



**Multifamily Minimum Property  
Standards  
For New Construction,  
Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, &  
Maintenance of Multifamily Facilities**

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# INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to provide the Minimum Property Standards (MPS) for new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of multifamily housing facilities that receive federal assistance through the City of Houston Housing & Community Development Department (HCDD) as required by 24CFR §200.925. The primary objective of the Minimum Property Standards is to establish the criteria for the life, health and safety of the residents at the property.

Pursuant to 24CFR§92.251, housing that is constructed or rehabilitated with HOME or CDBG funds must meet all applicable local codes, ordinances, and rehabilitation standards, at the time of project completion. In the absence of a local code addressing new construction, reconstruction, or rehabilitation, HOME-assisted new construction or rehabilitation must meet, as applicable, International Building Code (IBC) or its appropriate sub code, and/or the Minimum Property Standards(MPS) in 24CFR§200.925 and §200.926. Housing must meet the accessibility requirements at 24CFR Part 8, which implements Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29U.S.C.§794) and covered multifamily dwellings, as defined at 24CFR§100.201, and must also meet the design and construction requirements at 24CFR §100.205, which implement the Fair Housing Act (42U.S.C.§3601-§3619).

The MPS supplement local building codes by requiring properties to meet minimum standards of workmanship, durability and performance of various components of the multifamily property during the period of affordability. These components would include doors, windows, gates, stairwells, wall coverings, kitchen cabinets, carpeting, etc. of the property that would be maintained in good and safe working condition that ensures the life, health and safety of the residents at the property.

To achieve this objective, the Housing & Community Development Department conducts an annual inspection of the property in accordance with the 24CFR§92.251(a) and all local codes, construction standards, and city ordinances. Findings identified during the inspection are required to be resolved by the property owner and management. All repairs, materials, and installations must be meet the aforementioned standards of quality and workmanship.

HCDD will finance affordable multifamily developments leveraged with other capital sources, primarily Housing Tax Credits (“HTCs”). The rules and qualifications for HTCs are governed by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (“TDHCA”) within the Uniform Multifamily Rules TAC Chapter 10 (“Multifamily Rules”) and Housing Tax Credit Program Qualified Allocation Plan Chapter 11 (“QAP”). The Multifamily Rules and QAP identify minimum qualifications and threshold requirements for site and neighborhood characteristics outlining a variety of standards including design standards, environmental hazards, nuisances, and other requirements. To the extent HCDD finances with transactions financed with HTCs, HCDD recognizes the TDHCAs requirements and to the extent they comply with federal requirements will meet HCDDs requirements under the MPS. However, notwithstanding the TDHCAs design standards, applicants must be required to comply with design standards within designated flood zones.

Awardees of HCDD financing will be required to certify their developments meet these standards. Prior to closing, HCDD requires architect certification developments have been designed to meet these standards. The certification can be found in Appendix II of this document.

Assistant Director's signature 	Date Assistant Director Signed <i>February 19, 2020</i>
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# DEFINITIONS

- A. **ACCESSORY BUILDING** — A subordinate building or structure that is devoted exclusively to the main use of the property and is located on the property.
- B. **ADA**— Americans with Disabilities Act.
- C. **BATHROOM** — A room with a toilet and a lavatory sink in or near that room, with or without a bathtub or shower.
- D. **BEDROOM** --- A portion of a Dwelling Unit which is no less than 100 square feet; has no width or length less than 8 feet; is self-contained with a door (or the unit contains a second level sleeping area of 100 square feet or more; has at least one window that provides exterior access; and has at least one closet that is not less than 2 feet deep and 3 feet wide and high enough to accommodate 5 feet of hanging space. A den, study or similar space that could reasonable function as a bedroom and meets this definition can be considered a bedroom.
- E. **BUILDING AREA** — Any structure used or intended to be used for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy.
- F. **CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL** —Is one who is knowledgeable and qualified in type of work being performed; one who shows either by experience or academic qualifications, to be able to meet the industry standards for the work being performed.
- G. **DEBRIS** — Includes but is not limited to garbage, rubbish, refuse, or wrecked, decayed, dilapidated, or inoperative vehicles or machinery, and parts thereof.
- H. **DWELLING** — A building or structure, or any part of it, occupied or capable of being lawfully occupied, in whole or in part, for the purpose of human habitation and includes a dwelling unit and a building that would be used for this purpose except for its state of disrepair.
- I. **DWELLING UNIT** — A room or a suite of rooms operated as a housekeeping unit, used or intended to be used as a domicile by 1 or more persons and supporting general living conditions and includes cooking, eating, sleeping, and sanitary facilities.
- J. **EGRESS** – A permanent and unobstructed means of exiting from the dwelling in an emergency escape or rescue situation.
- K. **ENERGY STAR RATED** – To qualify, the Property includes all systems, components, equipment, fixtures and appliances that meet strict energy efficiency performance criteria established, as a joint effort, by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and that carry the Energy Star label as evidence of meeting the energy efficiency performance criteria.
- L. **ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT (ESA)** --- An environmental report that conforms to the Standard Practice of Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Assessment Process (ASTM Standard Designation: E 1527 - 13)
- M. **FAIR HOUSING ACT (24CFR§100.25)** — Federal law that prohibits discrimination by direct providers of housing, such as landlords and real estate companies as well as other entities, such as municipalities, banks or other lending institutions and insurance companies

whose discriminatory practices make housing unavailable to persons because of race or color, religion, sex, national origin, family status or disability.

- N. GRAFFITI** — Any unauthorized inscription, mark, word, figure, painting or other defacement that is written, marked, etched, scratched, sprayed, drawn, painted or engraved on or otherwise applied to any surface of public or private property to the extent that the graffiti was not authorized in advance by the owner or occupant of the property.
- O. GROUND COVER** — Suitable material applied to the ground to prevent erosion of the soil and includes concrete, flagstone, gravel, asphalt, grass or other form of landscaping.
- P. HABITABLE ROOM** — A room in a dwelling designed, lawfully used or capable of being lawfully used for living, sleeping, cooking or eating purposes. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces, and similar areas (rooms) are not considered habitable spaces (rooms).
- Q. HANDRAIL** — A continuously graspable rail forming the top part of a balustrade or guard on stairs, landings, raised walkways and ramps adhered to a wall or a guard forming part of the stair, landing, walkway or ramp intended to provide guidance and support to the user and to arrest falls.
- R. MINIMUM PROPERTY STANDARDS (MPS)** — The standards for the maintenance and occupancy prescribed for a multifamily property. Using these standards as a baseline for monitoring, a housing inspector identifies the physical deficiencies of a property and dwelling unit that need to be repaired.
- S. MULTIFAMILY DWELLING**— A building containing 3 or more dwelling units.
- T. NONHABITABLE FLOOR AREA** — Any room or space in a dwelling, or dwelling unit, other than a habitable room and includes a washroom, bathroom, toilet room, laundry, pantry, lobby, communicating corridor, stairway, closet, boiler room, garage, or space for service and maintenance of any building for public use and for access to and vertical travel between stories.
- U. NONRESIDENTIAL PROPERTY** — Land, a building or structure used or capable of being used for other than residential purposes.
- V. OCCUPANCY** — The use or intended use of a building or part of a building for the shelter or support of persons, animals or property as established by the Building Code and city ordinances.
- W. PEST**— Any mouse, rat, bed bug, flea, wasp, hornet or cockroach, but does not include a domesticated mouse or rat
- X. PROPERTY** — A building or structure or part of a building or structure and includes the lands and premises appurtenant thereto and all mobile homes, mobile buildings, mobile structures, outbuildings, fences, retaining walls and erections thereon whether heretofore or hereafter erected, and includes vacant property.
- Y. PROPERTY CONDITION ASSESSMENT (PCA)** --- Sometimes referred to as “Physical Needs Assessment,” “Project Capital Needs Assessment,” or “Property Condition Report.” The PCA provides an evaluation of the physical condition of an existing Property to evaluate the cost to rehabilitate and to determine the costs of future capital improvements to maintain the Property. The PCA must be prepared in accordance with ASTM E 2018 – 15 Standard Guide for Property Condition Assessments: baseline

Property Condition Assessment Process.

- Z. REPAIR** — Includes the provision of facilities, the making of additions or alterations or the taking of any other action that may be required to ensure that a property conforms with the standards established in a by-law passed under this section. All repairs shall be made in a good workmanlike manner with materials that are suitable and sufficient for the purpose and free from defects. The requirement that repairs be made in a "good workmanlike manner" includes, ensuring the component repaired can perform its intended function and finishing the repair in a manner reasonably compatible in design and color with adjoining decorative finishing materials. Repairs shall be made with "materials that are suitable and sufficient for the purpose" includes a requirement for materials reasonably compatible in design and color with adjoining decorative finishing materials.
- AA. RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY** — Land, a building or structure used, capable of being used, designed or intended for residential use.
- BB. RETAINING WALL** — A wall or similar structure built to hold back, confine, or sustain the pressure from a bank of earth, loose stone or fill material separating two grade levels.
- CC. SANITARY FACILITIES** — A room or rooms containing 1 or more toilets, washbasins, bathtubs or showers or any combination thereof and includes a toilet room.
- DD. SECTION 504 of the REHABILITATION ACT of 1973 (24 CFR§8.22)** — Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity that receives financial assistance from any federal agency, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as well as in programs conducted by federal agencies including HUD. This regulation requires that new construction of multifamily projects be designed and constructed to be readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. Both individual units and the common areas in the building must be accessible.
- EE. SEWAGE SYSTEM** — The City sanitary sewer system or a private sewage disposal system approved by the City.
- FF. SPECIFICATIONS** — Sometimes referred to as “written rehabilitation standards” or “specs,” that identify the minimum acceptable grades and types of materials to be used and to provide the basis for how materials and equipment shall be installed.
- GG. STORY** — The portion of a building that is situated between the top of any floor and the top of the floor next above it; or that is situated between the top of the floor and the ceiling above the floor, if there is no floor above it
- HH. VEHICLE** — Includes a motor vehicle, trailer, traction engine, farm tractor, road-building machine, bicycle and any vehicle drawn, propelled or driven by any kind of power, including muscular power.
- II. WORKMANSHIP** — refers to the quality of the work performed by a craftsman.
- JJ. YARD** — the land within the boundary lines of the property and not occupied by the principal building;



## **City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department Minimum Property Standard for New Construction and Reconstruction of Multifamily Rental Housing**

### **OVERVIEW & APPLICABILITY**

The standards contained in this document establish the minimum property standards for New Construction and Reconstruction under the City of Houston's (COH) Multifamily Rental Housing Program.

### **PURPOSE**

This document serves as the minimum standard for City of Houston multifamily rental housing. The minimum standard ensures the property must be free of those foreseeable hazards and adverse conditions that may affect the life, health, and safety of the occupants, and those conditions which may impair the customary use of the property. Fire safety and the structural soundness of the dwelling must be insured as well. In addition to these standards all units must comply with the more restrictive of the following:

- COH Building Code and Code of Ordinances
- The International Building Code (IBC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IBC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The International Residential Code (IRC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IRC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the Model Energy Code (MEC) and any applicable code required.
- The International Fire Code (IFC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IBC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The Uniform Mechanical code (UFM) adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IBC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The Uniform Plumbing code (UPC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IBC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The National Electric code (NEC) 2017 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IBC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- ASHRAE 90.1-2013 (Residential structures more than 3 stories) adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.

