fail to timely contact the code compliance office within the required time in order to schedule any inspection required under this article, or should such owner fail to allow such inspection to proceed on the date for which it was scheduled, the owner shall be in violation of this article and shall be subject to such penalties and enforcement remedies as provided in section 13-196 herein below.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

Sec. 13-196. - Certificates of compliance; applications and exemptions.

- (a) The following shall apply to all residential rental dwelling units located within inspection districts, which are not exempted under subsection 13-196(b).
 - (1) The initial inspection of each residential rental dwelling unit which is subject to inspection under this article, shall take place no later than one hundred twenty (120) days from the date that the owner thereof contacts the code compliance office to schedule such inspection. Each residential rental unit for which a certificate of compliance or forty-eight-month certificate of compliance as described in (a)(3) below has been issued shall be again inspected within thirty (30) days from the expiration of the certificate or expiration or earlier revocation of a forty-eight-month certificate of compliance.

Prior to expiration of the certificate of compliance or forty-eight-month certificate of compliance, or upon earlier revocation of a forty-eight-month certificate of compliance, the owner of the residential rental dwelling unit covered thereby shall contact the code compliance office and arrange for an inspection of such unit. Except in the case of an inspection following revocation of a forty-eight-month certificate of compliance, should the date scheduled for inspection be after expiration of the current certificate and more than thirty (30) days from the day on which the owner contacted the code enforcement office to schedule inspection, a thirty-day temporary certificate of compliance shall be

issued. Said inspection shall take place no later than thirty (30) days from the date of application for said inspection, and such temporary certificate shall expire on the date of the inspection.

As to building code violations which do not immediately affect the safe, decent and sanitary living conditions for persons living in such unit, and provided that all inspection fees shall have been remitted in advance to the issuance of such temporary certificate of compliance the department of codes compliance shall issue one (1) temporary certificate of compliance, valid for thirty (30) days and may permit such extensions thereof, as the department shall deem reasonably necessary to allow for remediation of the violations. However as to building code violations which are disqualifying violations and which violations which pose an immediate threat to the safe, decent and sanitary living conditions for persons living in such unit, then the department of codes compliance shall not issue a temporary certificate of occupancy.

Temporary certificates of compliance shall expire upon the earlier of their stated expiration date or the completion of an inspection which finds all violations satisfactorily remedied.

- (2) Unless a residential rental unit in an inspection district is exempted from inspection under this article, or receives a forty-eight-month certificate of compliance as provided section (a) below, the term of a certificate of compliance issued for any residential rental dwelling unit in an inspection district, shall be for a term of twelve (12) months beginning with the first day of the month next following the month of issuance.
- (3) A residential rental dwelling unit which upon inspection under this article reveals no disqualifying violations, or with only one (1) or more violations of such code that do not affect the safe, decent and sanitary living conditions for persons living in such unit, shall not be subject to further annual inspection under this article for forty-eight (48) months from date of such annual inspection, except as provided in section 13-195, and a forty-eight-month certificate of compliance shall be issued for such unit. However, if a residential rental dwelling unit covered by a forty-eight-month certificate of compliance is found in violation of the Uniform Statewide Building Code during the term of such forty-eight-month certificate of compliance, the department of codes compliance may revoke such forty-eight-month certificate of compliance and such unit shall thereupon become subject to annual inspections and the issuance of annual certificates of compliance. If an annual certificate of compliance is issued after the inspection necessitated by the

violation of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code and revocation of the extended certificate of compliance, then said residential rental dwelling unit shall again be eligible for an extended certificate of compliance only after the annual certificate of compliance has expired and as of the first subsequent annual inspection when no disqualifying violations are found.

- (4) Should a residential rental dwelling unit be sold, or the title thereto be otherwise transferred to another owner during term of a certificate of compliance or forty-eight-month certificate of compliance issued for such unit, the term of such certificate shall end as of the last day of the month next following the month of transfer of ownership and the new owner shall contact the department of codes compliance and arrange for inspection of the unit; provided, however, that if the last inspection of the unit pursuant to this article occurred during the calendar year of transfer of ownership, the existing certificate shall not expire until the end of such calendar year.
- (b) The following shall be exempt from the requirements of this article for the time periods indicated:
- (1) No inspection of a newly constructed residential rental dwelling unit located in an inspection district shall be required within forty-eight (48) months of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for such newly constructed unit. Thereafter said unit shall in all respects become subject to the requirements of this article.
 - (2) All hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfast establishments, and other similar facilities to the extent occupied by transients shall be exempt from compliance with this article.
 - (3) All residential rental dwelling units owned by or leased by an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia or of the City of Newport News, shall be exempt from compliance with this article so long as said dwelling units are operated by such agency in carrying out its public purpose.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

Sec. 13-197. - Multifamily complexes.

