

PARTNERS IN GOOD HOUSING



Quality of Life
City of Philadelphia
Department of Licenses & Inspections

Revised: October 20, 2025

PARTNERS IN GOOD HOUSING INTRODUCTION

The City of Philadelphia, on behalf of its citizens, has set minimum health, safety, and maintenance standards for houses and apartments. Meeting these standards involves a partnership between tenants, landlords, and the City government. All three must work together to provide decent housing for all Philadelphians.

The information in this guidebook applies to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and is based on the Code of General Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia – particularly Title 4, the Building Construction and Occupancy Code and Title 9, Regulation of Businesses, Trades, and Professions.

Additional information, including online access to this booklet, as well as access to the Building Construction and Occupancy Code (which includes the Philadelphia Property Maintenance Code) and the Philadelphia Fire Code, is available at [L&I's website](#).

Throughout this document, there are links to various online resources. If the document is being viewed electronically, the reader can directly click on those links. If the reader is viewing a hard copy of the document, they can find the URLs and QR Codes to those links at the end of each section. To access additional information, simply scan the QR codes with your smartphone or device. If multiple QR codes appear close together, you may need to cover the others so your camera can focus on the one you want to use.

LINKS

L&I's Website:

phila.gov/li





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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF A RENTAL LICENSE

1. RENTAL LICENSE

Rental Licenses are issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I). For more information, see [Section 9-3900](#) of the Philadelphia Code.

A [Rental License](#) is required for the owner of any of the following if let for occupancy:

- Any dwelling unit
- Rooming unit or rooming house
- Dormitory
- Hotel, Motel, or other Visitor Accommodations (other than limited lodging)
- Assisted living

EXCEPTIONS:

- A single rental license may be obtained for multiple units in a building under common ownership.
- A Rental License is not required if the property is occupied by an immediate family member and no rent is collected, provided that an [Affidavit of Non-Rental](#) is filed with the Department.
 - Submit to License Issuance division of L&I through a virtual or in-person appointment.
- A rental license is not required for properties owned and operated by the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) and its subsidiaries in compliance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development federal property maintenance standards.
- A Rental License is not required for [short term rental](#) (i.e. limited lodging). Limited lodging is the temporary rental of a dwelling unit to occupy for dwelling, sleeping or lodging (e.g., Airbnb).
 - Limited lodging is only permitted when a primary resident occupies the unit. If a unit does not have a primary resident, it should be permitted and licensed as a hotel.
 - Limited lodging activity is only permitted when arranged through a licensed [Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent](#) as defined in [Section 9-3910](#).
 - Limited Lodging activity requires zoning approval and a [Limited Lodging Operator License](#).

2. BUSINESS TAX ACCOUNT NUMBER

This is a number assigned by the Philadelphia Revenue Department used to file City business taxes.

Only one Business Tax Account Number is required for one individual or company, regardless of how many rental properties they own.

In order to obtain the required licenses, property owners and landlords must be tax compliant.



3. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY LICENSE (CAL)

Formerly known as the Business Privilege License, a [Commercial Activity License](#) is required of every person or company desiring to engage in any business in the City of Philadelphia including those desiring to let their properties for occupancy. It is a lifetime license free of charge and applies to all businesses owned by a person or company. A CAL must be obtained prior to applying for a rental license.

Only one CAL is required for one individual or company, regardless of how many rental properties they own.

EXCEPTION:

- For a property with four or less rental units, where the owner lives on the premises, a Commercial Activity License is not required. Instead, an identifier, known as an activity license number, is used by the City.

4. ZONING APPROVAL

A property must be properly zoned in order to operate as a dwelling for rent. Zoning approval is required even if the owner occupies one of the units.

A property must be zoned for residential use or visitor accommodations. The residential categories include Household and Group living.

- Household Living includes:
 - Single family - residence lot for 1 family
 - Two family - residence lot for 2 families with each family occupying a single dwelling unit
 - Multi-family - residence lot for 3 or more families with each family occupying a single dwelling unit
- Group Living includes:
 - Personal Care Home
 - Single Room Residence - a building containing multiples rooms without a private bathroom.
 - Example: Dormitories, rooming houses, and supported independent living
- Visitor Accommodations – Hotel, Motel, etc.

5. CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY (CO) OR PROOF OF LEGAL OCCUPANCY

A CO is a certification issued by L&I after a building is constructed or the occupancy of a building or space is changed. A CO is required as a prerequisite for obtaining a rental license. A CO is required as a prerequisite for a rental license for a newly established use or newly constructed building. For existing, legally established uses, alternative documentation may be submitted as established by the department.