- HUD 24 C.F.R Part 200.925a-c/296 Rules for Multifamily and Care-Type Housing
- HUD C.F.R Part 8 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ADA, UFAS, FHA, and TAS where applicable.
- The requirements from other governing entities such as Homeowners Associations, and Local and Federal regulations pertaining to zoning, traffic, drainage, flood plains and fire prevention (NFPA)

# **MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY EXTERIOR**

## **GRADING & DRAINAGE OF PROPERTY**

1. Entire property shall be graded and maintained so no stagnant water will accumulate or stand on the premises, within or around any building or structure located on the premises.
2. Ground areas around buildings shall be sloped away from walls to eliminate low areas where standing water may collect.
3. All rainwater shall be drained and conveyed from every roof so as not to cause dampness/ damage to walls, ceilings, or floors of any habitable rooms, bathroom, toilet room, laundry room, or any other type of room therein.
4. Nowhere on the property shall there be standing water that causes a public health hazard.

## **DESIGN STANDARDS IN DESIGNATED FLOOD ZONES**

**Floodway development is prohibited.** Developments with improvements within 100-year floodplain will also be ineligible unless the applicant can demonstrate flood mitigation practices to avoid adverse impacts to residents, impacts to the floodplain and preservation of life and property. Sites not located within 100-year floodplain but reported flooding events within the past 10 years may be subject to these requirements.

Mitigation efforts to include Chapter 19 of the City's Code of Ordinances. Mitigation efforts may include, but not limited to, elevating building site out of the floodplain, elevated podium construction, restricting ground floor space for residential use, pier and beam foundations for single-family units, etc. Any mitigation efforts will be considered on a case by case basis by HCDD.

## **NON-DWELLING STRUCTURES**

Every foundation, wall, roof, window, door, hatchway, and every other entryway of every non-dwelling structure shall be constructed in a way to prevent the structure from becoming a harborage for rodents, snakes, vermin, and insects, and shall be kept in a state of maintenance and repair.

## **STEPS, SIDEWALKS, DRIVEWAYS, PARKING LOTS & PAVING**

1. All walkways, sidewalks and parking lots are to be designed to comply with all requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (24 CFR§8.22 & 23) and the Fair Housing Act (24 CFR§100.205).
2. A walkway shall be provided from the principal entrance of every building to a public street or parking lot area.
3. Parking lots are to be graded and drained to prevent ponding of water and to direct the flow of water away from the walls of all buildings.
4. Parking lots are to be provided with suitable markings to indicate parking spaces, fire lanes and the markings shall be maintained so as to be clearly visible.

5. Where parking spaces are adjacent to a building, property line, sidewalks or walking paths, parking stops or a 6" vertical curb shall be provided and shall be properly anchored and secured, and properly aligned and positioned to each parking space.
6. Parking lots shall contain adequate lighting.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Swimming pools must be enclosed by a fence suitable to prevent unwanted activities or unsupervised children access to those areas. Swimming Pool enclosures must comply with Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 757 – Pool Yard Enclosures Entrance locations must have acceptable locking hardware.
2. The entire property must be enclosed by a minimum 6' fence constructed of masonry, metal, chain link, wood, or wood composite. Fence structure must be secure enough to withstand wind and rain.

### **FOUNDATIONS, EXTERIOR WALLS, ROOFS, SOFFITS & FASCIA**

1. Every building shall have a foundation acceptable for construction under the provisions of the local building codes, and shall be sound, reasonably plumb, as designed by registered structural engineer.
2. Every foundation, exterior wall, roof, soffit, fascia and all component parts shall be weather tight, watertight, rodent proof, and insect-proof and shall be kept in a state of maintenance and repair.

### **EXTERIOR WALL**

1. All exterior wood surfaces of all non-dwelling structures shall be properly protected from the elements and from decay and rot by lead-free paint or other approved protective coatings.
2. All exterior walls must be of standard construction with a minimum 2x4's at 16 inches on center when appropriate. Insulation sheathing shall be installed on the exterior, covered with an approved exterior siding material.
3. All exterior surface material shall be protected from weather and the elements by lead-free paint or other protective coatings i.e., stain, in accordance with industry recognized standards. The exception to painting shall be all types of exterior materials acceptable to weathering without deterioration, i.e., brick, masonry, stucco.

### **WINDOWS & EXTERIOR DOORS**

1. All windows and doors must be Energy Star rated for the Energy Star Southern Climate Region.
2. Every habitable room shall have at least one (1) open air space. The minimum total window area, measured between stops, for every habitable room shall be as follows:
  - a. 1/12 of the floor area if two or more separate windows exist, or;
  - b. 1/10 of the floor area if only one window exists;

- c. A minimum of 12 square feet of window area is required in habitable rooms other than kitchens;
3. Every window sash shall be fully equipped with glass windowpanes, which are without cracks or holes, and all panes shall be adequately secured within the window sash.
4. Every window, door and frame shall be constructed and maintained in such relation to the adjacent wall construction, so as to exclude rain, as completely as possible and to the maximum extent feasible substantially exclude wind from entering the dwelling or structure, i.e., it must have adequate weather-stripping. Every window sash shall be in good condition and shall fit tightly within its frame.
5. Every window, other than a “fixed window”, shall be capable of being easily opened and shall be held in position by window hardware in accordance with manufacturer’s design.
6. Every front, rear and side door shall be not less than 3’0” in width and not less than 6’ 6” in height, except where larger doors and doorways are required.
7. All exterior doors to the outside or to a common public hall shall be insulated metal or solid core and be equipped with security locks complying with Texas Property Code, Section 92.153.
8. All windows shall have a security device/lock complying with Texas Property Code, Section 92.153.
9. Every exterior and interior door, door hinge, and door latch and/or lock shall be installed in good working condition.

## **ROOF COVERING**

1. Sloped Roofs: All sloped roofs must have a minimum 4” to 1’-0” roof pitch. Every roof of a building, and all its components, shall be weather-tight, free from leaks, prevent ponding of water, be free from unsecured or unsafe objects and materials, and have a 25 year minimum life on the materials.
2. Low-sloped Roofs: All low-sloped roofs must have a minimum 1/4” to 1’-0” roof slope. Every roof of a building, and all its components, shall be weather-tight, free from leaks, prevent ponding of water, be free from unsecured or unsafe objects and materials, and have a 25 year minimum life on the materials.

## **VENTILATION**

3. Every window opening to outdoor space, intended to provide for required ventilation, shall be supplied with screens covering the required ventilation area.
4. The material used for all such screens shall be not less than 16 mesh per inch and shall be properly installed to prevent the entrance of flies, mosquitoes or other insects. Half screens on windows may be allowed, provided, they are properly installed and prevent the entrance of flies, mosquitoes or other insects.

5. A kitchen or bathroom is acceptable without a window area, provided, there is a mechanical means of ventilation.

### **STAIRWAYS, BALCONY'S & HALLWAYS**

1. Every interior and exterior stairway, every porch and every appurtenance thereto shall be so constructed as to be safe to use and capable of supporting the load that normal use may cause to be placed thereon.
2. Handrails are not required for interior stairs having not more than 2 risers and serving a single dwelling unit and exterior stairs having not more than 3 risers and serving a single dwelling unit.
3. Handrails are required for all exterior stairs and balconies.
4. All balconies and platforms, which are 30" or more above grade, shall have a protective railing not less than 36" in height above the balcony or platform level.
5. All multiple dwellings shall have a second exit stairway or approved fire escape available to all occupants from the second floor and above of all such structures.

### **ELECTRICAL & EXTERIOR LIGHTING**

1. Public halls, buildings and stairways shall be lighted at all times with an artificial lighting system. The said system shall provide at least 2-foot candles of illumination on all parts thereof, at all times, by means of properly located electric light fixtures, provided, that such artificial lighting may be omitted from sunrise to sunset where an adequate amount of natural light is provided. Whenever the occupancy of the building exceeds 100 persons, the artificial lighting system as required herein, shall be on an emergency circuit.
2. The required intensity of illumination shall apply to both natural and artificial lighting.

# **MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY INTERIOR**

## **MINIMUM CEILING HEIGHT**

1. All habitable rooms in a dwelling or dwelling unit shall have a minimum ceiling height of 8 feet.
2. All rooms, except kitchen and/or kitchenettes and baths, shall have a minimum width of 8 ft.
3. At least 1/2 of the floor area of every habitable room located above the 1st floor shall have a ceiling height of 8', and the floor area of that part of any room where the ceiling height is less than 5' shall not be considered as part of the floor area in computing the total floor area of the room for the purpose of determining maximum floor area.

## **DWELLING ROOMS, FLOORS & DOORS**

1. Minimum Room configurations and sizes shall be as follows:
  - a. the minimum sizes of Units will be as follows:
    - a. five hundred (500) square feet for an Efficiency Unit;
    - b. six hundred (600) square feet for a one Bedroom Unit;
    - c. eight hundred (800) square feet for a two Bedroom Unit;
    - d. one thousand (1,000) square feet for a three Bedroom Unit;
    - e. one thousand, two-hundred (1,200) square feet for a four Bedroom Unit
  - b. The minimum standard in a dwelling unit is as follows: One functional toilet with seat, lavatory, towel rack, ring or hook, and either a shower or a bathtub. Any additional baths in a unit, at minimum, must contain one functional toilet with seat, towel rack, ring or hook and a lavatory.
  - c. Single bedrooms shall be at least 100 square feet in area with the room having a minimum dimension on one side of 8'-0". Bedrooms accessed off another bedroom shall not count as a separate room.
  - d. Living rooms shall be at least 80 square feet in area.
  - e. All bedrooms must have access to closets for storage of clothing.
2. Every occupant of every dwelling unit shall have unrestricted access to a toilet, to a bath, and to a kitchen sink and lavatory basin located within that dwelling unit. No dwelling or dwelling unit containing (2) or more sleeping rooms shall have such room arrangement that access to a bathroom or toilet room intended for use by the occupants can be had only by going through another sleeping room or bathroom or toilet room.
3. Every bathroom, toilet room, kitchen and utility room floor surface shall be constructed and maintained so as to be substantially impervious to water and so as to permit such floor to be easily kept in a clean and sanitary condition.
4. Floor covering in bathroom shall be vinyl type or ceramic tile and shall be free from defects. Floor finishes shall be slip resistant when wet and shall be sealed around their edges with silicone sealant. Any flooring material that permits water to readily seep into the subfloor is unacceptable.

5. Laminate, wood, vinyl, or other similar types of flooring is not acceptable in flats above the ground floor level (except for kitchens and bathrooms), due to potential noise disturbance to tenants below. unless the floor/ceiling design will result in a 50 STC (Sound Transmission Class) between upper and lower Units. This will typically require sound batt insulation (R-11) under the floor and an acoustical underlayment under the cementitious floor topping above the floor.
6. Dwelling units with 2 or more bedrooms shall have an additional storage area of at least 4 square feet per bedroom. This storage requirement does not necessarily have to be located in the bedrooms.
7. All bedrooms must have a functional door, which may be of hollow core material, which closes, and can be locked from the inside. The door width must be at least 34” for first floor units and units in buildings with elevators and 30” for upper floors of buildings without elevators.
8. All bathroom doors must be at least 34” for first floor units and units in buildings with elevators and 30” for upper floors of buildings without elevators, be at least 6’8” in height and have locking doorknobs from the inside of the bathroom or have other ways of locking the door (standard bathroom door knobs).

