



DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION

Housing Inspection Services

City and County of San Francisco

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RESIDENTIAL HABITABILITY INFORMATION SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING CODE REQUIREMENTS (PROPERTY OWNER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST)

REVISED November 15, 2020

FOR ONE & TWO FAMILY DWELLINGS, APARTMENT HOUSES (3 OR MORE DWELLING UNITS) & RESIDENTIAL/TOURIST HOTELS

1. SEC. 605. PROHIBITION ON WOODEN FIXED UTILITY LADDERS

Wooden Fixed Utility Ladders shall be prohibited on buildings which contain R-1, R-2, and R-3 Occupancies (hotels and apartment house [and dwellings]), as defined by Chapter 4 of this Code. "Fixed Utility Ladder" shall mean any ladder permanently attached to the exterior of a structure or building, but shall not include ladders required by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health for workplace safety that have been installed with a proper permit, or ladders expressly authorized by the Department of Building Inspection for Building Code or Fire Code compliance purposes. Wooden Fixed Utility Ladders shall be removed or replaced with metal ladders that comply with applicable Building, Fire, and Housing Code requirements.

2. MAINTAIN CLEAR & UNOBSTRUCTED MEANS OF EGRESS: Please keep all means of egress, primary (front stairs, exit corridors), and secondary (rear stairs, fire escapes) free from encumbrances (such as storage, flower pots, household items, laundry lines, and any tripping hazards). These paths of travel are to be completely clear at all times for emergency exiting.

3. MAINTAIN FIRE ESCAPES: Check all fire escape ladders to ensure that they are fully operational (in particular the cable and all moving parts) and that drop ladders are not obstructed. You should have an industry professional inspect and service your fire escapes annually.

4. MAINTAIN CENTRAL SMOKE/FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS & SMOKE DETECTORS: In apartment houses and hotels maintain the central smoke/fire alarm system with the operational light indicating on within the supervision panel box, and annual Fire Department certification clearly posted in those buildings where applicable. In all residential occupancies check to confirm that all required smoke detectors are installed and fully operational in all sleeping or guest rooms, and at the top of every public stairway, and on every third floor below. Replace batteries annually. Do not paint over smoke detectors.

5. MAINTAIN & RETAG FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: In all apartment houses and hotels a Type 2A 10BC or equivalent Fire Extinguisher is required on every floor of all public hallways. Required Fire Extinguishers must be serviced and retagged by an industry professional annually (this includes recently purchased fire extinguishers)..

6. MAINTAIN ALL WOOD DECKS, EXIT CORRIDORS, STAIRS, GUARD RAILS ,AND HAND RAILS: You should have all of these existing items inspected annually for dry rot, fungus, deterioration or decay by a licensed professional pest control contractor, general building contractor, architect, or engineer to ensure their safety and stability. Have these professionals provide you with a written report of any recommended repairs. Obtain building permits for all structural repairs.

