



## CODE ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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# RESIDENTIAL / COMMERCIAL DWELLING & APARTMENT GUIDE

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Introducing the **CEA Inspection Guide**: Your Partner in Ensuring Safe, Compliant Properties

At CEA, we are proud to support our local community by providing crucial assistance in defining the key questions for most residential and commercial apartment rental and real estate transfer inspections. Our comprehensive guide outlines the common areas of concern observed during on-site inspections, helping you to better prepare and maintain your property.

### Why the CEA Inspection Guide?

- **Expert Insights:** Benefit from our extensive experience in identifying common inspection failure points.
- **Safety First:** Ensure your property meets the minimum life safety standards required for residential or commercial occupancy.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:** Our guide addresses a wide range of exterior and interior elements, making it an indispensable resource for property owners.

### Exterior Areas:

1. **Sidewalks, Driveways, Grading & Drainage, Sanitation and Weeds:** Inspectors ensure that entryways are safe and that public health and sanitation standards are met. Proper garbage disposal as per local jurisdiction is mandatory.
2. **Gates, Fences, & Barriers:** These must be operable and safe, particularly when near pools or spas.
3. **Protective Treatments, Roofs, Gutters, Windows & Doors:** Proper maintenance and operability, including emergency and egress windows.
4. **Foundations, Exterior Walls / Structural Members:** Must be maintained, safe, and free of disrepair. Unsafe conditions may require additional reports from a Pennsylvania Design Professional.
5. **Decks, Balconies, Steps, Landings, Fire Escapes:** Proper maintenance and safety are essential, with necessary handrails and guard rails. Unsafe conditions may require professional reports.

6. **Pools, Spas, and Accessory Structures:** Maintenance and safety barriers are required, with seasonal coverings as needed.
7. **Electrical and Lighting:** Must meet code requirements, with proper illumination for safety and ground fault protection for outlets.
8. **Premises Identification:** Clear, compliant address identification with **4”** minimum projections for both residential and commercial buildings.

## **Interior Structure:**

1. **Egress, Hallways, Steps, and Landings:** The interior of the structure shall be properly maintained and in good repair, structurally sound, and in a sanitary condition for proper public health. Any occupant of the structure shall keep the area occupied or controlled in a clean and sanitary condition.
2. **Doors, Windows, and Emergency Escapes:** All interior doors must properly fit their frames and be capable of being opened and closed properly and securely attached to jambs, headers, or tracks as intended by the manufacturer. **Note: ANY door used for exterior exit or separation between a habitable and non-habitable area (garage into basement) must be properly rated and installed to minimum code. Emergency windows, escapes, and hatches must be properly sized, operable, and in good condition. Doors providing access to a residential dwelling unit, rooming unit, or housekeeping unit that is rented, leased, or let shall be required to be equipped with a deadbolt lock designed to be readily openable from the side in which egress is to be made without the need for keys, special knowledge, or effort, and shall have a minimum lock throw of 1” in good working order.**
3. **Rubbish or Garbage:** Accumulation of rubbish, trash, or garbage shall not be permitted. Proper exterior collection areas must be presented to any residential structure. Inspectors ensure that entryways are safe and that public health and sanitation standards are met. Proper garbage disposal as per local jurisdiction is mandatory.
4. **Handrails and Guardrails:** Every interior flight of steps having four or more risers must be equipped with the proper graspable handrail on one side of the steps. Guards must be in place for fall protection of steps, landings, and projection areas.
5. **Pest Control and Elimination:** Infestation of the structure shall be properly maintained and free of pests, insects, rodents, wildlife, non-domesticated animals, or outside elements and debris in any interior area. Owners of multi-unit housing, apartments, or non-single units are solely responsible for pest control and records for the interior structure and surroundings.
6. **Fire Protection and Life Safety:** There are many portions of life safety depending on the structure. This list shall demonstrate the general portion for all residential dwellings and units. Smoke detectors are required to be properly installed and operable in every sleeping quarter, hallway area outside sleeping quarters/units, basement area (finished or unfinished), crawl space, mechanical room, closet, or defined area. Carbon monoxide detectors shall be located in the hallway or pathway area outside any sleeping quarters/units, and also installed within the vicinity of any gas-fired fuel appliance (furnace, hot water tank, boiler, etc.). Hardwired or interconnective devices are applicable to this code in new construction, alteration, and updated areas. Fire extinguishers are required in commercial units such as apartments and condos. Fire extinguishers are required to be properly affixed to a wall or cabinet, tested, and tagged.