#### **KITCHEN FACILITY (EXCEPT FOR SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY (SRO))**

1. Every dwelling unit shall have a kitchen room or kitchenette equipped with the following:
  - a. **Kitchen Sink** - an approved kitchen sink, properly connected to both hot and cold running water lines, properly functions under normal pressure, and maintained in working order.
  - b. **Stove** - a self-cleaning and Energy-Star rated stove (gas or electric), properly connected to the source of power, maintained in working order, and capable of supplying the service for which it is intended. Stoves shall be a minimum of 30 inches wide and include cooktop and oven. Installation of overhead exhaust fans to the exterior or recirculating is required over the cooking area. (Stoves may not be required in some efficiency size apartments when approved by the Assistant Director.)
  - c. **Refrigerator/Freezer** – an Energy-Star rated refrigerator/freezer, properly connected to the source of power, maintained in working order, and capable of supplying the service for which it is intended. The refrigerator/freezer shall have a minimum capacity of at least 18 cu ft. including a 4 cu ft. Freezer. (Smaller refrigerators may be allowed in some efficiency size apartments when approved by the Assistant Director.)
  - d. **Microwave** – a microwave properly connected to the source of power, maintained in working order, and capable of supplying the service for which it is intended.
2. **Work Space & Utilities** - if tenants are required to furnish their own appliances, the landlord shall furnish sufficient space, and all required electrical connections, properly installed, to facilitate the use of said appliances.
3. Every dwelling unit in which meals are prepared shall have a sink that is installed in a counter having a backsplash and a drain board made of material impervious to water. The

sink shall be connected to an adequate supply of potable running hot and cold water and be connected to the sanitary sewer system of the dwelling unit.

4. Sinks and faucets must meet minimum applicable standards. Sink and a backsplash shall be water and grease resistant.
5. Every dwelling unit shall have a work surface of at least 8 square feet, which shall be impervious to grease and water and a space sufficient to accommodate a cooking range or countertop cooking unit, beside or in the countertop and without placing the device in a doorway or a path of egress.
6. Cabinets, cupboards or pantry for the storage of food, dishes, and cooking utensils shall be provided.
7. Stove shall be either gas or electric and oven shall be clean and provided with racks. Installation of overhead exhaust fans may require installation of a cabinet for attachment of the fan.
8. Each kitchen in a dwelling unit shall have an approved, connected and operating gas or electrical supply for cooking and refrigeration appliances.
9. GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlet receptacles will be required in all kitchens, baths and exterior areas in accordance with the applicable Electric Code.
10. Minimum lighting in kitchens will consist of one lighting fixture in the kitchen cooking area and 1 lighting fixture in any adjoining eating/dining area.

## **BATHROOM FACILITIES**

1. Every dwelling unit shall contain a bathroom equipped with the following items:
  - a. **A toilet** equipped with adequate running water connected to the water supply. The toilet shall be clean, secure, and free of defects, with a secure seat and the bowl shall fill at a reasonable rate. Toilet needs to be connected only to a cold water supply. No toilet or urinal shall be located within a habitable room.
  - b. **A wash basin/sink** that shall be located in or adjacent to every room that contains a toilet or urinal. Fixtures shall be connected with an adequate supply of potable, hot and cold running water. The sink must have a proper drain with P-trap and be vented to the outside. A water-resistant back splash shall be provided of a minimum height of 4” that is sealed around the edges with bathroom grade silicone sealant.
  - c. **A bathtub/shower** may be in the same room as the toilet and lavatory or in a separate room. The bathtub shall be of a reasonable design so as not to give rise to a slipping hazard to those who use the shower. Bathtub and shower walls shall be covered to a height sufficient to protect the walls from water penetration. Bathtub shall be fitted securely and there shall be no leaks. All shower bases shall be adequately sealed and a curtain rod or door shall be provided of a sufficient standard to prevent water damage to the adjacent floor.
  - d. **A toilet paper roll holder & towel bar** shall be provided within 12” of toilet or tub.
  - e. **Medicine cabinet & mirror** Medicine cabinets that will limit access by children and a minimum 2’ x 2’ mirror is required in all full baths.

- f. **Light fittings** shall be of a sealed type appropriate for bathrooms.
  - g. **Ventilation to the exterior** shall be provided.
2. Dwelling units with two (2) or more bedrooms will be required to have at least two (2) bathrooms.
  3. Every toilet and every bath shall be contained in a room or within separate rooms, which affords privacy to a person within said room or rooms.
  4. All bathrooms and toilet rooms shall be located within an area accessible from within the building.
  5. Every communal bath shall be located within a room or rooms accessible to the occupants of each dwelling unit sharing such facilities, without going through a dwelling unit of another occupant and without going outside of the dwelling.
  6. Toilets and bathrooms shall have doors with a privacy-type lock.

## **PLUMBING**

1. Every dwelling unit shall contain at least the minimum number and types of working plumbing fixtures, consisting of a water closet; a hand wash basin; and a bathtub or shower.
2. Every supplied facility, piece of equipment, or utility which is required under this section, shall be constructed and installed in safe, sanitary working condition, free from leaks, defects and obstructions.
3. Every dwelling and every building to which water is available under pressure through piping shall be provided with piping for hot and cold water connected to every kitchen fixture, every washbasin, bathtub, shower, sink and laundry area; and piping for cold water connected to every toilet and hose bib.
4. Water faucets shall be free of defects with no leaks or drips and in good condition (i.e. no dripping) and easy to operate by children or people with finger mobility problems. The type of water faucet to be fitted should have a ceramic disc washer and should be quarter turn or lever operated.
5. Every dwelling shall have supplied water-heating facilities which are properly installed, in working condition, and free of leaks; properly connected to any required hot water lines; and capable of heating water to be drawn for every bath as well as general usage.
6. Hot water storage associated with water heating facilities shall be not less than the following minimum capacities:
  - a. One (1) bedroom dwelling unit -30 gallons
  - b. Two (2) bedroom dwelling units - 40 gallons
  - c. Three (3) or more bedroom dwelling units and rooming houses - 50 gallons or more
7. Sizes and/or number of water heaters shall be based upon the number of units served. No water heaters shall be allowed in sleeping rooms, bathrooms or closets, unless closet is dedicated for the purpose of housing plumbing and mechanical equipment. Water heaters in a utility room are acceptable. All water heaters shall be properly vented and sealed and shall be equipped with a pressure relief valve and drip leg.

8. Plumbing fixtures shall meet US EPA Water Sense requirements were applicable.

## **VENTILATION**

1. Every bathroom, toilet room, and kitchen shall comply with the light and ventilation requirements for habitable rooms contained above, except that no window shall be required in adequately ventilated bathrooms, toilet rooms or kitchens equipped with a ventilation system installed in good working condition and located to ensure its proper operation.
2. All bedrooms must have an egress window in addition to the door. Egress windows must be no more than 44” from the floor and permit at least 5.7 square feet of egress area. Windows must be operable, have locking mechanisms, and provide for ventilation. If there are living accommodations in a basement, an egress window is required.
3. All bathrooms must have an operational window, electric vent fan to the exterior, or other acceptable method of ventilation.
4. Ceiling fans installed in general living areas shall be Energy Star rated and installed to manufacturer’s requirements.

## **ELECTRICAL & LIGHTING**

1. The capacity of the system of circuits and electrical outlets within a building shall be adequate for the intended use of all rooms, and adequate electrical outlets shall be installed to prevent the need for extension cords or other extensions being used as a permanent wiring system.
2. Every habitable room within such dwelling shall contain, at a minimum, 2 separate and remote wall type electric convenience outlets.
3. Habitable rooms over 120 square feet, shall contain, at a minimum, 3 separate and remote wall type electric convenience outlets. All newly installed outlets shall be grounded type outlets.
4. Temporary wiring or extension cords shall not be used as permanent wiring.
5. All receptacles in the kitchen, bathroom and lavatory, must be GFCI type (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) and outlets must be provided within 6 feet from any bathroom sink or lavatory.
6. Receptacle convenience outlets installed on the exterior of the structure or on open porches, breezeways, garages, utility rooms, etc. shall be of the GFCI, weather protected type. All electric lighting fixtures installed on the exterior shall be of the type approved for exterior use.
7. All heavy-duty appliances, i.e., window air conditioners, freezers, refrigerators, electric stoves, washers, electric dryers, microwaves, etc., shall be supplied with their own dedicated outlet(s) on separate circuits, as applicable.
8. Outlets are required to permit coverage of the entire room by an appliance with a 6 foot cord.
9. Every habitable room shall have at least 1 ceiling or wall type electric light fixture, controlled by a wall switch, or a wall type grounded electric convenience outlet controlled by a remote switch in the interior of the room next to the entrance.

10. Every toilet room, bathroom, laundry, and hallway (where applicable) shall contain at least 1 supplied ceiling or wall type electric light fixture, controlled by a wall switch, and at least 1 wall type grounded electric convenience outlet. Wall type convenience outlets used in bathrooms and kitchens shall be the GFCI type.
11. Light switches in an open staircase must be double switched at the top and bottom of the stairs. Living quarters will be electrically switched at entrances. Weather proof exterior lighting at the front and back doors must be provided, and these lights must be switched from the interior at the entrance or back door.

## **HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING FACILITIES**

1. Each dwelling unit shall be supplied with its own heating & air condition system that is properly installed, in safe and good working condition, and be capable of adequately heating and cooling all habitable rooms, bathrooms, and toilet rooms contained therein to a temperature of at least 72°F measured at a distance of 36” above floor level under ordinary winter and summer conditions. Heating & air conditioning system must be adequate for healthful and comfortable living conditions.
2. Air conditioning equipment shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
3. Every central heating & air condition units shall be located and installed with the following:
  - a. Every heat duct, steam pipe and hot water pipe shall be free of leaks and shall function such that an adequate amount of heat is delivered where intended and in such a manner so as to afford protection against involvement of egress facilities or egress routes in the event of uncontrolled fires in the structure.
  - b. Every fuel burning heating unit or water heater shall be effectively vented in a safe manner to a chimney or duct leading to the exterior of the building. The chimney duct and vents shall be of such a design as to assure proper draft and shall be adequately supported.
  - c. If a fuel burning heating unit or water heater is located in a Unit, a carbon monoxide detector shall be installed in the unit in accordance with industry standards.
  - d. Every steam or hot water boiler and every water heater shall be protected against overheating by appropriate temperature and pressure controls.
  - e. A seven-day programmable thermostat that controls both heating and cooling should be located near the return air grill.
4. A/C condenser units and systems shall be a minimum 14 SEER rating. All units shall be installed in a non-obstructed area and well supported on a level surface.
5. The condenser unit’s refrigerant lines must be insulated and have secured wiring and connections. An electric disconnect switch shall be installed for maintenance and repairs.

## **SMOKE DETECTORS**

1. All residential structures shall have U.L. approved “hard wired with battery back-up” smoke detectors, properly installed in all bedrooms and in area adjacent to bedrooms in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and Building Code requirements.

2. When more than one smoke alarm is required in an individual dwelling unit the alarm devices shall be interconnected in such a manner that the actuation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit. The alarm shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed.