7. **MAINTAIN VISIBLE PROPERTY ADDRESS NUMBERING:** Your residential building must have the address numbers mounted at the front of the building at a minimum size of 4 inches in a color contrasting from the building. The address numbers should be clearly visible from the street by emergency vehicles. In addition, all guestrooms should be clearly identified by name, letter, or number.
8. **MAINTAIN GARAGES & STORAGE AREAS:** In all apartment houses of 5 units or more and all hotels, remove combustible storage from all storage areas that do not have fire sprinklers. Absolutely no combustible storage may be kept under stairwells without a proper fire sprinkler system. Garages are only to be used for the vehicle storage incidental to the apartment house or hotel use.
9. **MAINTAIN GARBAGE ROOMS & GARBAGE RECEPTACLES:** All garbage rooms shall have 26-gauge sheet metal walls and ceilings or approved alternative, fire sprinklers and must be kept clean of debris and vermin with self-closing tight fitting doors. All garbage receptacles must be tightly covered, with a sufficient number to serve the building.
10. **PROPERLY MAINTAIN SECURITY PROVISIONS SUCH AS SECURITY BARS, GATES, ENTRANCE/EXIT DOORS & DOOR SELF CLOSING DEVICES:** All security bars in sleeping rooms must be openable from the inside with a fully operational manual release (no keys, combination locks, or special knowledge is allowed to open security bars or gates). Absolutely no double cylinder locks (which require a key from the inside and outside) are allowed on any apartment unit or building entry or exit doors. Maintain 135-degree viewers at all apartment unit entry doors mounted no higher than 58 inches above the floor. All entrance and exit doors shall be tight fitting, self closing, and self-locking. In all apartment houses and hotels, all public bathroom, community kitchen, garbage room, roof penthouse, guest room, and dwelling unit entry doors shall be tight fitting and self-closing. No padlocks or padlock hasps are allowed on guest room or dwelling unit entry or exit doors.
11. **MAINTAIN SHUTOFF TOOL NEAR GAS METER:** In all apartment houses and hotels keep a shutoff tool near the gas meter and post the instructional diagram provided by the Department of Building Inspection in a public area near the gas meter.
12. **MAINTAIN HEAT & HOT WATER:** Heat is an essential housing service that a landlord is required by law to provide to all tenants. The San Francisco Housing Code, as amended January 20, 2020, establishes minimum heating requirements for residential rental units. In all residential rental units except for hotel rooms, the San Francisco Housing Code requires that a permanent heating source be provided that maintains a minimum room temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit at a point three feet above the floor in all habitable rooms (excluding bathrooms and hallways) at all times. For residential hotel guest rooms, the landlord must provide a permanent heating source which maintains a minimum room temperature of 68 Fahrenheit for 13 hours a day, from 5AM to 11 AM and from 3:00PM to 10:00PM. [Central source heat systems must have a locking thermostat to initiate the heat system located in a habitable room other than an owner or manager's unit (except for owner occupied residential condominiums).] Hot water to all units must be between 105 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. For boiler heat systems, obtain annual certification per the San Francisco Plumbing Code. Radiators must be in good working order with pressure valves operational and valve shut-off handles in place.
13. **MAINTAIN ALL FIREPROOFING, GLAZING, WEATHER PROOFING, EXTERIOR STUCCO, EXTERIOR SIDING, INTERIOR WALLS/ CEILINGS, and CHIMNEYS & FLUES:** Maintain these areas free from holes, decay, missing materials and peeling paint.

14. **MAINTAIN EXIT SIGNAGE:** Common hallway doors & windows leading to fire escapes or exits must have the appropriate signage, with lettering 6 inches in height on contrasting background.
15. **MAINTAIN ALL ROOF AREAS:** In all apartment houses or hotels, keep all wires/ropes 8 feet above the roof. Remove all tripping hazards. All doors to roof areas must be tight fitting and self-closing and openable from inside the penthouse door leading to the roof. This door must be lockable from inside the stairway to the roof if the roof is accessible from an adjacent roof. Keep the roof area free from combustible storage. Nothing should obstruct access to a roof-mounted fire escape.
16. **MAINTAIN ADEQUATE LIGHTING IN ALL PUBLIC AREAS:** Provide adequate lighting to all stairs, public hallways, exit corridors and fire escapes.
17. **MAINTAIN PROPER VENTILATION:** In garages, penthouses, public halls, furnace and boiler rooms, gas meter rooms, garbage rooms, and all other rooms with gas appliances, maintain the proper ventilation and vent systems.
18. **MAINTAIN SMOKE BARRIER DOORS:** All front entry doors to the apartment house or hotel, doors that separate the garage from the public hallway or lobby, hallway doors between floors and stairways (stairway enclosure doors), boiler/furnace room doors, garbage room doors, and penthouse doors must have self closing devices and remain closed to be effective smoke barriers.
19. **MAINTAIN FIRE SPRINKLERS IN GARBAGE & LINEN CHUTES:** In apartment houses and hotels, maintain fire sprinklers at top and bottom of chutes, and as required by the Housing Code. Do not paint over any sprinkler heads.
20. **MAINTAIN ALL LIGHT WELLS:** Keep all light wells clean and free from the accumulation of debris. Keep all light well drains clean and operational.
21. **MAINTAIN ALL ROOMS (VACANT OR OCCUPIED):** In all residential buildings, all dwelling units and guest rooms shall be maintained in a clean and functional manner. Walls, ceilings, floors, windows, doors, lavatory sinks, and private bathrooms shall be properly maintained, weather proofed and free from severe wear, moisture retention, plumbing fixture or roof leakage, chronic and severe mold and mildew or other dilapidated conditions.
22. **MAINTAIN ALL PUBLIC BATH ROOMS:** In all hotels, public bathrooms must be maintained in a clean and functional manner. The San Francisco Housing Code requires a minimum of 2 operational public bathrooms per floor when all guest rooms do not have private bathrooms. This number increases by one for every additional 10-guest rooms (or increment of 10) greater than 20 guest rooms per floor. Mechanical ventilation must be capable of delivering 5 air changes per hour. Windows that provide natural ventilation shall be well maintained and fully operational.
23. **MAINTAIN ALL COMMUNITY KITCHENS:** In hotels, all community kitchens shall be maintained in a clean and functional manner. Approved cooking facilities must have an electrical power source. Entry doors to the community kitchen shall be self-closing and tight fitting. Counters, flooring and sinks shall be of nonabsorbent/impervious materials. Institutional grade materials such as stainless steel counters and tiled floors are recommended.
24. **MAINTAIN ALL HANDRAILS & GUARDRAILS:** All interior and exterior handrails and guardrails shall be properly secured and maintained in a functional manner.
25. **MAINTAIN ELEVATORS REQUIRED BY THE FIRE CODE:** Hotels with a building height exceeding 50 feet (as calculated by the San Francisco Fire Department) shall have at least