6. LANDLORD LEAD PAINT RESPONSIBILITIES

If a building was constructed prior to March 1978 and is obtaining a rental license, it is subject to [laws related to lead safety](#).

EXCEPTION:

- Dwelling units developed by or for an educational institution for the exclusive residential use and occupancy by that institution's students

If the building is subject to the lead laws, before a lease is signed, the landlord must provide the tenant with a current certificate indicating that the property is Lead Safe or Lead Free. To certify a property is lead safe or lead free, a state-licensed lead inspector or EPA-certified dust wipe technician must inspect the unit and collect dust wipe samples to test for lead. A certificate will be provided upon the determination that the property is Lead Safe or Lead Free. Only a Pennsylvania Licensed Inspector, Risk Assessor or EPA Certified Lead-Dust Sampling Technician can provide a certification.

A copy of the certificate along with the dust wipe test results, must be submitted to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health through their [online portal](#).

- Lead safe certification must be based on an inspection performed no more than 4 years prior to rental license issuance, rental license renewal or execution of a new lease agreement.
- Lead free certification must be based on an inspection performed any time before rental license issuance, rental license renewal or execution of a new lease agreement.

A new or renewal rental license application may not be submitted until required lead certifications are uploaded to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's [online portal](#). For more information, copies of the law, guidance for landlords, sample certificates, and more, review the [laws related to lead safety](#).

7. BED BUG CONTROL

Landlords must develop and follow a bed bug control plan to prevent and control bed bug infestations and provide the tenant with the Philadelphia bed bug informational notice. For more information review [bed bug materials](#).

8. RENTERS' ACCESS ACT

The [Renters' Access Act](#) supports fair access to housing by creating uniform screening criteria for applicants' rental and credit history. Landlords shall follow the law when they screen prospective tenants.

9. EVICTION PROTECTION

Landlords must send residential tenants a [Notice of Rights for Tenants](#) at least 30 days before taking any steps toward eviction. This notice is not a lease termination or non-renewal notice.

Landlords must contact the [Eviction Diversion Program](#) if a tenant submits a COVID-19 Certification of Financial Hardship, unless the tenant poses an imminent threat of harm.



10. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Each time a dwelling unit is rented to a new tenant, the owner must give the tenant:

- I. A copy of this booklet, *Partners In Good Housing*.
- II. A [Certificate of Rental Suitability](#) issued by L&I no more than sixty (60) days prior to the start of tenancy.
 - The Certificate of Rental Suitability, which must include the owner's attestation to the suitability of the dwelling unit. (L&I will not issue a Certificate unless the owner has obtained all licenses required to rent the property.)
- III. Any owner required to obtain a Rental License must designate a Managing Agent who resides in the city or regularly attends a business office within the city.
 - An owner that resides or maintains a business office within the city may act as a Managing Agent.
- IV. A copy of [A Guide to Bed Bug Safety](#) brochure and confirmation that, within the past 120 days, this unit has or has not had a bed bug infestation.
- V. A link to the ["How to Register" page](#) on the City Commissioners' website.

HELPFUL TIP:

REFER TO APPENDIX B OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR A CHECKLIST THAT CAN BE COMPLETED BY THE OWNER AND TENANT.

High-rise residential buildings with a floor 75 feet or more above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access are also required to obtain a [High-Rise License](#) in addition to a rental license.

If you are a renter living in an apartment or house or a college student living off-campus, it is important to have renters' insurance to protect your belongings. Look for a policy that also includes lodging assistance in case you are temporarily displaced from your home. Renters' insurance can be bundled with other policies such as auto insurance to help lower the overall cost (please reach out to your current insurance provider to discuss available policies). For additional information and resources on renters' insurance, please visit the [Pennsylvania Insurance Department's website](#).

LINKS

Section 9-3900 - Property Licenses and Owner Accountability

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-280264



Rental License Service Page

phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/get-a-license/business-licenses/rental-and-property/get-a-rental-license/



Affidavit of Non-Rental

phila.gov/departments/department-of-licenses-and-inspections/licenses/rental-and-property-licenses/rental-and-property-licenses-materials/#affidavit-of-non-rental



Short Term Rental

phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/rent-or-sell-property/rent-your-property-short-term/



Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent

phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/get-a-license/business-licenses/rental-and-property/get-a-limited-lodging-booking-agent-license/



Section 9-3910 – Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent Licenses

codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-280381



Limited Lodging Operator License

phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/get-a-license/business-licenses/rental-and-property/get-a-limited-lodging-operator-license/