## **ENERGY CONSERVATION**

All structures shall comply with certain energy conservation measures (U.S. Department of Energy recommendations). These measures include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Installation of insulation or the installation of additional insulation, especially in the attic/ceiling areas: The recommended level for ceiling insulation is to a resistance factor of R-38, wherever possible.
2. An air infiltration barrier, such as Tyvek or approved equal, shall be installed on all exterior walls. The minimum R factor is R-13 or R-15. The installation of fan-fold foam or foam sheathing may be added to increase household R-ratings.
3. The installation of weather stripping at all exterior doors and windows is required. Doors shall be Energy Star rated. Door jams will be sealed, and thresholds will be caulked.
4. Provide caulking around exterior doors and windows, at the foundation/sill plate union, and at other air-infiltration areas.
5. All heat ducts and hot water or steam heat distribution piping shall be insulated or otherwise protected from heat loss where such ducts or piping runs are located in unheated spaces. Similarly, distribution piping for general use hot water shall also be protected from heat loss where such piping is located in unheated spaces. All water distribution piping shall be protected from freezing.

## **AMENITY REQUIRMENTS FOR NEW CONSTRCTION**

All newly constructed and reconstructed development dedicated to house standard populations (family and senior residents) will be required to provide the following property and in unit amenities to its residents. Note these requirements will not apply to Permanent Supportive Housing or other housing to identified special needs populations that provide housing intended for households in need of specialized services to maintain independent living.

### **Property and Common Amenities**

#### *Family Properties*

1. Furnished Clubhouse/Community Room
2. Onsite leasing office and management
3. Children's playground
4. Camera/security system providing onsite or offsite monitoring 24 hours each day, seven days a week
5. Elevator service for any building 4 stories and above.

#### *Elderly Properties (Developments that provide housing to residents 55 years of age and older)*

1. Furnished Clubhouse/Community Room
2. Onsite leasing office and management
3. Camera/security system providing onsite or offsite monitoring 24 hours each day, seven days a week
4. Elevator service to each building 2 stories and greater in height. A single elevator must not service more than 100 units independently.

### **Unit Amenities (All Properties)**

1. Ceiling fans in each bedroom
2. Microwave ovens
3. Washer/Dryer connections
4. Phone and internet service



## **City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department Minimum Property Standard for Rehabilitation Construction for Multifamily Rental Housing**

### **OVERVIEW**

The standards contained in this document establish the minimum property standard for Rehabilitation Construction under the City of Houston's Multifamily Rental Housing Program.

### **PURPOSE**

This document serves as the minimum standard for City of Houston multifamily rental housing rehabilitation projects. It is to provide guidance to achieving those minimum standards in the areas of work which your project may address. This document does not mandate that all the outlined areas are undertaken as a part of your project. This minimum standard is designed to ensure that the property is free of those foreseeable hazards and adverse conditions that may affect the life, health, and safety of the occupants, and those conditions which may impair the customary use of the property. Fire safety and the structural soundness of the dwelling must be insured as well. In addition to these standards all units must comply with the more restrictive of the following for any work undertaken:

- COH Building Code and Code of Ordinances
- The International Building Code (IBC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IBC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The International Residential Code (IRC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IRC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the Model Energy Code (MEC) and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The Lead Based Paint regulations as described in 24 CFR, Part 35 for units built before 1978.
- HUD 24 C.F.R Part 200.925a-c/296 Rules for Multifamily and Care-Type Housing
- HUD C.F.R Part 8 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ADA, UFAS, FHA, and TAS where applicable.
- The requirements from other governing entities such as Homeowners Associations and Local and Federal regulations pertaining to zoning, traffic, drainage, flood plains and fire prevention (NFPA)

# **MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY EXTERIOR**

## **GRADING AND DRAINAGE OF PROPERTY**

1. Entire property shall be graded and maintained so no stagnant water will accumulate or stand on the premises, within or around any building or structure located on the premises.
2. Ground areas around buildings shall be sloped away from walls to eliminate low areas where standing water may collect.
3. All rainwater shall be drained and conveyed from every roof so as not to cause dampness/ damage to walls, ceilings, or floors of any habitable rooms, bathroom, toilet room, laundry room, or any other type of room therein.
4. If present, all rainwater draining devices such as gutters and downspouts shall be kept in a state of maintenance and repair.

Nowhere on the property shall there be standing water that causes a public health hazard.

## **NON-DWELLING STRUCTURES**

Every foundation, wall, roof, window, door, hatchway, and every other entryway of every non-dwelling structure shall be constructed in a way to prevent the structure from becoming a harborage for rodents, snakes, vermin, and insects.

## **STEPS, SIDEWALKS, DRIVEWAYS, PARKING LOTS & PAVING**

1. All walkways, sidewalks and parking lots are to be designed and monitored in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (24 CFR§8.22 & 23) and the Fair Housing Act (24 CFR§100.205).
2. A walkway shall be maintained from the principal entrance of every building to a public street or parking lot area.
3. Parking lots shall be appropriately sloped so as to prevent ponding of water and to direct the flow of water to the appropriate storm drainage infrastructure.
4. Paved parking lots shall have clearly visible and suitable markings to indicate parking spaces and fire lanes.
5. Parking stops or a 6” vertical curb shall be provided where parking spaces are adjacent to a building, property line, sidewalks or walking paths and shall be properly anchored and secured, and properly aligned and positioned to each parking space.
6. Parking lots shall contain adequate lighting.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Swimming pools, must be enclosed by a fence suitable to prevent unwanted activities or unsupervised children access to those areas. Entrance locations must have acceptable

locking hardware. Swimming Pool enclosures must comply with Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 757 – Pool Yard Enclosures.

2. The entire property must be maintained and enclosed by a minimum 6' fence constructed of masonry, wood, wood composite, chain link, or metal. Fence structure must be secure enough to withstand wind and rain.

### **FOUNDATIONS, EXTERIOR WALLS, ROOFS, SOFFITS & FASCIA**

1. Every building shall have a foundation acceptable under the provisions of the local building codes and shall be sound, reasonably plumb, and adequate to carry the loads imposed on them. At the City's sole discretion, reports from certified/licensed professionals commenting on the condition/suitability of the foundations may be required.
2. Every foundation, exterior wall, roof, soffit, fascia and all component parts shall be maintained to be weather tight, watertight, rodent proof, and insect-proof.

### **EXTERIOR WALL SURFACES**

1. All exterior wood surfaces, or other surfaces intended to be painted, of all non-dwelling structures shall be properly protected from the elements and from decay and rot by lead-free paint or other approved protective coatings. If units are constructed on or before 1978, treatment of all applicable surfaces shall be in full compliance with the Lead Base Paint regulations as found at 24 CFR Part 35, including all future amendments as published by HUD.
2. A lead-based paint analysis must be conducted on structures constructed prior to 1978. If testing reveals the existence of lead-based paint surfaces, they must be removed or covered as prescribed by HUD Lead-Based Paint regulations.
3. All exterior wall framing, exposed during the course of the rehabilitation must be of standard construction with a minimum 2x4's at 16 inches on center, when appropriate. Insulation sheathing shall be installed on the exterior, covered with an approved exterior siding material.
4. All exterior surface material intended to be painted shall be protected from weather and the elements by lead-free paint or other protective coatings i.e., stain, in accordance with industry recognized standards. The exception to painting shall be all types of exterior materials acceptable to weathering without deterioration, i.e., brick, masonry, stucco.
5. Every exposed ceiling or exterior wall of a residential building when opened or replaced during the course of alterations or renovations shall be insulated, in order to minimize heat loss, air infiltration and moisture condensation on the interior surfaces, in accordance with the local building codes.

### **WINDOWS & EXTERIOR DOORS**

1. All windows and doors being replaced must be Energy Star rated for the Southern Climate Region.
2. Every habitable room shall have at least one (1) open air space. The minimum total window area, measured between stops, for every habitable room shall be as follows:

- a. 1/12 of the floor area if two or more separate windows exist, or;
  - b. 1/10 of the floor area if only one window exists;
  - c. A minimum of 12 square feet of window area is required in habitable rooms other than kitchens;
3. Every window sash shall be fully equipped with glass windowpanes, which are without cracks or holes, and all panes shall be adequately secured in the sashes.
  4. Every window, door and frame shall be constructed and maintained in such relation to the adjacent wall construction, so as to exclude rain, as completely as possible and to the maximum extent feasible substantially exclude wind from entering the dwelling or structure, i.e., it must have adequate weather-stripping. Every window sash shall be in good condition and shall fit tightly within its frame.
  5. Every window, other than a “fixed window”, shall be capable of being easily opened and shall be held in position by window hardware in accordance with manufacturer’s design.
  6. Every front, rear and side door shall be not less than 32” in width and not less than 6’ 6” in height, except where larger doors and doorways are required to accommodate handicapped access.
  7. All exterior doors to the outside or to a common public hall shall be insulated metal or solid core and be equipped with adequate security locks complying with Texas Property Code, Section 92.153.
  8. All windows shall have a security device/lock complying with Texas Property Code, Section 92.153.
- .
9. Every exterior and interior door, door hinge, and door latch and/or lock shall be in good working condition, function as originally intended, and when closed, shall fit well within its frame.

## **ROOF COVERING**

1. All pitched roofs must have a minimum 4” to 1’-0” roof pitch.
2. Whenever feasible, in one to three story stick and brick construction, flat roofs over dwelling units should be eliminated in favor of pitched roofs.
3. Low-sloped Roofs: All low-sloped roofs must have a minimum 1/4” to 1’-0” roof slope.
4. Every replaced roof of a building, and all its components, shall be weather-tight, free from leaks, prevent ponding of water, be free from unsecured or unsafe objects and materials, and have a 25-year minimum life on the materials.
5. Reconstruction of the roof during a COH funded renovation should occur whenever the damaged area is greater than 25 percent of the roof area or the expected service life of the roof is 5 years or less.
6. Every new roof of a building, and all its components, shall be weather-tight, free from leaks, prevent ponding of water, be free from unsecured or unsafe objects and materials, and have a 25-year minimum life on the materials.

## **VENTILATION**

1. Every window opening to outdoor space, intended to provide for required ventilation, shall be supplied with screens covering the required ventilation area.

2. The material used for all such screens shall be not less than 16 mesh per inch and shall be properly installed, to prevent the entrance of flies, mosquitoes or other insects. Half screens on windows may be allowed, provided, they are properly installed and are bug and insect tight.
3. A kitchen or bathroom is acceptable without a window area, provided, there is a mechanical means of ventilation in working order.

## **STAIRWAYS, BALCONY'S & HALLWAYS**

1. Every interior and exterior stairway, every porch, and every appurtenance thereto shall be so constructed as to be safe to use and capable of supporting the load that normal use may cause to be placed thereon.
2. Handrails are not required for interior stairs having not more than 2 risers and serving a single dwelling unit and exterior stairs having not more than 3 risers and serving a single dwelling unit.
3. All balconies and platforms, which are 30" or more above grade, shall have a protective railing not less than 36" in height above the balcony or platform level.
4. All multiple dwellings shall have a second exit stairway or approved fire escape available to all occupants from the second floor and above of all such structures.

## **ELECTRICAL & EXTERIOR LIGHTING**

1. Public halls, buildings and stairways shall be lighted at all times with an artificial lighting system. The said system shall provide at least 2 foot candles of illumination on all parts thereof, at all times, by means of properly located electric light fixtures, provided, that such artificial lighting may be omitted from sunrise to sunset where an adequate amount of natural light is provided. Whenever the occupancy of the building exceeds 100 persons, the artificial lighting system as required herein, shall be on an emergency circuit.
2. The required intensity of illumination shall apply to both natural and artificial lighting.
3. All electric panel boxes shall be properly labeled and accessible from either the interior or exterior of the dwelling unit. The electrical switch boxes on the exterior must be capable of being locked but must allow emergency access. If the unit's panel box is located on the exterior of the unit, it must be locked, but access by the tenant must be provided at all times to address tripped breakers.

