



Rental Housing Safety Program Performing Schedule A Inspections during Shelter-In-Place

Website: www.cityofberkeley.info/housing/rhsp

Planning & Development Department – Building & Safety Division
Housing Code Enforcement – Rental Housing Safety Program

PERFORMING THE SCHEDULE A INSPECTION

The Rental Housing Safety Program has developed this document to provide guidance to property owners on performing Schedule A inspections safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance is an adaptation of procedures developed for City of Berkeley housing inspectors.

The Self-Certification inspection may be performed by the owner, landlord, property manager, contractor or any persons representing the owner. The owner may appoint the tenant to represent the owner and perform the self-certification checklist inspection.

The inspection may be performed in person or as a Remote Video Inspection (RVI) using Facetime, Skype, Zoom or other video app or software available. Using video inspection requires the cooperation and assistance of a participant (tenant or resident). We recommend that a video inspection be the first option to consider during the pandemic. If a video inspection is unavailable, an in-person inspection may be performed following the Health Officer's Shelter -In-Place Order. Continue to the last page for guidance on performing In-Person Inspections (IPI).

Performing Remote Video Inspection (RVI)

Below is information that may assist with performing a remote video inspection (RVI) or contactless in person inspection. These guides may be used by both owners and tenants to facilitate the inspection. Keep in mind that checking the Not Applicable [N/A] box is acceptable when it applies.

Doors & Windows:

Ease of operation. Ask the participant to open and close. Observe hand positions, stance and amount of force to open or close. Confirm your observation with participant.

Locks and Hardware. Ask participant to operate locks and latches. Observe ease of operation and proper installation. Confirm your observation with participant.

Smoke detectors and Carbon Monoxide Alarms: Test each alarm for proper operation. Chirping sounds normally indicate there is low battery power and the battery should be replaced.

Alarms with Indicator Lights: There are indicator lights that flash red, green or no color and lights that remain on. If lights flash every 60 seconds or are constantly on, that is an indication the alarm is operating properly. If lights flash every 10 to 15 seconds, there is something wrong with the alarm and the alarm should be repaired or replaced.

Alarms without Indicator Lights: To test ask the participant to press the test button. If the alarm chirps after pressing, it is operating properly. Depending on the brand of alarm, there will be several chirps following the initial chirp. Those are normal conditions. If the chirping continues, there may be an operational problem. If there is no chirp after pressing, the alarm is considered inoperable and should be repaired or replaced.

Other Alarms: New technology allows for different indicators of operational status. Alarms comes in various sizes, shape and functionality. Use of smart technologies by Nest, Alexa and OneLink are examples of new innovations in alarms. Some alarms are proprietary alarms used by ADT and other alarms systems.

Heating: Ask the participant to turn on the heater. If the heater is on a thermostat with a set temperature, ask to bypass the temperature setting to turn on the heater. The sound of the burners turning on or the heat coming from the heater is an indication that the heater is operational.

Not Under Tenant Control. Check temperature setting of thermostats. The temperature setting (not the actual temperature) should be set at 68 degrees Fahrenheit. If there are concerns that it is still cold, confirmation that the heater is in operating condition may be performed by following the above directions.

Water heaters: Inspect for safe conditions on existing installations. The safe installation can be determined by observation.

Ventilation/Windows: Observe the opening and closing of windows and the effectiveness of the locks and handles.

Appliance: Observe operating conditions.

Electrical Wiring: Ask the participant if there are any concerns regarding electrical fixtures. Electrical fixtures are tested for proper operation.

Exhaust Fans: Ask the participant to turn fans on and off.

Lighting Fixtures: Ask the participant to turn lights on and off.

Outlets and receptacles: Observe faceplates and cover plates on each electrical receptacle, outlet, box or panel.

GFCI receptacles with LED indicator: Most GFCI receptacles come with an LED light indicator. Green light means that it is wired correctly. No testing required. If the light is off or the light is red, have the participant press the test and reset button. If the status does not change by pressing the test and reset button, then the GFCI receptacle is deemed damaged or inoperable. If light turns green, the receptacle is operational.

GFCI receptacles without LED indicator: For GFCI receptacles that do not have a light indicator, an electrical tester may be used if available. Follow the pre-cautionary steps above when using the tester. The tester should be removed when the participant is pressing the test and reset button.

Service Panel: Ask the participant if there are any concerns. Service panels that have fuses are recommended to have 15 amps fuses unless the circuits have been tested and a licensed electrician has determined the circuit can handle the higher amperage.

Plumbing: Signs of leakage do not necessarily mean the fixture is leaking. The leak may have been repaired.

Faucet or Shower valve: If a leak is observed, ask the participant to open and shut off the valves. If the leak is still present, repairs may be required.

Drains: If there is a sign of leak, ask the participant to run the water to confirm and identify the leak.

Toilets: Ask participant if there are any concerns.

Handrail/Guardrail: Ask participant if there are any loose or damaged members.

Stairway Condition: Ask participant if there are any loose or damaged steps, balusters or handrails.

Floor and Trip Hazards: Ask the participant if there are any concerns.

Common Area and Exterior: Inspections may be performed without tenant or resident participation.

Performing In-Person Inspections (IPI)

- Owners or owner's representative who enter private residences are required to wear a face mask and gloves as personal protective equipment per the Berkeley Health Officer's Shelter in Place Order Appendix B and should carry personal hand sanitizer. They may choose to use other optional personal protective equipment such as goggles, a face shield, or shoe covers.
- Contact tenants or residents in advance, ideally the day before the appointment is scheduled, to confirm the appointment and ask if any member of the household or personnel on-site is exhibiting any symptoms, has been sick or is currently sick, or whether anyone on the premises has been exposed to someone who has been sick or is under quarantine. If the customer answers in the affirmative for any of those questions, reschedule the appointment at least 10 to 14 days in the future.
- During the advance call, request tenants or residents use face coverings during the appointment and emphasize the importance of maintaining a safe distance of at least six feet.
- Allow owners or owner's representative to call a "safety stop" when they are reluctant to enter a residence or building due to unsafe conditions related to COVID-19 hazards.
- When working in a private residence, minimize contact with personal belongings, avoid touching surfaces where possible and limit interaction. Where possible, appliances or other items that must be touched should be cleaned with sanitizing wipes prior to and after the inspection is performed.
- Only bring into the unit tools that may be required to do the inspection. Do not bring any unnecessary equipment or tools inside the residence.
- Every effort should be taken to minimize contact between the owners or owner's representative and residents, including maintaining a minimum of six feet distance at all times. Strictly control "choke points" and "high risks areas" where it is difficult to maintain the six-foot distance by limiting access or limiting the number of persons present during the inspection. Such "high risk areas" are hallways, bathrooms and small rooms.
- After completion of the inspection at a residence or building, owners or owner's representative should remove all PPE and face coverings and wash their hands with hand sanitizer.