Commercial Activity License

phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/get-a-license/business-licenses/activity/get-a-commercial-activity-license/



Laws Related to Lead Safety

phila.gov/programs/lead-and-healthy-homes-program/



Philadelphia Department of Public Health Online Portal

leadcertification.phila.gov/login



Bed Bug Materials

phila.gov/documents/philadelphia-bed-bug-materials/



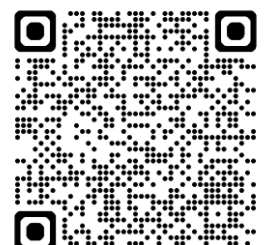
Renters' Access Act

phila.gov/documents/renters-access-act-tenant-screening-guidelines/



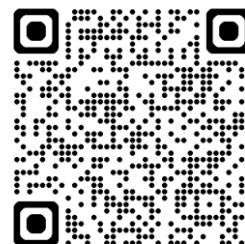
Notice of Rights for Tenants

phila.gov/documents/emergency-housing-protection-act-materials-for-tenants-and-landlords/



Eviction Diversion Program

eviction-diversion.phila.gov/#/



Certificate of Rental Suitability

phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/get-a-certificate/get-a-certificate-of-rental-suitability/



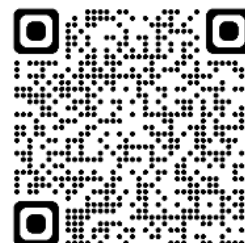
A Guide to Bed Bug Safety

phila.gov/documents/philadelphia-bed-bug-materials/#philadelphia-bed-bug-informational-notice



Voting – How to Register

<https://vote.phila.gov/voting/registering-to-vote/how-to-register-2/>



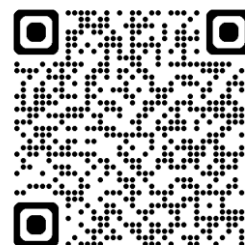
High-Rise License

phila.gov/services/property-lots-housing/buy-sell-or-rent-a-property/information-about-renting/get-a-high-rise-license/



Pennsylvania Insurance Department

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/insurance>





FIRE PROTECTION

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- In the City of Philadelphia, L&I is responsible for enforcing the applicable sections of Title 4, the Building Construction and Occupancy Code, and Title 9, Regulation of Businesses, Trades, and Professions.
- Tenants, landlords, and homeowners each have the duty to keep hallways, stairways, fire escapes, and exits clear at all times. Storage of any kind under stairways is prohibited unless the space is separated from the stair by fire-resistance-rated construction per Chapter 11 of Philadelphia Fire Code.
- Rubbish and garbage are not allowed to accumulate in any location inside a building, including basements, storage, electrical, mechanical or other equipment rooms. Rooms intended for trash storage must have sprinklers and be separated from the rest of the building by one-hour fire-resistance-rated construction.
- Rubbish, garbage or other materials shall not be stored or allowed to accumulate in stairways, passageways, aisles, doors, windows, fire escapes or other means of egress.
- Permitted amounts of paints and flammable liquids (including insecticides containing flammable materials) must be stored in a room separated from all other parts of the building by one-hour fire-resistance-rated construction.
- Fire extinguishers must be installed in accordance with [Section 906 of the Philadelphia Fire Code](#). As an alternative to area and distance requirements set forth in Section 906 and NFPA 10, the code allows for at least one fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 1-A:10-B:C to be mounted in each dwelling unit. All fire extinguishers shall have a tag attached indicating inspections and maintenance performed during the past 12 months.
- Except for one- and two-family dwellings, lighting is required in common corridors, stairways, and the exit discharge (exterior) to provide a light level of one foot-candle at the floor. This lighting must be on a circuit independent of any dwelling unit. In buildings that have more than one required exit, this lighting must have an emergency power source.
- In buildings that are required to have more than one exit (including fire escapes), exit signs are required to identify the means of egress from each floor. These signs are required to be illuminated at all times by both the normal and emergency power sources.
- In existing buildings that have more than one required exit stair, the stairs must be enclosed and separated from the corridor by fire-resistant construction. In non-high-rise buildings, doors in these exit or stair enclosures must be one-hour fire-rated self-closing doors or 1 ¾ -inch thick solid core wood self-closing doors.
- In buildings that have only one required exit, the doors from the apartments must be self-closing and one-hour fire-rated or 1 ¾ -inch solid core wood door.