## **PLUMBING - WATER SUPPLY**

All dwelling units shall be connected to a municipal water supply.

## **MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY INTERIOR** **MINIMUM CEILING HEIGHT**

1. Wherever possible, all habitable room in a dwelling or dwelling unit shall have a minimum ceiling height of 7'-6".
2. All rooms, except kitchen and/or kitchenettes and baths, shall have a minimum width of 7'-0" unless such provision would require major additional reconstruction.
3. At least 1/2 of the floor area of every habitable room located above the 1st floor shall have a ceiling height of 7'-6", and the floor area of that part of any room where the ceiling height is less than 5' shall not be considered as part of the floor area in computing the total floor area of the room for the purpose of determining maximum floor area.

## **DWELLING ROOMS, FLOORS & DOORS**

1. If the project includes redesigning floor plans Minimum Room configurations and sizes shall be as follows:
  - a. Single bedrooms shall be at least 100 square feet in area with the room having a minimum dimension on one side of 8'-0".
  - b. Bedrooms accessed solely through another bedroom shall not count as a separate room.
  - c. Living rooms shall be at least 80 square feet in area. Rooms of less than 50 square feet cannot be used as living rooms or bedrooms.
  - d. All bedrooms must have access to closets for storage of clothing. On existing housing, closets in adjoining hall areas are acceptable.
2. Every occupant of every dwelling unit shall have unrestricted access to a toilet, to a bath, and to a kitchen sink and lavatory basin located within that dwelling unit. No dwelling or dwelling unit containing 2 or more sleeping rooms shall have such room arrangement that access to a bathroom or toilet room intended for use by the occupants can be had only by going through another sleeping room or bathroom or toilet room.
3. Every bathroom, toilet room, kitchen and utility room floor surface shall be constructed and maintained so as to be substantially impervious to water and so as to permit such floor to be easily kept in a clean and sanitary condition.
4. Laminate, wood, vinyl, or other similar types of flooring is not acceptable in flats above the ground floor level (except for kitchens and bathrooms), due to potential noise disturbance to tenants below unless the floor/ceiling design will result in a 50 STC (Sound Transmission Class) between upper and lower Units. This will typically require sound batt insulation (R-11) under the floor and an acoustical underlayment under the cementitious floor topping above the floor.
5. Floor covering in bathroom shall be vinyl type or tile and shall be free from defects. Floor finishes shall be slip resistant when wet and shall be sealed around their edges with silicone sealant. Any flooring material that permits water to readily seep into the subfloor is unacceptable. Carpeting in bathrooms is generally not considered an appropriate floor material
6. When possible, dwelling units with 2 or more bedrooms shall have a storage floor area of at least 4 square feet per bedroom. This storage requirement does not necessarily have to be located in the bedrooms.
7. All bedrooms must have a functional door, which may be of hollow core material, which closes, and can be locked from the inside. The width must be at least 32".
8. All bathroom doors must be at least 24" wide by 6'-0" in height and have locking doorknobs from the inside of the bathroom or have other ways of locking the door (standard bathroom door knobs).

## **KITCHEN FACILITY (EXCEPT FOR SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY (SRO))**

1. Every dwelling unit, shall have a kitchen room or kitchenette equipped with the following:
  - a. **Kitchen Sink** - an approved kitchen sink, properly connected to both hot and cold running water lines, under pressure, and maintained in working order.
  - b. **Stove** - a stove (gas or electric), with cook top and oven, properly connected to the source of power, maintained in working order, and capable of supplying the service for which it is intended. Installation of overhead fans is required over the cooking area. (Stoves may not be required in some efficiency size apartments when approved by the Assistant Director.) .
  - c. **Refrigerator** - a refrigerator, properly connected to the source of power, maintained in working order, and capable of supplying the service for which it is intended. The refrigerator/freezer shall have a minimum capacity of at least 18 cu ft including a 4 cu. ft. freezer. (Smaller refrigerators may be allowed in some efficiency size apartments when approved by the Assistant Director.)
  - d. **Work Space & Utilities** - if tenants are required to furnish their own appliances, the landlord shall furnish sufficient space, and all required electrical connections, properly installed, to facilitate the use of said appliances.
2. Every room in which meals are prepared in a dwelling unit shall have a sink that is installed in a counter having a backsplash and a drain board made of material impervious to water. The sink shall be connected to an adequate supply of potable running hot and cold water and be connected to the drainage system of the dwelling unit.
3. Sinks and faucets must meet minimum applicable standards. Sink and backsplash shall be water and grease resistant. P-traps and other drain components under the sink shall be metal and or PVC material.
4. Every dwelling unit in which meals are prepared shall have a work surface of at least 8 square feet, which shall be impervious to grease and water.
5. All counter tops showing evidence of excessive wear, water damage, uplifting of surface material, etc. must be replaced. Replacement counter tops may include prefabricated laminated counter tops when walls are sufficiently square. When walls are not square and constructed of plaster materials, counter tops must be built in place, using acceptable materials and designed appropriately for functional use. Granite may be used when cost is not substantially greater than other commonly used materials.
6. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide cabinets, cupboards or pantry for the storage of food, dishes, and cooking utensils.
7. When a cabinet's level of wear makes it unsanitary or nonfunctional, it shall be replaced.
8. Stove shall be either gas or electric and oven shall be clean and provided with racks. Installation of overhead exhaust fans to the exterior or recirculating may require installation of a cabinet for attachment of the fan.
9. Each kitchen in a dwelling unit shall have an approved, connected and operating gas or electrical supply for cooking and refrigeration appliances.

10. GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlet receptacles will be required on all counter tops within 6'-0" of sink areas.
11. Minimum lighting in kitchens will consist of 1 lighting fixture in the kitchen cooking area and one lighting fixture in an adjoining eating/dining area.
12. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide space in the kitchen sufficient to accommodate a refrigerator/freezer having a minimum capacity of at least 18 cubic feet refrigerator including a 4 cubic feet freezer without impeding accessibility to other areas of the kitchen.

## **BATHROOM FACILITIES**

1. Every dwelling unit shall contain a bathroom equipped with the following items:
  - a. **A toilet** equipped with adequate running water connected to the water supply. The toilet shall be clean, secure, free of defects, with a secure seat, and the bowl shall fill at a reasonable rate. Toilet needs to be connected only to a cold-water supply. No toilet or urinal shall be located within a habitable room.
  - b. **A wash basin/sink** that shall be located in or adjacent to every room that contains a toilet or urinal. Fixtures shall be connected with an adequate supply of potable, hot and cold running water and must have hot and cold-water knobs and must be in good functioning condition. The sink must have a proper drain with P-trap and be vented to the outside. A water-resistant back splash shall be provided of a minimum height of 4" that is sealed around the edges with bathroom grade silicone sealant.
  - c. **A bathtub/shower** may be in the same room as the toilet and lavatory or in a separate room. The bathtub shall be of a reasonable design so as not to give rise to a slipping hazard to those who use the shower. Bathtub and shower walls shall be covered to a height sufficient to protect the walls from water penetration. Bathtub shall be fitted securely and there shall be no leaks. All shower bases shall be adequately sealed, and a curtain rod or door shall be provided of a sufficient standard to prevent water damage to the adjacent floor.
  - d. **A toilet roll holder & towel bar** shall be provided within 12" of toilet or tub.
  - e. **Medicine cabinet & mirror** Medicine cabinets that will limit access by children and a minimum 2'x2' mirror are required in all full baths.
  - f. **Light fittings** shall be of a sealed type appropriate for bathrooms.
  - g. **Ventilation** to the exterior shall be provided.
2. Every toilet and every bath shall be contained in a room or within separate rooms, which affords privacy to a person within said room or rooms.
3. All bathrooms and toilet rooms shall be located within an area accessible from within the building.
4. Every communal bath shall be located within a room or rooms accessible to the occupants of each dwelling unit sharing such facilities, without going through a dwelling unit of another occupant and without going outside of the dwelling.

5. Toilets and bathrooms shall have doors with a privacy-type lock and such doors, locks and hardware shall be operable.
6. When there is deteriorated ceramic or plastic tile in bath or shower areas, the deteriorated area must be removed. Water proof sheetrock or cementitious backer board must be installed, and old or new tile reinstalled, grouted, and caulked. Backsplashes above sinks may also be required depending on the condition and layout of sinks and other plumbing.

## **PLUMBING**

1. Every dwelling unit shall contain a minimum number and type of working plumbing fixtures, consisting of a water closet, a hand wash basin, and a bathtub or shower.
2. Replacement plumbing fixtures shall be Water Sense certified where applicable.
3. Every supplied facility, piece of equipment, or utility which is required under this section, shall be constructed or installed in safe, sanitary working condition, free from leaks, defects and obstructions.
4. Potable water supply piping, water discharge outlets, backflow prevention devices or similar equipment shall not be so located as to make possible their submergence in any contaminated or polluted liquid or substance.
5. Every dwelling and every building shall be provided with piping for hot and cold water connected to every kitchen fixture, every washbasin, bathtub, shower, sink and laundry area; and piping for cold water connected to every toilet and hose bib.
6. Water faucets shall be free of defects with no leaks or drips and in good condition (i.e. no dripping) and easy to operate by children or people with finger mobility problems. Traditional screw machine head faucets should be avoided. The type of water faucet to be fitted should have a ceramic disc washer and should be quarter turn or lever operated.
7. Every dwelling shall be connected to adequate water-heating facilities which are properly connected to any required hot water lines; and capable of heating water to be drawn for every bath, as well as general usage.
8. Hot water storage associated with water heating facilities shall be not less than the following minimum capacities:
  - a. One (1) bedroom dwelling unit - 30 gallons
  - b. Two (2) bedroom dwelling units - 40 gallons
  - c. Three (3) or more bedroom dwelling units and rooming houses - 50 gallons or more
  - d. or the property must contain appropriately sized boilers.
9. No water heaters shall be allowed in sleeping rooms, bathrooms or closets, unless closet is dedicated for the purpose of housing plumbing and mechanical equipment. Water heaters in a utility room are acceptable. All water heaters shall be properly vented and sealed and shall be equipped with a pressure relief valve and drip leg.

## **VENTILATION**

1. Every bathroom, toilet room, and kitchen shall comply with the light and ventilation requirements for habitable rooms contained above, except that no window shall be required in adequately ventilated bathrooms, toilet rooms or kitchens equipped with a ventilation system installed and located to ensure its proper operation.

2. Every habitable room shall have at least 1 window or skylight which can easily be opened or be equipped with such other acceptable device to adequately ventilate the room.
3. All bedrooms must have an egress window in addition to the door. Egress windows must be no more than 44” from the floor and permit at least 5.7 square feet of egress area. Windows must be operable, have locking mechanisms, and provide for ventilation. If there are living accommodations in a basement, an egress window is required.
4. All bathrooms must have an operational window, a functional electric vent fan to the exterior or other acceptable method of ventilation.
5. Ceiling fans installed in general living areas shall be Energy Star rated and installed to manufacturer’s requirements.