one operating elevator for the residential occupants' use that is well maintained and operates safely.

26. **MAINTAIN ADEQUATE GARBAGE PICK-UP:** All residential buildings shall maintain garbage pick-up services necessary to prevent the accumulation of garbage and debris that would result in rodent harborage and unsanitary conditions.
27. **MAINTAIN HOT WATER HEATERS:** All hot water heaters must be properly secured and double strapped. Pressure relief valves, shut off valves and vent connectors must be properly in place and operational. When located in a garage the appliance must be a minimum of 18 inches off the floor.
28. **MAINTAIN ALL WINDOWS:** All windows shall be well maintained, tight fitting and fully operational. Broken sash cords shall be replaced. No window shall be painted or nailed shut. Replacement windows must have sufficient weather-stripping and a minimum 20 inch width and 24 inch height if required for escape.
29. **MAINTAIN ALL FLOORING & CARPETING THROUGHOUT:** All carpeting or other floor covering shall be kept sanitized and free of extensive wear and tripping hazard. All floor coverings that cannot be sanitized shall be replaced in an appropriate manner to prevent a tripping hazard.
30. **MAINTAIN ALL MATTRESSES & LINEN:** In all hotels or guestrooms where the property owner or building operator provides mattresses and linen, these items shall be maintained in a sanitary condition and free from insect infestation.
31. **REPAIR OR REPLACE LEAKING WINDOWS, PLUMBING FIXTURES & ROOFS:** Investigate and repair leaks from windows, plumbing fixtures or the roof quickly to prevent moisture retention that can cause mold and mildew. Do not cover over leaking areas until the source of the leak is properly repaired.
32. **PROVIDE PROPER NOTIFICATION WHEN DISTURBING LEAD PAINT & OBSERVE REQUIRED REMOVAL PROTOCOLS:** Property owners need to provide residential occupants with proper notification when disturbing interior and exterior lead based paint, provide proper signage, protect interior floors/furnishings, and observe work protocols related to lead paint removal, debris containment and migration, clean-up, etc.
33. **PROPERLY VENT ALL CLOTHES DRYERS:** Moisture exhaust ducts shall be properly maintained, be equipped with a back draft damper and terminate on the outside of the building.
34. **ON SITE CARETAKER:** Apartment houses of 16 or more dwellings or hotels of 12 or more guest rooms must have an onsite caretaker that can be contacted by the city in case of emergency. The name, unit #, and contact information of this individual must be posted at the front entrance to the building.
35. **CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS:** State Fire Marshal approved alarms and detection systems are required in the common areas, and sleeping rooms of existing residential buildings that contain fuel-burning appliances, such as heaters or gas appliances, fireplaces, etc., as delineated in the San Francisco Building Code.
36. **LOSS OF DWELLING UNITS:** The Planning Department, and Department of Building Inspection will review the proposed loss of any dwelling units in a building greater than two units (legal or illegal) pursuant to Executive Directive 13-01, issued by Mayor Lee on December 18, 2013.

NOTE: This informational checklist is provided for the general use of residential occupants, property owners, operators, managers, and the public. This criterion does not address all potential Code violations that may be detected during an on-site inspection and is subject to change without notice. Please contact the Housing Inspection Services Division at (628) 652-3700 during business hours if you require further information.