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR ONE- AND TWO-FAMILY DWELLINGS

Owners of one- and two-family dwellings (including owner-occupied one-family dwellings) are required to install smoke alarms powered by the building's primary electrical system or a non-removable (sealed) 10-year battery. Smoke alarms should be installed as follows:

- Where more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed within an individual dwelling unit or sleeping unit, the smoke alarms shall be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit. Physical interconnection of smoke alarms shall not be required where listed wireless alarms are installed and all alarms sound upon activation of one alarm.
 - In buildings built prior to January 1988, smoke alarm interconnection is not required between multiple alarms within a dwelling unit.
- Smoke alarms must be installed:
 - In the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms
 - On each story of the house (including the basement)
 - Inside the bedroom in new dwelling units built before January 1988.
 - Discretion should be used to place smoke alarms as near to the bedroom(s) as practical without causing activation by normal cooking activity or steam from bathrooms.
 - In no event shall the detector be placed more than 15 feet from the bedroom door
- Ionization smoke alarms shall not be installed less than 20 feet horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance; Ionization smoke alarms with an alarm-silencing switch shall not be installed less than 10 feet horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance; Photoelectric smoke alarms shall not be installed less than 6 feet horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance.
- Smoke alarms shall be installed not less than 3 feet horizontally from the door or opening of a bathroom that contains a bathtub or shower.
- In split-level dwellings without doors between adjacent levels, a smoke alarm is only required on the upper level, provided there is less than one full story between levels.
- Existing properties occupied as one- and two-family dwellings (R3) and those used as Residential Care facilities (R4) with five (5) to fifteen (15) occupants, must be equipped with Carbon Monoxide (CO) detection.
 - CO detectors shall receive their primary power from the building wiring.
 - CO detectors are permitted to be battery powered or electric plug-in type if the building was constructed prior to January 1, 2010.
 - CO detection shall be installed outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.
 - Where a fuel burning appliance is located within a bedroom or its attached bathroom, a carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed within the bedroom.
 - Combination Smoke/CO alarms are permitted.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION AGENCY, THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 72,000 CARBON MONOXIDE INCIDENTS IN THE U.S. EACH YEAR

- Annual certification of smoke alarms in one- and two-family dwellings is not required. However, upon sale of the property, the seller is required to certify in writing to the buyer that the required smoke and CO detectors have been installed and are in proper operating condition.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR RESIDENTIAL HOTELS, MULTIPLE FAMILY DWELLINGS, AND MIXED-USE OCCUPANCIES (RESIDENTIAL LOCATED ABOVE NON-RESIDENTIAL)

SMOKE ALARMS

- Smoke alarms are required within the dwelling units of buildings that are not sprinklered throughout, in the same fashion as described for one- and two-family dwellings, except that battery-powered units are not accepted for any of the required smoke alarms. These should not be connected to the building's automatic fire alarm system as their purpose is to sound their self-contained alarm only in the dwelling unit where they are activated.
- In existing high-rise buildings that are not sprinklered throughout, a smoke alarm is required in each bedroom in addition to the ones in the vicinity of the bedrooms.

FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

The following lists the minimum requirements of the Philadelphia Fire Code. Increased protection may be required for newer buildings.

- A fire alarm system is required in the following occupancies:
 - Existing Hotels and Motels (R1) occupancies more than 3 stories or more than 20 units, with certain exceptions for sprinklered buildings and those less than two stories, as listed in the Philadelphia Fire Code
 - Existing Use Group R2 (buildings containing 3 or more apartments, condominiums, rooming units, dormitories, etc.) except where the building is protected by an automatic fire suppression system (sprinklers) or those meeting the exception specified in the Philadelphia Fire Code
 - Existing mixed-use occupancies (for example, an apartment above a grocery store) except where the non-residential space in the building is protected by an automatic fire suppression system (sprinklers)
 - Existing Use Group R4 (assisted living up to 16 occupants)
- An automatic fire alarm system consists of a fire alarm panel and system smoke detectors which differ from smoke alarms, and audible devices such as bells, or horn strobe combinations used for occupant notification unless normal operations in the space produce products of combustion that would activate smoke detectors.
- A manual fire alarm system consists of a fire alarm panel with manual activation, typically a pull or break-glass station and sounding devices similar to those referenced above.

- All fire protection equipment, including fire alarm systems, must be inspected, tested, and certified each year by a qualified licensed electrical contractor or licensed fire alarm inspector. Copies of the certification must be kept on site for a period of three years.
- A fire alarm panel is required to supervise all system components for proper continuous operation, to receive signals from the devices, to activate the sounding devices, and to provide back-up power in the event of the primary power failure. Fire alarm systems in high-rise buildings or those installed after January 1, 2004, are also required to be monitored in accordance with the Philadelphia Building Code.
- The Fire Department must be notified IMMEDIATELY through “911” of the activation of any fire alarm, excluding the household fire warning detectors that are installed in the dwelling units.