## **ELECTRICAL & LIGHTING**

1. The capacity of the system of circuits and electrical outlets within a building shall be adequate for the intended use of all rooms, and adequate electrical outlets shall be installed to prevent the need for extension cords or other extensions being used as a permanent wiring system.
2. Every habitable room within such dwelling shall contain at a minimum, 2 separate and remote wall type electric convenience outlets.
3. Habitable rooms over 120 square feet, shall contain, at a minimum, 3 separate and remote wall type electric convenience outlets. All newly installed outlets shall be grounded type outlets.
4. Temporary wiring or extension cords shall not be used as permanent wiring.
5. All receptacles in the kitchen, bathroom and lavatory, must be GFCI type (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) outlets and must be provided within 6’-0” from any sink or lavatory.
6. Receptacle convenience outlets installed on the exterior of the structure or on open porches, breezeways, garages, utility rooms, etc. shall be of the GFCI weather protected type. All electric lighting fixtures installed on the exterior shall be of the type approved for exterior use.
7. All heavy-duty appliances, i.e., window air conditioners, freezers, refrigerators, electric stoves, washers, electric dryers, microwaves, etc., shall be supplied with their own dedicated outlet(s) on separate circuits, as applicable.
8. Outlets are required to permit coverage of the entire room by an appliance with a 6 foot cord. Use of extension cords is discouraged and additional outlets should be provided whenever possible to avoid their use.
9. Every habitable room shall have at least 1 ceiling or wall type electric light fixture, controlled by a wall switch, or a wall type grounded electric convenience outlet controlled by a remote switch preferably in the interior of the room next to the entrance.
10. Every toilet room, bathroom, laundry, furnace room, and hallway (where applicable) shall contain at least 1 supplied ceiling or wall type electric light fixture, controlled by a wall switch, and at least 1 wall type grounded electric convenience outlet. Wall type convenience outlets used in bathrooms and kitchens shall be the GFCI type.

11. Light switches in an open staircase, must be double switched at the top and bottom of the stairs. Living quarters should be electrically switched at entrances, unless impractical.
12. Exterior lighting at the front and back doors must be provided. These lights must be weather proof and switched from the interior at the entrance. All old pendant type lighting fixtures shall be removed and replaced with properly installed non-pendant type fixtures.
13. All broken and/or missing switch plates and/or receptacle plates shall be replaced.
14. All outlets and fixtures shall be properly installed and connected to the source of electric power in a proper manner
15. If a unit does not have a central air-conditioning system and central air will not be installed, at a minimum a proper grounded outlet of sufficient electrical capacity shall be installed under 1 window in each habitable room to allow the occupant(s) to install window air conditioning units.
16. Unit specific lights switched from the outside generally do not need to be moved, unless rewiring to be conducted in the house.
17. Replaced lighting shall be Energy Star rated or have energy use equal to or better than Energy Star lighting such as compact fluorescent bulbs.

### **HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING FACILITIES**

1. Each dwelling unit supplied with its own heating & air condition system, that system is to be properly installed, in safe and good working condition, and be capable of adequately heating and cooling all habitable rooms, bathrooms, and toilet rooms contained therein to a temperature of at least 72°F measured at a distance of 36” above floor level under ordinary winter and summer conditions. Heating & air conditioning system must be adequate for healthful and comfortable living conditions.
2. All existing heating systems, including but not limited to, chimneys and flues, cut-off valves and switches, limit controls, heat exchangers, burners, combustion and ventilation air, relief valves, drip legs and air, hot water, or steam delivery components (ducts, piping, etc.) that are not being replaced, shall be inspected by certified professionals to be in a safe and proper functioning condition at the time of inspection, by means of written project file documentation.
3. Any dwelling unit having as its only source of heat, space heaters or floor furnaces shall have such units removed and replaced with a proper central heating system.
4. Air conditioning equipment shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
5. Every central heating & air condition unit shall be located and installed with the following:
  - a. Every heat duct, steam pipe and hot water pipe shall be free of leaks and shall function such that an adequate amount of heat is delivered where intended and in such a manner so as to afford protection against involvement of egress facilities or egress routes in the event of uncontrolled fires in the structure;
  - b. No fuel-burning furnace shall be located in any sleeping room or bathroom unless provided with adequate ducting for air supply from the exterior, and, the combustion chamber for such heating unit shall be sealed from the room in an airtight manner.

- c. Every fuel burning heating unit or water heater shall be effectively vented in a safe manner to a chimney or duct leading to the exterior of the building. The chimney duct and vents shall be of such a design as to assure proper draft and shall be adequately supported.
  - d. If a fuel burning heating unit or water heater is located in a Unit, a carbon monoxide detector shall be installed in the unit in accordance with industry standards.
  - e. Every steam or hot water boiler and every water heater shall be protected against overheating by appropriate temperature and pressure limit controls.
  - f. A seven-day programmable thermostat that controls both heating and cooling should be located near the return air grill.
6. A/C condenser units or systems that will be replaced shall meet the minimum 14 SEER rating. All units shall be installed in a non-obstructed area, level and be well supported on a level surface.
  7. The condenser unit's refrigerant lines must be insulated and have secured wiring and connections. An electric disconnect switch shall be installed for maintenance and repairs.

### **SMOKE DETECTORS**

1. All residential structures shall have U.L. approved "hard wired" with battery back-up smoke detectors or sealed Lithium battery operated smoke detectors, properly installed in all bedrooms and in area adjacent to bedrooms in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
2. When more than one smoke alarm is required in an individual dwelling unit, the alarm devices shall be interconnected in such a manner that the actuation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit.
3. All smoke detectors shall be operable. The alarm shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed.

### **ENERGY CONSERVATION**

All structures shall comply with certain energy conservation measures (U.S. Department of Energy recommendations). These measures include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Installation of insulation or the installation of additional insulation, especially in the attic/ceiling areas. The recommended level for ceiling insulation is to a resistance factor of R-38, wherever possible.
2. When siding is being replaced and/or interior wall finishes of exterior walls are being replaced on a dwelling, such exterior walls are to be provided with insulation and at the recommended resistance factor (R-value) of R-13, or that which is allowed by the stud cavity space. In addition, an air infiltration barrier, such as Tyvek or approved equal, shall be installed on all exterior walls. If new walls are being framed and insulated, the minimum R factor is R-19 or R-13 plus R-5 foam. The installation of fan-fold foam or foam sheathing may be added to increase household R-ratings.
3. The installation of weather stripping at all exterior doors, windows, ground-entry basement doors, etc. is required. Doors, when replaced, shall be Energy Star rated. Door jams will be sealed, and thresholds will be caulked.

4. Provide caulking around exterior doors and windows, at the foundation/sill plate union, and at other air-infiltration areas.
5. All heat ducts and hot water or steam heat distribution piping shall be insulated or otherwise protected from heat loss where such ducts or piping runs are located in unheated spaces. Similarly, distribution piping for general use hot water shall also be protected from heat loss where such piping is located in unheated spaces. All water distribution piping shall be protected from freezing.
6. Replacement of single pane window units with thermal units or, the installation of combination storm windows if the single window units will not be replaced.
7. Any attic access passage ways in individual units should be addressed accordingly so as not to significantly reduce the efficiencies created by the other energy conservation measures being undertaken.

# **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

## **APARTMENT UNIT & BUILDING AND PARKING TABULATION**

The construction drawings shall include an Apartment Unit Tabulation that summarizes the building square footage for all types of apartment units and common areas. This would include the total number of living units per floor; unit descriptions (1 bedroom/1bath, etc.) and total net rentable square footage of each unit. Parking space tabulation shall include handicap spaces.

## **GENERAL NOTES**

A statement shall be included in the general notes section of the drawings stating that all design and proposed renovation work for the project is in compliance with all applicable requirements for the project.

## **REHAB/RENOVATION DRAWINGS**

All project designs and drawings for work requiring permits are to be performed by certified professionals. The type of work being performed will dictate the types of drawings that will be required. Please contact the City of Houston Planning Department or other certified professionals for details related to your individual project. One set of approved drawings shall be submitted to COH Housing & Community Development Department prior to the start of project and 1 set of “as-built” drawings at the end of the project.

Regardless of the types of drawings required, the following items are to be included in the set of working drawings:

1. A Site Plan of the entire apartment property, including all apartment buildings/units, common areas, laundry facilities, boiler rooms, access entryways, parking areas, wheel chair ramps, parking spaces, etc.;
1. The location(s) and nature of rehab work that will be performed;
3. Apartment Unit Tabulation that summarizes the building square footage for all types of apartment units and common areas. This would include the total number of living units per floor; unit descriptions (1 bedroom/1bath, etc.) and total net rentable square footage of each unit. See attachment I for a sample template.
4. Parking Space Tabulation showing the total number of parking spaces, including those spaces designated for handicap parking.
5. All ADA living units on the property, specifying those for individuals with mobility impairments and individuals with sensory impairments.

## **AMENITY REQUIRMENTS FOR RENOVATIONS**

All renovated developments dedicated to house standard populations (family and senior residents) will be required to provide the following property and in units amenities to its residents. Note these requirements will not apply to Permanent Supportive Housing or other housing to identified special needs populations that provide housing intended for households in need of specialized services to maintain independent living.

### **Property and Common Amenities**

#### *Family Properties*

1. Furnished Clubhouse/Community Room
2. Onsite leasing office and management
3. Children's playground
4. Camera/security system providing onsite or offsite monitoring 24 hours each day, seven days a week
5. Elevator service for any building 4 stories and above
6. Onsite laundry room with at least one washer and dryer units for every 40 units if units do not have washer and dryer connections

#### *Elderly Properties (Developments that provide housing to residents 55 years of age and older)*

1. Furnished Clubhouse/Community Room
2. Onsite leasing office and management
3. Camera/security system providing onsite or offsite monitoring 24 hours each day, seven days a week
4. Elevator service to each building 2 stories and greater in height. Buildings with 100 units or more must provide at least two elevators in each building

### **Unit Amenities (All Properties)**

1. Ceiling fans in each bedroom
2. Phone and internet service



## **City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department Minimum Property Standard for Affordability Maintenance for Multifamily Rental Housing**

### **OVERVIEW**

The standards contained in this document establish the minimum property habitability (MPS) standard for Affordability Maintenance for the City of Houston's Multifamily Rental Housing Program that receives assistance through federal funding from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

### **APPLICABILITY**

This minimum standard applies to multifamily rental housing units that currently receive federal assistance or were acquired/developed/rehabilitated using federal assistance.

### **PURPOSE**

This document serves as the minimum standard for City of Houston multifamily rental housing. As a result, the property must be free of those foreseeable hazards and adverse conditions that may affect the life, health, and safety of the occupants, fire safety, and the structural soundness of the dwelling or which may impair the customary use of the property. In addition to these standards all units must comply with the following:

- COH Building Code and Code of Ordinances
- The International Building Code (IBC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IBC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The International Residential Code (IRC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the IRC and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) 2012 adopted by the City of Houston or the latest adopted edition of the Model Energy Code (MEC) and any applicable code required by the pertaining Municipality.
- The Lead Based Paint regulations as described in 24 CFR, Part 35 for units built before 1978.
- HUD 24 C.F.R Part 200.925a-c/296 Rules for Multifamily and Care-Type Housing

- HUD C.F.R Part 8 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ADA, UFAS, FHA, and TAS where applicable.
- The requirements from other governing entities such as Homeowners Associations and Local and Federal regulations pertaining to zoning, traffic, drainage, flood plains and fire prevention (NFPA)

# MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR EXTERIOR PROPERTY

## **TREES, BUSHES & LAWN**

1. All lawns and any other part of a property shall be kept clean and free from accumulations of junk, rubbish, brush, refuse, litter, garbage and other debris, and any conditions that are health, fire or other hazards.
2. All lawns shall be provided with suitable ground cover to prevent instability and erosion of the soil. Holes or depressions of more than 6" in diameter should be filled to correct drainage problems and remove safety hazards.
3. All lawns, shrubs, hedges, trees and plants shall be planted and maintained in a manner that does not:
  - a. obstruct the safety of the public;
  - b. affect the safety of vehicular or pedestrian traffic;
  - c. constitute an obstruction of view for vehicular traffic;
  - d. wholly or partially conceal or interfere with the use of any hydrant or water valves;
  - e. overhangs or encroach upon any pavement, sidewalk or travelled portion of any street or highway.
4. Trees or parts thereof that are dead, diseased, decayed or damaged, shall be removed or maintained in a condition that is not hazardous to persons expected to be on or about the property.
5. Trees that present a safety hazard because electrical wiring running through them must be trimmed. Trees that could damage the structural integrity of an adjoining building above or below the foundation shall be removed.
6. HVAC condenser units and electrical panels shall be free of shrubs, hedges, weeds, trees and plants that interfere with its operation and access for repairs and maintenance.

