

SAFE AND HEALTHY HOUSING IN RENTON (PROPOSED)

May 2016

The City of Renton is considering adoption of new regulations that would **require owners of residential rental properties to register rentable units** with the City. The basic goal of the program would be to ensure that residential rental units meet the standard principles of healthy housing as per the Seattle / King County Department of Public Health.

Registration would be accompanied by a “Certificate of Occupancy,” that would be available to the property owner or their agent following **successfully passing an inspection of the interior and exterior of each unit**.

Inspections would be limited to a uniform set of **safety and health standards** (see next page). Inspections would be visual and not include testing devices. This program would not include the physical appearance of structures nor would “cosmetic” improvements be required.

Inspections may be by either a **City of Renton inspector** or a **private inspector** contracted by the property owner or agent. Private inspectors must be approved by the City of Renton prior to the inspection. A list of approved inspectors would be available from the City.

A “**pilot project**” has been proposed to test the program.



The area selected for the pilot project would be in the **Renton Highlands**, generally located south of NE 21st Avenue, west of Monroe Avenue NE, north of NE 7th Street, and east of Edmonds Avenue NE.

This area has been selected because it has the highest concentration of the oldest housing in the City and, therefore, a greater potential for safety and health issues (most of the housing in this area was originally constructed to be temporary).

Following successful completion of the pilot program, the Safe and Healthy Housing Program would be phased in throughout the city.

The Program would apply to all single-family structures, duplexes (and similar multi-unit structures), accessory dwelling units, rented condominium and apartment units, and other rentals. **Exceptions** to the program would include hotels, motels, and similar transient rentals; single room rentals within a unit also occupied by the owner; emergency and temporary shelters; units in hospitals, care centers, and similar facilities, housing authority rentals, and other units that are otherwise inspected by the state or federal government (documentation regarding current occupancy and inspection must be available).

Registration information would include the property owner and agent contact information; number of bedrooms and number of occupants allowed; signed statement of understanding of responsibilities to provide safe living environment; that all necessary permits have been obtained; garbage and recycle would be managed and that the property would be kept free of litter, abandoned vehicles, furniture, and large utilities; and noise and nuisances would be monitored and controlled.

Safety inspection standards would include structural integrity of the building; absence of injury hazards and safe and functional access from the street and building entrances; presence of fully functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; free from defective or hazardous electrical systems. **Health inspection standards** would include protection from weather (adequate roofing); free from interior moisture, mold, plumbing leaks; gutters and downspouts connected; fully functioning plumbing, sanitation, thermally controlled heat, and water systems; and free from contaminants and pests.

For properties with 1 to 4 units, property owners would have the option of selecting either a City inspector (City of Renton staff) or a private contractor chosen from a preapproved list of local inspectors. For properties of more than 4 units, inspection would be by a private contractor. For the purposes of this program, “property” is distinguished from “portfolio of properties.” A property may have one or more rental units on it, but a portfolio may consist of several properties. A property with 6 units would require inspection by a private contractor, but a portfolio consisting of 3 properties with 3 triplexes could be inspected by a City inspector.

All units would be inspected upon **initial registration** and would be reinspected with registration renewals. Reinspections may be required following resolution of code violations. A “**Certificate of Inspection**” would be required to maintain unit registration and occupation.

Following the initial inspection, **registration renewal and reinspections** would be required every four years, however, not all units may require reinspection. If a rental unit selected for inspection fails the reinspection or if a rental property or unit has had conditions that endanger or impair the safety or health of a tenant reported to the City since the last inspection, 100 percent of the units on the property may be required to be reinspected and a Certificate of Inspection provided for each.

For properties having 1 to 20 units, **no more than 4** units would require the renewal reinspection. For properties having 21 and more units, **no more than 20 percent** of the units, to a maximum of 50 units, would be required to be reinspected. The four year registration renewal period would apply in phases throughout the city based on the original phasing of the program.