4. FIRE ALARM REQUIREMENTS UNIQUE TO BUILDINGS WITH MORE THAN ONE EXIT STAIR

- The fire alarm panel is required to have at least one zone per floor.
- A manual fire alarm box (break-glass or pull station) is required at each door from the corridor to building exit stairs on each floor. At each box, a sign should be affixed, stating “IN CASE OF FIRE: SOUND ALARM AND CALL 911.”

5. FIRE ALARM REQUIREMENTS UNIQUE TO “SMALL” APARTMENT BUILDINGS

Buildings three stories or less with one exit stairway or two exit stairways that are both visible from all points within a maximum 20-foot-long vestibule or corridor between the stairs have less stringent alarm requirements.

- The fire alarm panel is permitted to have a minimum of one zone that incorporates all of the system devices in the building.
- A manual fire alarm box (break-glass or pull station) is required only at the exit door from the stairway to the outside, not on each floor. At the box, a sign shall be affixed, stating “IN CASE OF FIRE: SOUND ALARM AND CALL 911.”

6. FIRE ALARM REQUIREMENTS FOR MIXED OCCUPANCIES

- Mixed Occupancy is a term to describe a building that contains both residential dwellings and commercial spaces. For example, a business on the first floor and two dwelling units on the upper floors.
- An automatic electrically powered fire alarm system with smoke detection is required in the non-residential use unless it is sprinklered throughout.
- Where the non-residential use is a drinking and/or dining establishment, heat detectors are permitted in lieu of smoke detectors in the kitchen, in patron areas where smoking is permitted, and in patron areas where skillet or sizzling-type entrees are served. All other detectors in the non-residential use are required to be smoke detectors.
- Alarm sounding devices are required to be located in the non-residential use and typically in the stairway or hallways in multiple-family dwellings above. Where the use above the non-residential use is a single-family or two-family use where there is no common hallway or stairway serving all floors, sounding devices will be required in the dwelling unit(s). Alarm sounding devices are required to be



activated by the manual fire alarm boxes, fire suppression systems including commercial kitchen suppression, and all smoke detectors within the property excluding smoke alarms installed within dwelling units.

- Manual fire alarm boxes must be located at the exits from the non-residential use. These boxes must be connected to sounding devices throughout the building. Manual fire alarm boxes are not required in the exits from the residential use if it is a one- or two-family dwelling.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

**ACCORDING TO THE U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION, COOKING IS
THE LEADING CAUSE OF FIRE IN RESIDENCES**

LINKS

Philadelphia Fire Code

<https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/PHLFC2018>



BASIC FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED PLUMBING FACILITIES

- Every dwelling unit is required to have the following:
 - A water closet (toilet) in a room that gives privacy.
 - A lavatory basin (sink) located in the same room as the water closet or in close proximity to the water closet room door.
 - A bathtub or shower in a room that gives privacy. This room may be the same as the room with the toilet or a separate room.
 - An openable window or an approved ventilating system in each bathroom.
- Rooming houses require one water closet, lavatory basin (sink), and bathtub or shower for each four rooming units.
- All toilet rooms, bathrooms, and equipment must be kept in good working condition.
- Tenants must keep the bathroom and bathroom equipment clean and sanitary.

REQUIRED KITCHEN FACILITIES

- A kitchen sink
- Tenants are responsible to keep the sink clean and use it properly.
- Dwelling units must be provided with permanent cooking facilities. The cooking equipment must be properly installed, work safely and effectively, and be maintained in good working condition. The tenant must use the cooking equipment properly and must keep it clean and sanitary.
 - Permanent cooking facilities are fixtures necessary for cooking which generally consist of a kitchen with a stovetop oven. Permanent cooking facilities do not include microwave ovens, toaster ovens or hotplates.
- Cooking and cooking equipment is not permitted in any Rooming or Dormitory Unit (coffee pots and microwave ovens are not considered cooking equipment).

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

PORTABLE COOKING EQUIPMENT THAT USES FLAME IS PROHIBITED. COOKING EQUIPMENT THAT USES GASOLINE OR KEROSENE AS FUEL IS PROHIBITED.

WATER SYSTEMS

- The landlord must provide running water and facilities for hot water. Hot water must be available at not less than 110 degrees and not more than 125 degrees and at sufficient volume and pressure to enable the fixture to function properly.



