

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a rental inspection program?

A: A rental inspection program is a city ordinance that applies to 2 districts in the city, the Central District and the Southwest District. If you own property in either of these districts that you rent or lease to tenants, it is subject to a rental inspection

Q: If I live in my home and it is located inside a rental inspection district, is it subject to inspection?

A: No. Only homes rented or leased by you or your company to a tenant or tenants.

Q: As a property owner, what must I do to comply with this ordinance?

A: You can visit the city website or come into City Hall to register your property to schedule an appointment for your property to be inspected.

Q: Is there a time frame to register my property?

A: Your property must be registered by October 1, 2023. Failing to register can result in a fine of \$50.00 per property.

Q: What will happen during my inspection?

A: During your inspection, an inspector will look at electrical facilities, plumbing, and mechanical items such as water heaters and HVAC systems to determine that they are properly functioning. Walking surfaces, roofs & drainage, structural members, and exposed surfaces will also be looked at.

Q: What if my property does not pass inspection?

A: If it is determined that your property has violations of the building code that require attention, the inspector will give you a reasonable amount of time to correct those violations. When the violations have been corrected, an inspector will check again for compliance, and a rental certificate of occupancy will be issued to you.

Q: Am I required to bring my property into compliance with the current building code?

A: No. Your property, by law, is only required to comply with the building code that was in effect according to the year it was built or modifications made.

EXAMPLE: If your property was built in 1960, it must only comply with the building code that was in effect in 1960. However, if your electrical system was upgraded in 2010, your electrical system must be in compliance with the building code that was in effect in 2010.

Q: What happens after my property receives a passing inspection?

A: After it has passed inspection, you will be issued a rental certificate of occupancy. You must pick up this certificate from City Hall. The certificate of occupancy will exempt you from further inspections for a period of 4 years.

Q: How much will this cost?

A: The fee for the initial inspection is free. When you pick up your certificate of occupancy, you must pay a fee of \$50.00. If your property requires subsequent inspections because of building code violations, an additional fee of \$50.00 will be applied to the rental certificate of occupancy cost.

Q: I own multiple rental properties; do I have to have all of them inspected?

A: Yes. All properties within the two districts must be inspected, and a rental certificate of occupancy must be obtained. Each rental certificate of occupancy will require a fee of \$50.00 when picked up.

Q: What if I own an apartment building?

A: Only ten percent of units require inspection in an apartment building or complex. However, if building code violations are found in forty percent of the units inspected then ALL units must be inspected. A SEPARATE RENTAL CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY MUST STILL BE OBTAINED FOR EACH UNIT IN THE BUILDING OR COMPLEX.

An apartment building or complex is a structure in which more than one dwelling unit exists within the same building.

Q: What if I need to correct the violations with my property within the time given?

A: If you find that you cannot correct violations in the time given, please contact the Property Maintenance Official with the City of Bristol. Sometimes an extension may be given to you if a contractor cannot complete the work within the original time frame that you were given. FAILURE TO CONTACT THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE OFFICIAL AFTER THE DEADLINE THAT IS GIVEN TO YOU MAY RESULT IN CIVIL CHARGES AND A FINE OF UP TO \$2,500.00 FOR NON-COMPLIANCE.

Q: What if my tenant will not allow the inspection?

A: As the owner or manager of a property, YOU are ultimately responsible for your property. Therefore, you must have an inspection or obtain the rental certificate of occupancy to avoid charges against you and a fine of up to \$2,500.00.

Q: What if I sell my property?

A: If your property is sold or ownership is otherwise transferred, you must notify the Property Maintenance Official immediately so that it may be noted that you are no longer the responsible party of said property.

Q: What if I purchase or acquire property inside of a rental inspection district?

A: If you purchase or otherwise acquire a property to rent/lease to a tenant(s) in a rental inspection district, you must notify the Property Maintenance Official immediately. If the property has already been issued a rental certificate of occupancy, it will only require an inspection once it expires. YOU MUST STILL REGISTER THE PROPERTY with the correct information of the new owner/manager.

Q: What if I own a rental property that is currently vacant?

A: No inspection is required if your property is currently vacant. However, the property must be registered and inspected when it becomes occupied. Failing to do so may result in charges and a fine.