- (a) If a multifamily complex contains more than ten (10) residential rental dwelling units, in the initial and annual inspections, the department of codes compliance shall inspect no less than two (2) units and not more than ten (10) percent of the residential rental dwelling units.
- (b) Notwithstanding the number of residential rental dwelling units inspected, the department of codes compliance shall charge the fee authorized by this article for inspection of no more than ten (10) dwelling units.

- (c) If the department of codes compliance determines upon inspection of the dwelling units in accordance with (a) above that there are within one (1) or more of such units or the building housing same, violations of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code that affect the safe, decent and sanitary living conditions for the tenants of such multifamily complex, the department may inspect as many dwelling units as it deems reasonably necessary to assure compliance with the building code in which case, the fee shall be based upon a charge per dwelling unit inspected, notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

DIVISION 4. - CERTIFICATE ISSUANCE, INSPECTION FEES AND ENFORCEMENT

Sec. 13-198. - Issuance of certificate; fees.

- (a) Except as provided in section 13-197 above, there shall be a fifty-dollar (\$50.00) inspection fee for the inspection of each dwelling unit. If repairs or corrections are deemed necessary by the department of codes compliance, and a reinspection is required, no additional fee shall be charged for the reinspection. If, however, subsequent reinspections are required, there shall be charged an additional fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00) per dwelling unit for each subsequent reinspection. No reinspection shall be performed, nor any certificate of compliance be issued, unless all fees have been paid.
- (b) Requests for an inspection may be made by telephone; provided that the department of codes compliance shall, in all cases, receive notice from the owner and payment of the applicable inspection fees prior to conducting any inspection required under this article.
- (c) The department of codes compliance shall issue a forty-eight-month certificate, as provided in section 13-196 hereinabove if, upon inspection, the department finds that the residential rental dwelling unit does not have any disqualifying violations. The forty-eight-month certificate of compliance may be issued immediately upon completion of an inspection in which no disqualifying violations are found.
- (d) If the dwelling unit fails to comply with any one (1) or more provisions of Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, and any amendments thereto, the department of codes compliance shall furnish the owner with a written list of specific violations. Failure to list any violation shall not be deemed a waiver of such violation. Upon the completion of all corrections and repairs, the owner shall arrange a reinspection of the residential rental dwelling unit. Reinspection shall be for the purpose of determining compliance by the owner with the written list of specific violations furnished to the owner by the codes compliance

administrator. However, if upon reinspection, the department of codes compliance discovers other violations that were not listed on the written list of specific violations previously furnished to the owner, the department shall furnish the owner with a supplemental list of violations and shall provide the owner a reasonable opportunity to correct same. This provision, however, shall not preclude the department from revoking the forty-eight-month certificate of compliance if the subsequently discovered violations are disqualifying violations or if the non-disqualifying violations have not been corrected pursuant to sections 13-195 and 13-196.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

Sec. 13-199. - Appeals; effects.

- (a) Any person aggrieved by any determination or decision of the department of codes compliance made pursuant to this article shall have the right to appeal such determination or decision in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, and amendments thereto.
- (b) Nothing in this article shall be construed to limit, impair, alter or extend the rights and remedies of persons in their relationship of landlord and tenant as such rights and remedies exist under applicable law.
- (c) Nothing in this article shall be construed to relieve or exempt any person from otherwise complying with all applicable laws, ordinances, standards and regulations pertaining to the condition of buildings and other structures.
- (d) Nothing in this article shall be construed to limit the authority of the department of codes compliance to perform housing inspections in accordance with applicable law.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)

Sec. 13-200. - Violation; penalty; right of entry.

- (a) Any person willfully failing to comply with the inspection requirements of this article or the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code shall be subject to the penalties established section 13-2 of this Code.
- (b) The remedies set forth in (a) of this section are not the exclusive remedies for noncompliance with the requirements of this article and the department of codes compliance shall take such further actions as allowed by applicable law in order to obtain

compliance with the requirements of this article including, but not limited to, seeking injunctive relief under Code of Virginia, § 15.2-1432, and obtaining inspection warrants as provided in Code of Virginia, § 36-105.C.3.

(Ord. No. 7320-16)