- A gas-burning water heater shall not be located in any bathroom, toilet room, bedroom or other occupied room normally kept closed unless permitted by the Property Maintenance Code [Section PM 505.4](#).
- All plumbing equipment must be connected to the City water and sewage systems unless the City gives permission to use a private system.

HEATING FACILITIES

- The landlord must provide a central heating system or an approved separate permanent heating system for each residential unit. Heating equipment must be safe, properly installed, and adequate to heat the entire dwelling unit.
- Cooking equipment or appliances cannot be used for heating.
- In rooming houses and buildings with two or more dwelling units, the landlord must supply heat at a temperature of 68 degrees for each apartment from October 1 through April 30 and during the months of May or September when the outside temperature falls below 60 degrees F.
- The landlord does not have to supply heat if the dwelling unit is provided with separate permanent heating equipment solely under the control of the tenant of that apartment.
- Approved portable kerosene heaters are only permitted in one- and two-family dwellings provided they comply with the Fire Code. They should not be within 3 feet of combustible materials, have all fuel containers stored outside, should never be left unattended, be shut down before sleeping, and should only be re-fueled outdoors.

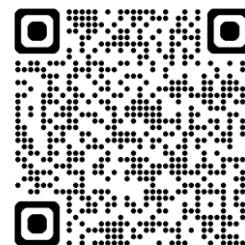
ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

- Dwelling units must be served by a minimum three-wire 120/240-volt single-phase service not less than 60 amperes.
- Every habitable space must have at least two separate and remote electrical outlets. Bathrooms, closets, halls, storage, utility and similar spaces are not considered habitable space.
- Laundry areas must contain one grounded receptacle or ground fault circuit interrupter and bathrooms must contain at least one receptacle. New bathrooms require a receptacle with ground-fault-circuit interrupter protection.
- Every bathroom, toilet room, kitchen, laundry room, furnace room, interior stairway, and public hall must have at least one light fixture.
- Every public hall and stairway in buildings with three or more apartments must be lit by an electric fixture at all times.
- Multi-family dwellings (three or more) are required to have automatic exterior lighting over each street entrance and in each side or rear yard.
- Emergency lighting is required in hallways and stairways in buildings with two or more exits.

LINKS

Section PM 505.4 – Plumbing Systems and Fixtures

codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-271925





KEEPING HOMES, APARTMENTS, AND YARDS CLEAN & SANITARY

KEEPING THE HOME HEALTHY AND SAFE

Both landlords and tenants must act to mitigate environmental hazards in the home. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health recommends following the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Seven Tips for keeping a Healthy Home:

1. **Keep it Dry.** Prevent water from entering your home through leaks in roofing systems, keep rainwater from entering the home due to poor drainage, and check your interior plumbing for any leaking.
2. **Keep it Clean.** Control the source of dust and contaminants, creating smooth and cleanable surfaces, reducing clutter, and using effective wet-cleaning methods.
3. **Keep it Safe.** Store poisons out of the reach of children and properly label them. Secure loose rugs and keep children's play areas free from hard or sharp surfaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and keep fire extinguishers on hand.
4. **Keep it Well-Ventilated.** Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens and use whole house ventilation for supplying fresh air to reduce the concentration of contaminants in the home.
5. **Keep it Pest-free.** All pests look for food, water and shelter. Seal cracks and openings throughout the home; store food in pest-resistant containers. If needed, use sticky-traps and baits in closed containers, along with least toxic pesticides such as boric acid powder.
6. **Keep it Contaminant-free.** Reduce lead-related hazards in pre-1978 homes by fixing deteriorated paint and keep floors and window areas clean by using a wet-cleaning approach. Test your home for radon, a naturally occurring dangerous gas that enters homes through soil, crawlspaces, and foundation cracks. Install a radon removal system if levels above the EPA action-level are detected.
7. **Keep it Well-Maintained.** Inspect, clean and repair your home routinely. Take care of minor repairs and problems before they become large repairs and problems.

For more information, please visit [HUD's website](#).

GARBAGE & TRASH

- The interior and exterior of every premises must be free from the accumulation of rubbish or garbage.
- Occupants must place all rubbish and trash in storage containers or in disposal equipment.
- The owner of every dwelling shall supply one of the following:
 - an approved mechanical food waste grinder in each dwelling unit,
 - an approved incinerator unit in the structure available to the occupants, or
 - an approved leakproof, covered, outside garbage container.
- Garbage, not ground or incinerated, must be placed in leak-proof containers with tight-fitting lids. Combustible waste must be placed in covered containers or in sturdy bags that are securely tied. Newspapers and magazines should be tied in bundles of not more than 20 gallons.

- All containers must be kept clean and sanitary.
- Refrigerators and similar appliances and equipment shall not be discarded or stored on premises without first removing the doors.

RECYCLING

- Recycling is the law in Philadelphia. If you don't recycle, you can be fined. Residents need to obtain their own recycling container - no larger than 20 gallons in size. Using multiple containers is okay, as long as they are used only for recycling set-out. A free recycling container may be available to city residents at any one of the [City's Sanitation Centers](#).
- The City will collect recycling curbside at residential buildings of six or fewer dwelling units.
- Owners of buildings with more than six dwelling units are responsible for providing recycling services through their own means. Usually, this means through a private contract with a recycling service provider. Owners of condo and co-op buildings may elect to register with a Streets Department program.
- Landlords are responsible for notifying tenants of the City trash and recycling regulations.

CARE & MAINTENANCE OF YARDS & FENCES

- The landlord and the homeowner must ensure that their yards drain properly.
- The tenant must keep the yard clean and sanitary.
- Fences must be kept in good repair by the homeowner or landlord.
- The property shall be maintained free from weeds or plant growth more than 10 inches.

INSECTS & RODENTS

- Owners are responsible for extermination within the structure prior to renting or leasing.
- The occupant of a single-family dwelling must keep the house clean and sanitary. It is the occupant's responsibility to have insects, rodents, and/or other pests exterminated.
- The owner of a structure with two or more dwelling or rooming units is responsible for extermination of public or shared areas. If the infestation is caused by the failure of an occupant to prevent infestation, the occupant and the owner shall be responsible for extermination.
- Responsibility for Bed Bugs:
 - Owner Obligations
 - May not lease a dwelling unit unless:
 - they have given the tenant an informational notice regarding bed bugs;
 - has developed, maintained and is following a bed bug plan; and
 - has provided the tenant with written notice of any history of bed bug infestation and remediation history for the unit for the past 120 days.
 - If no such history exists, that must also be given to the tenant in writing



- Tenant Obligations:
 - o Upon entering a dwelling, may not bring in personal belongings that are infested with bed bugs.
 - o Must notify the landlord within 5 business days if tenant reasonably suspects or knows of a bed bug infestation in the tenant's dwelling or common area of the building.
- Shared Obligations Between Owner and Tenant:
 - o Tenant must share in the responsibility for the reasonable cost for investigating and remediating a bed bug infestation if tenant fails to notify the landlord, in writing, more than 365 days of the start of the lease that the tenant found or reasonably suspected bed bug.
- For more information, see [Section 9-4802](#) of the Philadelphia Code.

LINKS

HUD's Website

hud.gov/contactus/healthy-homes



Philadelphia Sanitation Centers

phila.gov/services/trash-recycling-city-upkeep/get-a-recycling-bin/



Section 9-4802 – Bed Bugs and Property Rentals

codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-280984



HOW THE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY CODE IS ENFORCED

REPAIRS

- The landlord or homeowner is responsible for all repairs that are necessary to keep the building in good condition.
- All foundations, walls, roofs, floors, ceilings, windows, doors, stairs, and porches must be safe, weather-tight, and rodent proof.
- All interior doors, cabinets, shelves, and other supplied equipment must be kept in sound condition and good repair.
- Exterior wood or metal surfaces must be painted or covered with protective coating to prevent deterioration. Exterior walls must be pointed, and cracks sealed to keep them weather-tight and waterproof.
- All plumbing and heating equipment must be properly installed, kept in good mechanical condition, and free from leaks and stoppages.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

THE CITY HOLDS THE LANDLORD RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL REPAIRS REQUIRED BY LAW, REGARDLESS OF ANY AGREEMENT OR LEASE BETWEEN THE TENANT AND LANDLORD.

LEAD PAINT

- Lead paint shall not be permitted to remain on interior surfaces of any dwelling, rooming house, dwelling unit, or rooming unit when the Department of Public Health determines that its presence creates a health hazard.
- The Environmental Protection Agency's Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule (the RRP Rule), has been in effect since June 23, 2008, to protect against hazardous lead dust. The RRP applies to renovation, repair or painting work at a property that:
 - Was built before 1978;
 - Is visited or occupied by children under six years of age; and
 - Will disturb more than six square feet of painted surface on walls or woodwork (interior) or 20 square feet (exterior)
- There is no safe level of lead in the human body. Children under the age of six are most susceptible to the effects of lead. Even at low blood lead levels, the result of lead exposure can result in behavior and learning problems, lower IQ and hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and anemia.