## **GARBAGE & DEBRIS**

1. Property shall be kept free of garbage, rubbish, debris or accumulations of such materials that prevent access to or exit from the property in the case of emergency or other safety or health hazard.
2. Every apartment project shall be provided with sufficient trash receptacles to contain all garbage, debris or rubbish which accumulates on the property between scheduled pick-up times, and such materials shall be placed for collection in proper receptacles in compliance with applicable local ordinances, and not allowed to accumulate in a manner that would present a life, health and safety issue.
3. Trash receptacles shall be containers that are water-tight, equipped with a tight-fitting cover, rodent-and pest-proof, and shall be maintained in a clean condition without holes or spillage; and closed, or emptied, rinsed and cleaned when not in use, to prevent the escape of offensive odor or debris.
4. Where commercial or on site garbage containers are visible from a public street or land, or the property abuts residential properties, the area where the receptacles are stored shall be enclosed on all sides by wall or solid fence not less than 6' high. Such wall or fence shall

contain an adequate door or gate to allow for the removal of garbage or refuse. They shall be maintained in a manner that will not attract pests, create a health or other hazard, or obstruct an emergency route, recreation facility, parking area, driveway or walkway.

5. Every unenclosed porch, balcony, and every exterior or interior hallway, stairway and common area shall be kept free of garbage, debris, furniture or appliances, except furniture which is outdoor grade or made weather and water resistant may be placed for use on balconies or porches.
6. Bulk trash, including refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers and other appliances; unlicensed automobiles and other vehicles; and improperly stored construction materials or firewood should be removed or appropriately stacked as prescribed by City of Houston ordinances.

### **GRADING & DRAINAGE OF PROPERTY**

1. Property shall be graded and maintained so no stagnant water will accumulate or stand on the premises, or within or around any building or structure located on the premises or create unstable soil conditions or erosion.
2. Ground areas around buildings shall be sloped away from walls to eliminate low areas where standing water may collect.
3. All catch basins, storm drains, ditches and swales shall be maintained free from defects and obstructions.
4. Condensation from air conditioners shall not be permitted to discharge onto the exterior wall of a building, pedestrian walkways, sidewalk or street.

### **STORM GUTTERS & SPLASH BLOCKS**

1. Gutters and downspouts shall be maintained watertight and free from leaks, in good working order, and free from any obstructions and hazards, and in a stable condition and shall be securely fastened to the structure.
2. Any above-ground discharge from a downspout or pipe shall be directed to discharge and be contained on the property in a manner that is not likely to cause damage to any adjoining property or create a hazardous condition on any stairway, walkway, street or boulevard.
3. Gutters and downspouts shall be protected by a suitable finishing material. Deteriorated or damaged gutters and downspouts that impede drainage or cause a safety hazard shall be repaired or replaced.

### **PEST CONTROL**

The entire property shall at all times be kept free of rodents, vermin, insects and other pests and from conditions which may encourage infestation by pests.

### **FENCE MAINTENANCE**

1. All fences and other enclosures around or on a property shall be maintained in a structurally sound condition and plumb, unless specifically designed to be other than vertical, with a uniform construction, in good repair and free from hazards.

2. Fences, barriers, retaining walls shall be kept free of posters and graffiti and shall be maintained in compliance with all City of Houston ordinances. Any part of a fence or enclosure that creates an illegal entry and access ways must be repaired immediately.

### **VACANT BUILDINGS**

1. The owner shall protect vacant or unoccupied buildings against the risk of fire, accident or intentional damage to the property, or such damage as may be caused to other properties, arising from the entry of unauthorized persons to the building, by effectively preventing entrance by unauthorized persons.
2. The owner shall protect buildings damaged by accident, storm, neglect or other causes or intentional damage, against further risk of further damage, accident or other danger, and shall effectively prevent entrance thereto by all unauthorized persons, by closing and securing opening(s) to the building(s) with boarding which completely covers the opening.
3. Any structure that is in a state of disrepair or collapse must be repaired or demolished, and any collection of building materials must be removed from the property. Such demolition shall not reduce the number of units required under Loan Agreements.

### **NON-DWELLING STRUCTURES**

1. Every accessory building shall be maintained with suitable and uniform materials, kept in good repair, free from hazards, and protected by paint, preservatives or other weather-resistant material.
2. All laundry rooms, recreation rooms and any other ancillary rooms, and the facilities, amenities and associated equipment for those rooms, shall be kept clean and maintained in a safe condition and in good repair.
3. All laundry rooms shall be provided with hot and cold running water and properly connected to the sanitary sewer system.
4. All laundry rooms shall have a trapped floor drain connected to the sanitary sewer system and capable of adequately draining the floor.

### **STEPS, SIDEWALKS, DRIVEWAYS, PARKING LOTS & PAVING**

1. The surfaces of steps, sidewalks & driveways and similar areas of the yard shall be maintained in good repair so as to afford safe passage under normal use.
2. All sidewalks, service walks driveways & patios shall be kept in a state of maintenance and repair, free from obstructions, defects, uneven joints, tripping hazards, etc.
3. All areas used for vehicular traffic or the parking or storage of a vehicle shall be paved with asphalt or concrete or other environmentally safe and dust-free equivalent surface and shall be kept free from dirt, surface dust and refuse; maintained in good repair and free from cracks, holes and ruts.
4. Parking lots are to be properly maintained in a way to prevent ponding of water and to direct the flow of water away from the walls of all buildings.

5. Parking lots are to be provided with suitable markings to indicate parking spaces, and the markings shall be maintained so as to be clearly visible. Signs, decals, pavement markings should be clear, visible and distinctive.
6. Parking stops shall be installed where parking spaces are adjacent to a property line to protect fences and neighboring properties from physical damage and shall be properly anchored and secured and properly aligned and positioned to each parking space.
7. Handicap parking areas shall be maintained so that individuals with disabilities can approach, enter, and exit the areas easily.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. The water in swimming pools shall be kept clean and in a sanitary condition free from obnoxious odors and conditions likely to create a breeding environment for insects. Surrounding surface areas for walking and relaxing shall be kept clean of dirt, mold, mildew, etc.
2. Property and building signs and faces shall be maintained without any visible deterioration of the sign or its structure so that the information conveyed by the sign by color, form, graphic, illumination, symbol or writing is clearly legible.
3. Property and building signs and any fastening/supporting structures that are damaged, broken or excessively weathered or faded, or that have a worn, peeled or cracked finish, shall be removed and replaced or refinished and put in a good state of repair so that the signs are free from defects or faded lettering.
4. Every dwelling unit shall have a separate and secure mail box or mail receptacle that is maintained in good condition at all times. Identification information on the mail box should be clearly visible.
5. All antennas, satellite dishes, lightning rods and other similar structures and their supporting members shall be maintained in a safe condition and in good repair.
6. Elevators shall be maintained in a clean condition and certified to be in good working order.
7. All elevator parts and appendages, including lighting fixtures, lamps, elevator buttons, floor indicators and ventilation fans, shall be kept in good repair and operational.
8. Coolant lines of HVAC condenser units shall be insulated to insure optimum performance. Insulation shall not be torn or worn out and shall be tightly secured to the refrigerant line.

## **BUILDING STRUCTURE**

1. Every building structure on the property shall be maintained in structurally sound and safe condition.
2. Every part of a building or structure shall be maintained in good repair and in a structurally sound condition so as:
  - a. To be capable of safely sustaining its own weight and any load to which, normally, it might be subjected;
  - b. To be capable of safely accommodating all nominal structural movements without damage, decay or deterioration; and
  - c. To prevent the entry of moisture that would contribute to damage, decay or deterioration.

## **FOUNDATION**

1. The foundation walls and floors shall be maintained in good repair and structurally sound.
2. Foundation walls and crawl spaces and other supporting members of a building or structure shall be stable and not sinking and maintained in good repair and structurally sound.
3. Foundation cracks should be identified, particularly at window areas. All cracks must be filled with epoxy, cement, and rubbed with appropriate cement materials. All cracks exceeding ¼” wide must be investigated by a certified professional to determine the extent of repair work needed.
4. Areas of the foundation that are spalling (crumbling gravel or rock), have decaying concrete, have collapsed, or are in any other state of disrepair must be addressed to prevent further deterioration or damage to the buildings.
5. Collapsed sections of foundations must be reconstructed as per the written recommendation of a certified professional.
6. Exposed foundation rebar should be cleaned and prepared and surface area patched thoroughly to avoid water penetration.

## **EXTERIOR WALL SURFACES**

1. All exterior surfaces of buildings, structures, fences and retaining walls, including mobile structures and buildings shall be maintained and kept weather resistant so as to prevent their deterioration and entry of vermin and birds. Surfaces shall be free of dirt, mold, mildew, algae and water stains.
2. Exterior walls shall contain no holes or cavities, separation of siding materials, collapse of siding or deterioration of exterior siding materials or openings at the rafters and at the rim joist.
3. All exterior surfaces of buildings, structures, fences and retaining walls, including mobile structures and buildings, shall be repaired by the painting, restoring or repairing of the walls, coping or flashing or by the waterproofing of the joints and of the walls itself.
4. Markings, stains, graffiti, painted slogans, smoke damage or other markings or defacement appearing on any exterior surface shall be removed. If necessary, to maintain the exterior surface, the surface of these areas shall be restored and, resurfaced to the exterior finish of the building or structure.
5. All canopies, marquees, signs, awnings, screens, grilles, stairways, pipes, ducts, standpipes, air conditioners and all similar equipment, attachments and their supporting members shall be maintained in good repair, properly anchored and protected from the elements, so as to prevent decay and rust, by paint or other protective coating.

## **WINDOWS & EXTERIOR DOORS**

1. Windows, skylights, exterior doors and frames and attic access doors shall be maintained in good repair and shall be of such construction so as to minimize drafts and heat losses through the infiltration of outside cold air.

2. All exterior openings for doors and windows shall be fitted with doors or windows that are maintained in a weather-tight condition to prevent drafts or leakage and protected by suitable materials to prevent the entry of rodents, vermin and insects.
3. Rotted or damaged doors, door frames, window frames, sashes and casings, weather-stripping, caulking, broken glass and missing or defective door and window hardware shall be repaired or replaced.
4. All exterior doors and the entrance door to a dwelling unit shall have hardware so as to be capable of being locked from the outside, and locked or otherwise secured from the interior of the space.
5. All windows in a dwelling unit that are capable of being opened shall be fitted and equipped with screens that are maintained in good repair and free from defects and missing components.
  6. All exterior doors and windows capable of being opened shall be free from defective hardware and be capable of being locked or otherwise secured from inside the building. Exterior doors and windows shall have locking devices complying with Texas Property Code, Section 92.153.
7. Glazed doors, windows and other transparent surfaces shall be kept reasonably clean in order to permit unimpeded visibility and unrestricted passage.
8. Doors, passageways and exits shall be maintained free from hazardous conditions, obstructions and impediments.

