



Standards for Maintenance of Residential Properties



A Guide for Property Owners, Landlords, and Tenants

Yards

- Yards must be maintained free of garbage and debris.
- Grass must be cut as often as needed to control weeds and to ensure it is not longer than eight (8) inches.
- It is required that garbage and recycling carts be stored in a secure location, not visible from the street, and placed at the curbside the morning of collection. Carts should be removed from the curbside promptly after pick-up.
- Dead, diseased and dying trees must be removed from the property.
- Sidewalks, stoops and driveways must be maintained free from crumbling, potholes or cracks. A permit is required to replace or repair.

Exteriors and Fences

- Houses and existing accessory structures (such as sheds, garages, and fences) must have a protective coating that is in good condition (paint, siding, stucco) to prevent deterioration of the structure. New accessory structures require a building permit.
- Windows or window screens that are broken must be repaired, and doors must be tight-fitting to prevent insects and rodents from entering the building.
- Gutters and downspouts must be kept in good repair, and directed away from any building foundation or public sidewalk or public street. This can help to prevent flooding of basements and neighboring properties and excessive moisture, which can lead to significant and costly damage and mold problems.

Interior Conditions

- Smoke detectors must be installed on each floor and each sleeping room.
- A carbon monoxide detector must be installed within 15 feet of sleeping rooms.
- Floors, walls, and ceilings must be in good repair and free of holes and cracks.
- Paint as needed to keep surfaces washable and to protect against damage and deterioration.
- Stairs must be in good repair and equipped with handrails to prevent falls.
- GFCIs must be installed on all counter top outlets in the kitchen and at least one outlet adjacent to the sink in the bathroom.
- All circuits in the electrical panel must be properly identified.

Heating and Water

- Rental properties must maintain a temperature of not less than 68°F (20°C) during the period from October 1 to May 1 in all habitable rooms and bathrooms.
- Plumbing systems must be in good repair and provide hot water that is at least 110°F (43°C). It is also recommended, that the hot water temperature should not exceed 135°F (57°C), as it can cause severe burns, especially to small children.

Basement Rooms

- Basement sleeping rooms must have drywall ceilings and walls, a door and an egress window with a minimum area of 9 square feet. Smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors must also be installed. If you are interested in making any part of the basement into a sleeping room please contact the Community Development Department for permit requirements.
- Rooms in the basement must be protected from moisture, seepage, and sewer back-up.

Insects and Rodents

- All properties must be kept free of insects and rodents to prevent damage to the home and the transmission of disease through bites and feces.
- Kitchens and food storage areas should be kept tidy, and food should be stored off the floor to keep pests out. Even pet food left out in a feeding dish will attract unwanted pests.
- At the first sign of insects or rodents, take aggressive action or call an exterminator before the problem gets out of hand.

Fire Pits

- Portable outdoor fireplaces shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and shall not be operated within 15 feet of a structure or combustible material.
- Permanent outdoor fireplaces shall not be operated within 25 feet of a structure of combustible material and require a permit from the City.
- Only burn clean, untreated wood (no garbage, painted materials, or construction waste).
- Fires must never be left unattended and must be extinguished with water before leaving the area.

Vehicles

- Vehicles that are not operational, rusted, wrecked or partly wrecked, dismantled or partly dismantled, are not registered and/or do not have a current valid license plate attached to it are not permitted to be stored on the property, except in a closed garage.
- Vehicles are not permitted to be parked on any portion of the yard, except on an area that is paved. A "paved surface" can be cement, brick, asphalt, paver, etc.
- A maximum of one non-commercial trailer vehicle is permitted on a residential property and must be parked on a paved surface.

Renting Your Property

- All rental properties in the City must be licensed, which requires annual registration and inspection.
- During each inspection, the landlord is required to provide proof of a valid lease for each respective rental unit. Each lease must contain wording indicating the tenants' written consent to allow inspection of the property by the City.
- The licensing term starts January 1 of any given year and ends December 31 of the same year.
- License renewal application and fee are due prior to January 1. If submitted after January 1, a 20% penalty fee applies.

Landlord/tenant concerns or disputes are handled by the IL Circuit Courts

- The Eighteenth Judicial Circuit Court (Wheaton, IL) has information and resources on both landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities.
- See website at <https://www.dupageco.org/LawLibrary/3403/>

This resource does not contain all property standards requirements for the City of West Chicago. A link to City Code is available on the City's website.

Questions or concerns? Visit <http://westchicago.org/departments/community-development> or contact (630)293-2200 extension 131 or 141 or email CommunityDev@westchicago.org.