If the landlord does his/her own work on rental properties subject to the RRP rule and/or uses his/her own employees to do so, the landlord must be an EPA-certified RRP firm and only use trained and certified workers to do the work. If the landlord hires a contractor to do the work, the landlord does not need to be certified, but the contractor doing the work does.

For more information, please see the [EPA's website](#).

LINKS

EPA's Website

epa.gov/lead



HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT OR AN APPEAL

GENERAL

The City enforces the Building Construction and Occupancy Code by sending L&I inspectors to examine housing conditions. L&I is authorized and directed by law to conduct such inspections at reasonable times. Inspectors must show proper identification.

When a violation is found, L&I notifies the responsible party – either the landlord, the tenant, or the homeowner. That person is told to correct the violation within a certain period of time. The responsible party is also provided an opportunity to contest the violation(s) by filing an administrative appeal to the Board of Licenses and Inspection Review.

The responsible party may also be fined directly by the Department or, if violation is not corrected, subject to a lawsuit. Such a lawsuit could result in court ordered monetary fines for amounts prescribed by the Philadelphia Code.

In extreme cases such as structurally dangerous buildings, properties which are vacant and open to trespass, or those with hazardous material storage, L&I is authorized to correct any violations which are considered unsafe or hazardous, if the violations are not corrected. The City may also issue a cease operations order for the property, rendering further occupancy of the property unlawful. The City charges the cost of the corrections to the violator and, with the approval of the Law Department, can collect the cost by liens on the property.

COMPLAINTS

If the landlord is not carrying out his or her responsibilities, the tenant should tell the landlord what the problems are. If the landlord fails to act, the tenant should report the problems to L&I through 311. Complaints can be filed over the phone by calling 311 (within Philadelphia) or 215-686-8686 (outside Philadelphia), in person (City Hall, Room 167), [online](#), or through the Philly 311 app.

When filing a complaint, the person must give his or her name and/or address, the address of the property, and the nature of the complaint to ensure accuracy and efficiency of the inspection. A case will be generated and referred to the appropriate inspection unit.

If an inspector is unable to enter the property, he or she will leave a card. The recipient is required to call the number on the card to arrange for an inspection.

The Department does not divulge the identity of a complainant.

APPEALS

Any person who believes that the Department has erred in some action that has been taken may appeal to the appropriate Appeals Board. For more information on Appeals Boards and filing instructions, visit [L&I's website](#).



LINKS

311 Online Portal

iframe.publicstuff.com/#?client_id=242



L&I Website:

phila.gov/li



APPENDIX A: LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

The following information is provided by the Philadelphia Water Department and Department of Public Health:

Old plumbing fixtures and solder, and the service pipe connecting a residential property to the public water main, may contain lead that can enter the drinking water. The City treats its drinking water to reduce the risk of exposure from lead materials used in home plumbing. Using fresh water from the main will further reduce the risk of lead exposure from your plumbing. If the water tap has not been used in more than six hours, it is recommended that you run the water for at least three minutes before drinking or cooking with it. This time may need to be longer depending on how far the tap is from the water main. Also, you should always use cold water for drinking, cooking, or making baby formula.

For more information, review the [Lead Guide](#).

LINKS

Lead Guide

phila.gov/guides/lead-guide/where-is-lead/





APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTAL RENTAL CHECKLIST

The checklist below is intended to serve as a guide to outline the additional documents or information that a tenant is entitled to.

Property Address and Unit: _____

Document / Information	QR Code and Link	Provided?
A copy of this Partners in Good Housing brochure	 phila.gov/documents/partners-in-good-housing-brochures/	☐
A Certificate of Rental Suitability issued by L&I no more than sixty (60) days prior to the start of tenancy Date of Certificate: _____	 phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/get-a-certificate/get-a-certificate-of-rental-suitability/	☐
A valid Rental License License No: _____	 phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/get-a-license/business-licenses/rental-and-property/get-a-rental-license/	☐
Managing Agent that operates in Philadelphia Name: _____ Phone/Email: _____		☐
A copy of A Guide to Bed Bug Safety brochure	 phila.gov/documents/philadelphia-bed-bug-materials/#philadelphia-bed-bug-informational-notice	☐
Confirmation that, within the past 120 days, this unit has or has not had a bed bug infestation.		☐
Confirmation that this property has been certified Lead Free / Lead Safe Date of Certificate: _____		☐
Voter Registration Information	 https://vote.phila.gov/voting/register-to-vote/how-to-register-2/	☐



City of Philadelphia
Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I)
Quality of Life (QOL)
2401 Walnut Street, Ste 502
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Phila.gov/LI