7. **Mechanical, Heating, and Ventilation:** Any structure defined for the use of a dwelling shall maintain in operable and good condition in accordance with the manufacturer's requirement and recommendation the following: Heating of the habitable areas within the structure shall be maintained at a temperature of 68 degrees from October till April. Heated supply ducts must be properly sealed and wrapped in unventilated or unconditioned areas. Habitable areas must be properly ventilated with an acceptable amount of exchanged fresh air according to the structure. All bathrooms and lavatories shall be equipped with proper sized and operable ventilation fans that extend to the exterior only. Kitchen areas or cooking areas must be properly ventilated as per the appliances used and the manufacturer's requirements. Fireplaces must be properly maintained and in good condition for use. Laundry and dryers must be properly ventilated to the exterior and free of lint and debris in the area. Gas-fired appliances (furnaces, boilers, and hot water tanks) shall be properly ventilated and in good working condition. All safety and blow off valves and stems must be properly affixed and safe. All required emergency valves and shut-off valves must be operable and in place within range of any gas-fired appliance. Gas lines must be properly sized, installed, and in good working condition in accordance with the mechanical and fuel gas code.

**ALL equipment must be properly working and in good condition for inspection.**

8. **Electrical:** Any structure defined for the use of a dwelling shall maintain in operable and good condition in accordance with the manufacturer's requirement and recommendation the following: electrical supply, service panel, sub-panel, branch circuit, outlet, junction box, switches, or equipment associated thereto shall be safe and in good condition at the time of inspection.

All electrical service panels installed in a structure shall be inspected at least one time at installation or beyond to certify the proper installation, grounding, and bonding method for the utility provider. Any panel not having a Pennsylvania certified electrical inspection sticker affixed to the proper panel shall be required to be inspected by CEA prior to final inspection. All panels and sub-panels with fuses or breakers must have a proper panel directory of areas defined in the panel.

Any alterations, disconnection of utility service, updates, or disrepair of electrical panel, sub-panel, or equipment associated with the structure shall require additional electrical inspections.

Any improper, illegal, or unsafe wiring conditions observed or nonfunctioning, including open or exposed wires, boxes, or junctions during an inspection, shall be required to be resolved and maintained in a good working condition as per the minimum code basis.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets must be properly installed and working within 6' (six) feet of any open water source. All exterior outlets must be properly ground-faulted. Damp areas, wet areas shall be ground-faulted properly.

Proper working emergency lighting, exterior lighting, and illumination requirements in attic spaces, crawl spaces, egress doorways to the exterior, and hallways shall be operable and to the minimum illumination.

9. **Plumbing:** Any structure defined for the use of a dwelling shall maintain in operable and good condition in accordance with the manufacturer's requirement and recommendation the following: Every dwelling unit or structure used for dwelling shall contain its own bathtub or shower, lavatory (sink), water closet (toilet), and kitchen sink. All associated fixtures, pipes for sanitary or potable water supply, and drinking facilities (fountains & coolers) shall be in good sanitary condition, free of debris, and in good working condition.

All fixtures, traps, equipment, and sanitary systems must have the proper piping materials, sizing, and methods required by the International Plumbing Code. In addition, every sink, shower/tub, toilet, drinking fountain, and any other plumbing fixture shall be properly connected to an approved public sanitary or certified private septic system and maintain open and operable conditions of such.

All proper sanitary ventilation of the plumbing throughout the structure must be installed and properly opened for air exchange as required. All sanitary piping must be in good working condition and operable to the public/private systems.

Backflow and preventative containment devices, including atmospheric type vacuum breakers (hose bibs) for water supply, must be in place and operable. Appliances requiring additional expansion tanks (hot water/boiler) shall be properly installed in accordance with the plumbing code and manufacturer recommendations.

Water heating temperature shall be a minimum temperature of 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Hot water restriction control valves required in commercial areas must be properly installed and operable to maintain temperature. Additionally, gas-burning hot water heaters may not be located in bathrooms, toilet rooms, or bedrooms.

Remember, maintaining and repairing exterior and interior structures and premises is the owner's responsibility to ensure compliance and safety. In some cases, additional integrity reports from a Pennsylvania Design Professional may be required.

**Disclaimer:** This listing is provided solely for informational purposes in connection with a property inspection conducted prior to scheduling. It does not constitute a final, comprehensive list of all potential conditions or deficiencies. Additional items observed on-site may necessitate further terms and/or corrective actions.

Always feel free to contact us directly for any code questions or concerns.