### **STAIRWAYS, BALCONY'S & HALLWAYS**

1. Interior and exterior stairs, landings, balconies, porches and any other means of access shall be maintained so as to be free of holes, cracks and other defects which may constitute possible accident hazards. Treads or risers that show excessive wear or are broken, warped or loose and all supporting structural members that are rotted, rusted or deteriorated shall be repaired or replaced. Treads that have become loose need to be securely anchored to stairwell.
2. Handrails shall be installed and maintained in good repair on all exterior stairs which have more than 3 risers and on all interior stairs within dwelling units which have more than 2 risers.
3. Handrails on porches, balconies or raised floor surfaces shall be securely anchored to the floor and/or to the nearest exterior wall so as to not allow any horizontal movement of the handrail.
4. Wood balconies and walkways need to be maintained in good repair and in a structurally sound condition. Structural components that have deteriorated, rotted or are in disrepair shall be replaced to maintain the structural integrity.

## **ROOF COVERING**

1. All structural components of a roof shall provide adequate support for all designed loads and form a suitable base for the roof covering. If the roof is subjected to a load for which it may not be adequate, the roof shall be cleared of the load to prevent collapse or structural damage.
2. A building roof, including the fascia board, soffit, cornice and flashing around the perimeter of a roof, should be inspected for deterioration and be maintained in a weather-tight condition and able to prevent the leakage of water into the building.
3. On structures over 50 years of age, the truss and support system of roofs must be inspected by a Registered Professional Structural Engineer to ensure adequate construction. When deficiencies are identified, appropriate supports and truss system repairs or replacements must be made.

## **PLUMBING**

1. The plumbing system in every building shall be maintained in good working order and free from leaks and defects.
2. All water pipes and appurtenances thereto shall be protected from freezing.
3. All clean-out drains shall be enclosed with insert covers that contain no holes.
4. Any sanitary sewage discharged from buildings on the property constitutes a life, health and safety danger to the residents and needs to immediately be repaired.

## **ELECTRICAL & EXTERIOR LIGHTING**

1. The capacity of the electrical connection to a building and the system of circuits and electrical outlets distributing the electrical supply within the building shall be maintained at all times and free from unsafe conditions.
2. Electrical panel boxes must have cover plates and covers for all unused breaker slots.
3. Every stairway, exterior exit and entrance doorway, bathroom, toilet room, kitchen, hallways, laundry, furnace room and non-habitable work room in a suite, dwelling unit or building shall have a permanently installed lighting fixture that shall be maintained in good working order to provide safe passage.
4. Exterior lighting shall be maintained in a good state of repair without any damage to light fixture and its components. Wires shall be properly enclosed to avoid contact with water.
5. Outdoor receptacles must be maintained to be impervious to water intrusion and in a condition that permits easy access and not interfere with lawn maintenance.
6. All exterior electrical wires shall be enclosed in conduit. Conduit that is cracked, broken or is deteriorated shall be replaced.

# **MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR INTERIOR PROPERTY**

## **WALLS, FLOORS, CEILINGS, DOORS & WINDOWS**

1. Floors and floor coverings shall be maintained free from any trip or other hazardous condition and shall be kept in a clean and sanitary condition and free from holes, stains, rubbish and debris.
2. Any repair, replacement or painting required on walls and ceilings shall be such that the material used shall have a finish and facing similar to that of the original covering.
3. Floors of rooms in which plumbing fixtures are installed shall be maintained to be reasonably impervious to water and in a condition, that permits easy cleaning.
4. Every wall and ceiling shall be maintained clean and free of holes, cracks and damaged and deteriorated surface material, and each repair shall be finished to reasonably match the existing walls or ceilings.
5. Previously finished walls and other surfaces in public areas of property shall be maintained in good repair and shall be renewed or refinished, when necessary, to maintain a similar appearance.
6. In bathrooms, water proof green rock, blue rock or other similar drywall material must be utilized. Interior walls with deteriorated sheetrock must be replaced by installing new water proof sheetrock, taping cracks, texturing and repainting.
7. Interior doors, their frames, glass panels and hardware shall be maintained in good repair, and all doors shall be of a good fit in their frames.
8. All damaged or deteriorated door trim and baseboard must be removed and replaced.
9. All doors and hatches to the roof that provide access for the purpose of maintenance shall be kept free of obstructions and locked at all times.
10. All cracked or deteriorating ceilings require an inspection to determine the cause that generated the problem. Every effort should be made to correct the problem before the ceiling is repaired. Cracks must be filled and retextured, and the ceiling completely repainted when treated.
11. When there is deteriorated ceramic or plastic tile in bath or shower areas, the deteriorated area must be replaced with water proof sheetrock and new tile reinstalled, grouted, and caulked.

## **KITCHEN FACILITIES**

1. All counter tops showing evidence of significant wear and tear, water damage, uplifting of surface material, etc. must be replaced. Replacement counter tops may include prefabricated laminated counter tops when walls are sufficiently square.
2. Sinks and worktops shall be sealed around edges with silicone sealant to be impervious to water and in a condition that permits easy cleaning.
3. All kitchen plumbing must be inspected to ensure that faucets and drain pipes work properly. All waste pipes and traps shall be free of defects with no leaks or drips.

4. Water faucets shall be in good condition (i.e. no dripping) and easy to operate by children or people with finger mobility problems.
5. Any holes around waste pipes and traps shall be sealed so as to prevent the ingress of vermin and pests.
6. Waste disposal unit shall be maintained in operating condition. Electrical connection wires and drain lines should be properly sealed.
7. The refrigerator/freezer or refrigerator and freezer shall be clean and in good working order.
8. All stove gas rings or burners shall be clean and in operating condition. The oven shall be clean and properly working.
9. Kitchen cabinets must have properly functioning doors and/or drawers. Cabinet doors must be in good condition and properly open and close.

### **BATHROOM FACILITIES**

1. The toilet shall be clean, secure, and free of defects, with a secure seat and the tank shall fill at a reasonable rate. All bathroom flooring must be inspected at the base of the toilets to ensure that leaking is not occurring. When leaking has occurred and sub floor has rotted, the sub floor must be removed and replaced.
2. Bathtub or shower and washbasin shall be in good condition and should show no signs of surface build-up, cracks or chips. They shall be sealed around the edges to prevent water intrusion.
3. Waste pipes and faucets shall be free of defects with no leaks or drips.
4. Water faucets shall be in good condition (i.e. no dripping) and easy to operate by children or people with finger mobility problems.

### **BEDROOM & LIVING ROOM REQUIREMENTS**

1. All bedrooms must have a functional door that closes, which, preferably can be locked from the inside.
2. All switchable light fixtures and electrical outlets in the bedrooms shall be in operating condition.

### **ELECTRICAL**

1. The capacity of the system of circuits and electrical outlets within a building shall be adequate for the intended use of all rooms, and adequate electrical outlets shall be installed to prevent the need for extension cords or other extensions being used as a permanent wiring system.
2. All electrical fixtures, switches, receptacles and connections to them shall be maintained in a safe and complete condition and in good working order.
3. All electrical connections must be in enclosed metal or plastic electrical boxes. No hanging wires are permitted.

4. All light fixtures should be inspected to ensure that they are solidly hung and that the electrical connections have not been loosened. All electrical fixtures that evidence wear must be replaced with new fixtures.
5. All electrical outlets and switches must have tight cover plates. Any switches or outlets that are nonfunctional must be inspected by a certified professional to correct.
6. Smoke detectors must be fully operational and shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed. Installation of smoke alarms should be in accordance with the recommendations of the manufacturer. Unacceptable smoke detectors must be removed, properly reinstalled in an acceptable location, and all affected wall or ceiling areas repaired to match surrounding.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. The heating and cooling system and all associated mechanical equipment shall be operated and maintained in good working order, free from unsafe conditions, and in accordance with the requirements of the local building code.
2. All systems of mechanical ventilation shall be maintained in good working order.
3. Every dwelling unit shall be kept free of infestation of pests.
4. Fire extinguishers should be located in the kitchen and be fully loaded and shall be maintained in good working order.
5. Boiler rooms shall be good working condition with drain lines at the temperature and pressure relief valves properly sized and terminated in an acceptable location.

# **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS BY THE CITY OF HOUSTON**

## **HABITABILITY ORDINANCE 2009-1043**

As per the City of Houston's Ordinance 2009-1043 for Habitability Inspections – All apartment communities with 3 or more units (Sec 10-151 of the Houston Code of Ordinances) are required to register with The City of Houston for Habitability Inspection purposes ([Habitability Inspection Checklist](#) ). To obtain detailed information regarding the program, log on to [www.houstonmultifamily.org](http://www.houstonmultifamily.org). For more information, please contact the Habitability Inspections Section at 713-535-7900. See appendix II for Habitability Ordinance 2009-1043.

## **APARTMENT SECURITY ORDINANCE 2006-1124**

As per the City of Houston's Ordinance 2006-1124 for Apartment Security – All apartment communities of ten or more units (Sec 28-282 City of Houston Code of Ordinances) are required to register the ownership of the apartment community with the Multifamily Administrative Unit of the Houston Police Department. To obtain detailed information regarding the program, log on to [www.houstonmultifamily.org](http://www.houstonmultifamily.org). For more information, please contact the Habitability Inspections Section at 713-535-7900.

## **CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY RENEWAL**

All properties are required to have a Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Houston Code Enforcement located at 3300 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002.

## **FIRE INSPECTION**

All inspections related to City of Houston Fire Department are coordinated through the City of Houston Habitability Inspection.

# Appendix I

City of Houston, Texas, Ordinance No. 2009-1043

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, HOUSTON, TEXAS, RELATING TO THE HABITABILITY OF MULTI-FAMILY RENTAL BUILDINGS; CONTAINING FINDINGS AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE FOREGOING SUBJECT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; CONTAINING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**WHEREAS**, the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature (Regular Session) passed House Bill 1819 ("HB 1819"), which bill became law on June 19, 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, HB 1819 added Section 214.219 ("Section 214.219") to the Texas Local Government Code; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 214.219 requires a municipality with a population of 1.7 million or more to "adopt an ordinance to establish minimum habitability standards for multi-family rental buildings, including requiring maintenance of proper operating conditions" and to "establish a program for the inspection of multi-family rental buildings to determine if the buildings meet the minimum required habitability standards"; and

**WHEREAS**, HB 1819 requires a municipality subject to Section 214.219 to enact the said ordinance and to establish the said program not later than December 31, 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, the City is a municipality subject to Section 214.219; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council finds that Article V and Divisions 3 and 4 of Article IX of Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances, City of Houston, Texas (the "Code of Ordinances") constitute habitability standards for multi-family rental buildings, which standards should be supplemented and strengthened as provided herein; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS:**

**Section 1.** That the findings contained in the preamble of this Ordinance are determined to be true and correct and are adopted as a part of this Ordinance.

**Section 2.** That Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances, Houston, Texas, is amended by adding a new Article IV that reads as follows:

