

Tips from a health officer 2016

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Town Health Officer, City of *Burlington*

Rental Housing Health Code*

- Purpose – to protect the health, safety and well-being of the occupants of rental housing
- Authority – The code is adopted under authority of 18 VSA Section 102, 3 VSA Section 3003 (a) and 3VSA Section 801(b)(11)

Priority tasks

Documentation

- ✓ Use checklist or other tool to track inspection process
- ✓ Make notes
- ✓ Take photos if possible

Follow up

Provide responsible party with findings, required corrections and a date for compliance

Additional Follow up

If property owner does not comply voluntarily you may need to issue a health order or emergency health order

Rental Housing Health Code

Scope

Rental Housing Health Code shall apply to all rented dwellings, dwelling units, rooming houses, rooming units, and mobile home lots used as a residence.

Working with Landlords/property owners

Voluntary compliance

According to 18 VSA, Chapter 3 § 124, when appropriate the town health officer shall make all practicable efforts to secure voluntary compliance.

Beware

- o The code is full of potential “trap words” like:
 - ✓ Adequate
 - ✓ Sufficient
 - ✓ Appropriate
 - ✓ Reasonable

Document how these **are or are not met**

Use your senses

- o Sight
- o Sound
- o Touch
- o Smell
- o Taste (probably not)

Confirmation bias

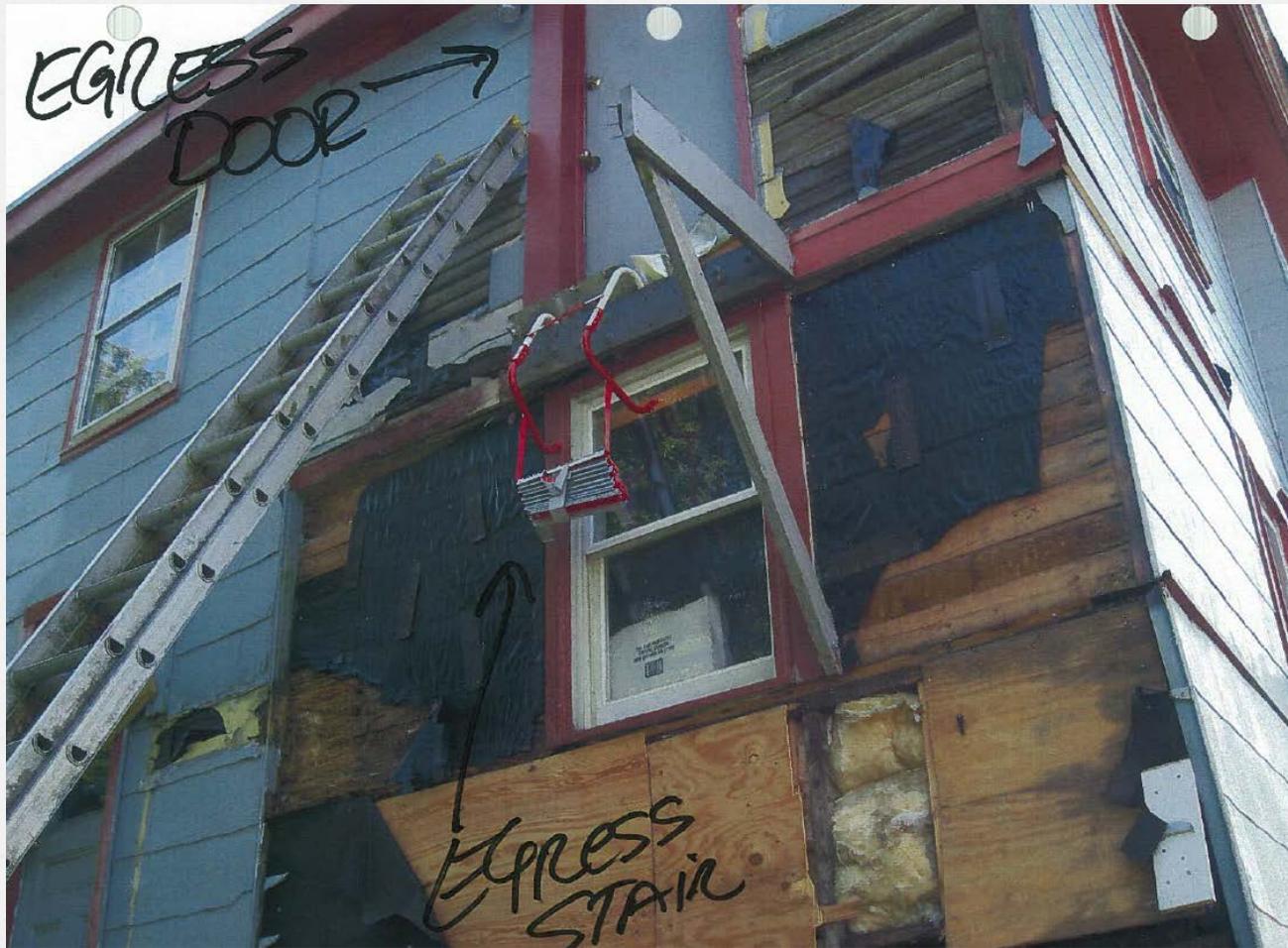
- o A tendency to search for information that confirms one's preconceptions.
- o If you go looking for something – you may find it –or miss something more important

Secret police academy investigative tactic

Works with nearly 100 percent success

GOYAATTP

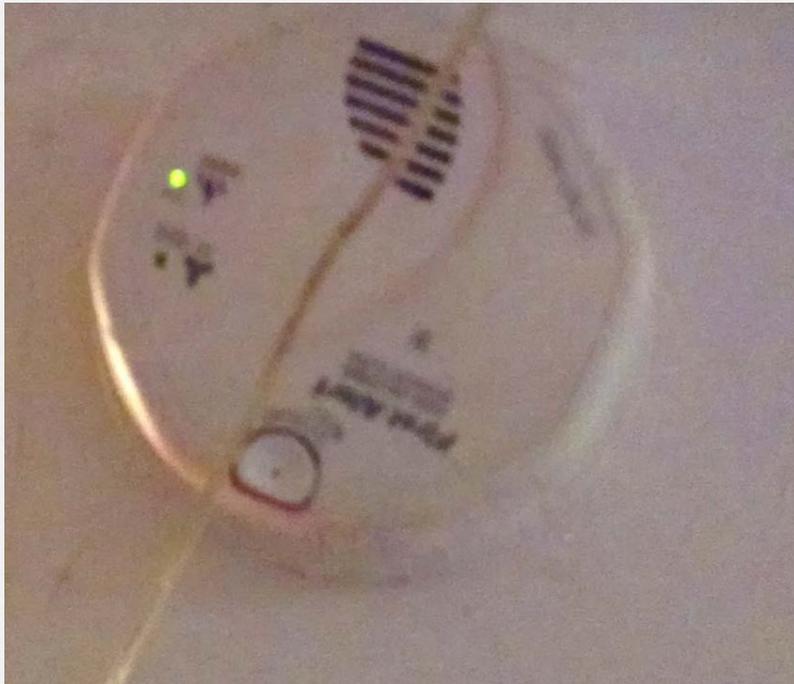
Section 1 - Life Safety



- Is there a working smoke alarm (detector):
If “No”, contact your regional DPS office.
- a. On each level of the dwelling including basements?
 - b. In the vicinity of each bedroom?



- Is there a working carbon monoxide (CO) alarm (detector):
If “No”, immediately contact your regional DPS office.
- a. In the vicinity of each bedroom?
 - b. In each room used for sleeping that contains a fuel-burning appliance?



“One common factor in most fatal fires is the lack of properly installed, and working smoke alarms.”

- from the VT Department of Public Safety
Division of Fire Safety



Do all stairways have handrails that are securely mounted?



Are all exits out of the building free of obstructions and able to be used?



Does each bedroom have a window that can be easily opened and is large enough for emergency rescue or escape?



Does the dwelling unit (if there are 3 or more units) have a working fire extinguisher?



Section 2

SANITATION FACILITIES (I)

o Is there a kitchen sink?



Is there space to store and prepare food?



Apr 10 2013 3:34pm

Are the countertops
nonabsorbent ?



Jun10 2014 8:35am

Is the floor made of:

- o a. Smooth, nonabsorbent, non-corrosive, waterproof covering? (ex: tile)
- o b. Carpeting with a solid, water repellent backing?
- o c. Wood flooring with a water resistant finish and with no cracks?

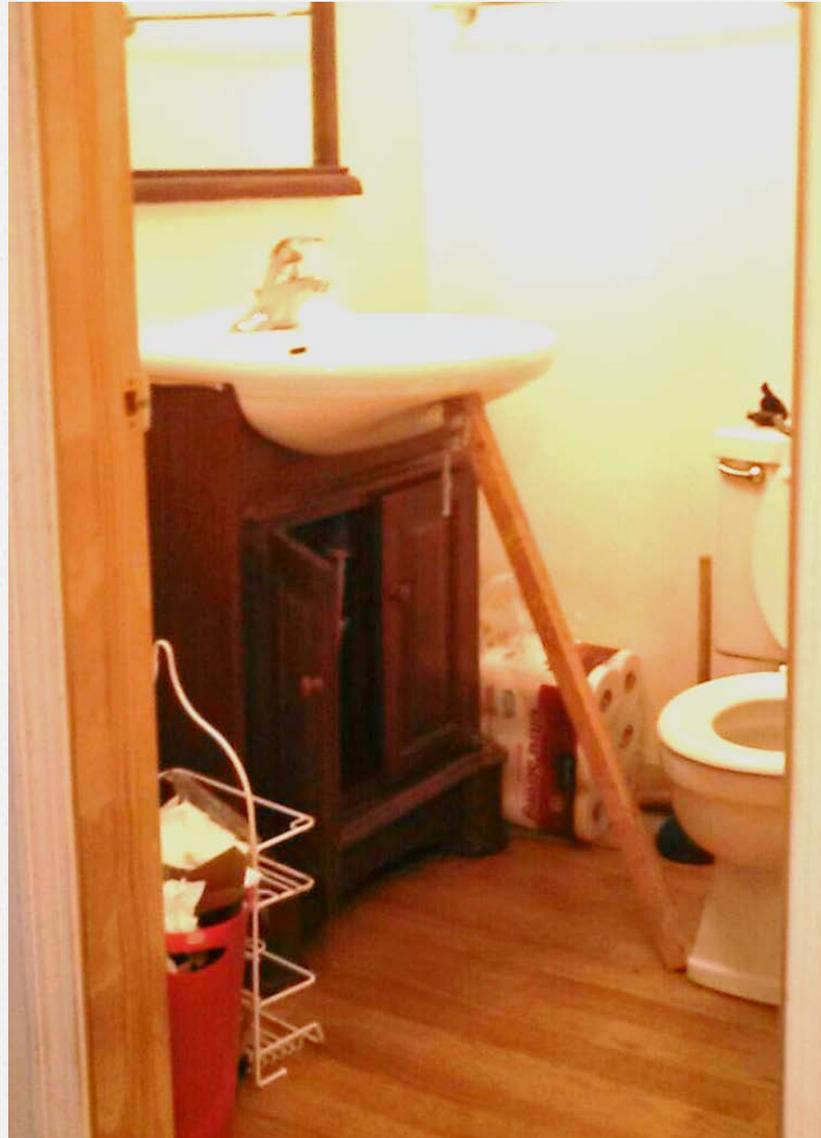
Flooring



Is there at least 1 bathroom sink, 1 toilet, and 1 bathtub or shower per unit?



Dec 11 2014 10:21 AM



Question is only applicable to
rooming houses.

Is there 1:

Toilet per 10 people?

Sink per 10 people?

Shower/tub per 8
people

Is the floor made of:

- a. Smooth, nonabsorbent, noncorrosive, non-slip, waterproof covering? (ex: tile)

- b. Carpeting with a solid, water repellent backing?

Do all the toilets flush?



Is the shower/tub and sink/toilet separate from habitable rooms?



Section 3

SANITATION FACILITIES (II)

- o Is there currently a water supply to the unit?

IS the water supply from

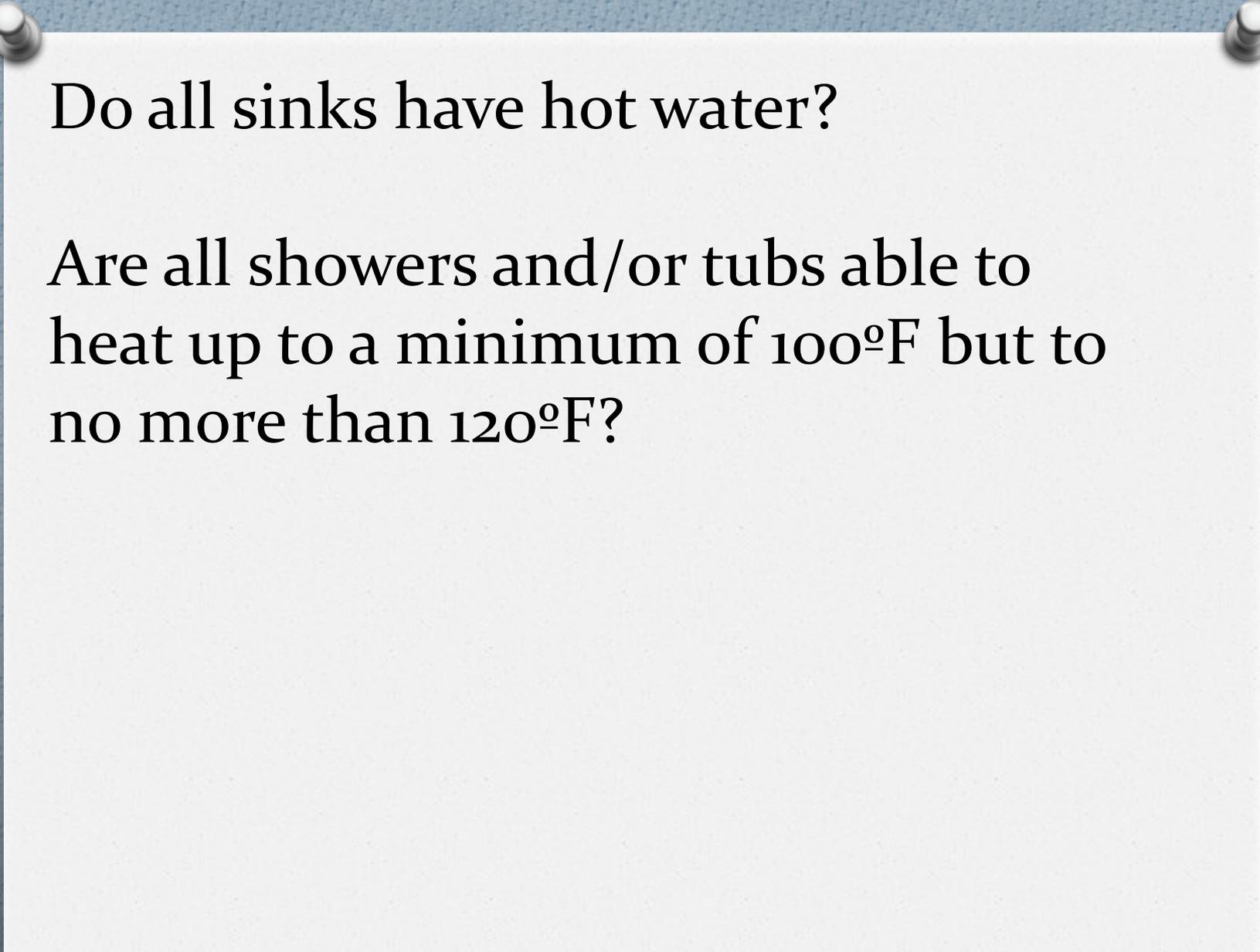
- o A public source
- o B Known private source



If a private System, was the water tested for coliform (Kit A) within the last year?

If a private system, was the water tested for inorganic chemicals (Kit C) within the last 5 years?

If a private system, was the water tested for gross alpha (Kit RA) within the last 5 years



Do all sinks have hot water?

Are all showers and/or tubs able to heat up to a minimum of 100°F but to no more than 120°F?

Are household waste pipes functioning correctly (no blockage resulting in waste backup into home)?



Does private, on-site leach field seem to be functioning so that no wastewater is surfacing?



Is there a durable, covered, and watertight container(s) for trash and food scraps outside?

Is there a durable container for recycling?



Are trash, recyclables, and food scraps removed from the home at least once a week?



Are spaces that are not dwelling unit/rooming unit spaces free of trash, recyclables, and food scraps ?



Are dwelling unit/rooming unit spaces free of trash, recyclables, and food scraps ?



Section 4

Pest & Bedbug Infestations

Home free of visual evidence of pests?
(cockroaches, ants,
rats, mice, bats , etc.)

Infestation?
Fecal droppings?
Pest carcasses?
Chew)gnaw marks?

If “No” (to any or all) have any measures been taken to stop pest infestation?



02/08/2010



Home free of visual evidence of bedbugs?

Infestation of bedbugs or bedbug nymphs?

Fecal droppings

Eggs

Blood spots

If “No” (to any or all) have any measures been taken to stop bedbug infestation?



05/19/2010 10:07



Oct07 2013 10:09am

Section 5 HEATING

Is heat provided when outside temperature is less than 55 degrees F/13 degrees C?

Are the heating facilities able to maintain a temperature of at least 65 F/18 C?

Are all fuel-fired heating facilities vented to the outside of the building?

Does Wood Stove/Pellet stove have the proper clearance to walls, ceiling, and furnishings in the room?



Nov20 2013 4:51 pm

Furnace/stove vents





Chimney problems



Section 6

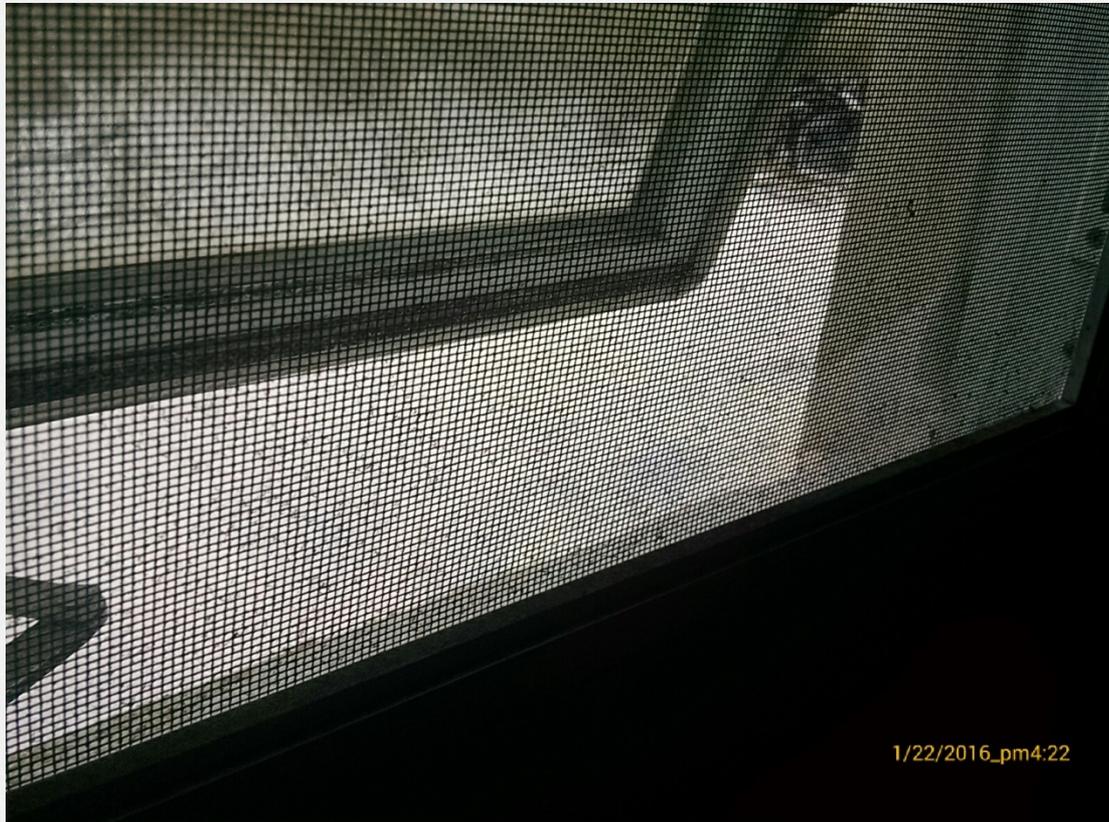
NATURAL & MECHANICAL VENTILATION



Does every habitable room have at least one window or a door on an outside wall that can be opened for fresh air?



Are screens present for all operable windows and for doors that are providing ventilation when a window is not available?



1/22/2016_pm4:22

Are hallways and stairways in common spaces adequately ventilated?

Are all bathrooms ventilated by a window, airshaft, or a ventilation fan that vents to the outside of the building?



Are all the cloths dryers vented to the exterior of the building?





Oct07 2013 1:37pm

Section 7

LIGHTING & ELECTRICITY



Does every habitable room (excluding a kitchen) have at least 2 duplex electrical outlets OR
1 duplex electrical outlet and 1 electrical light fixture?

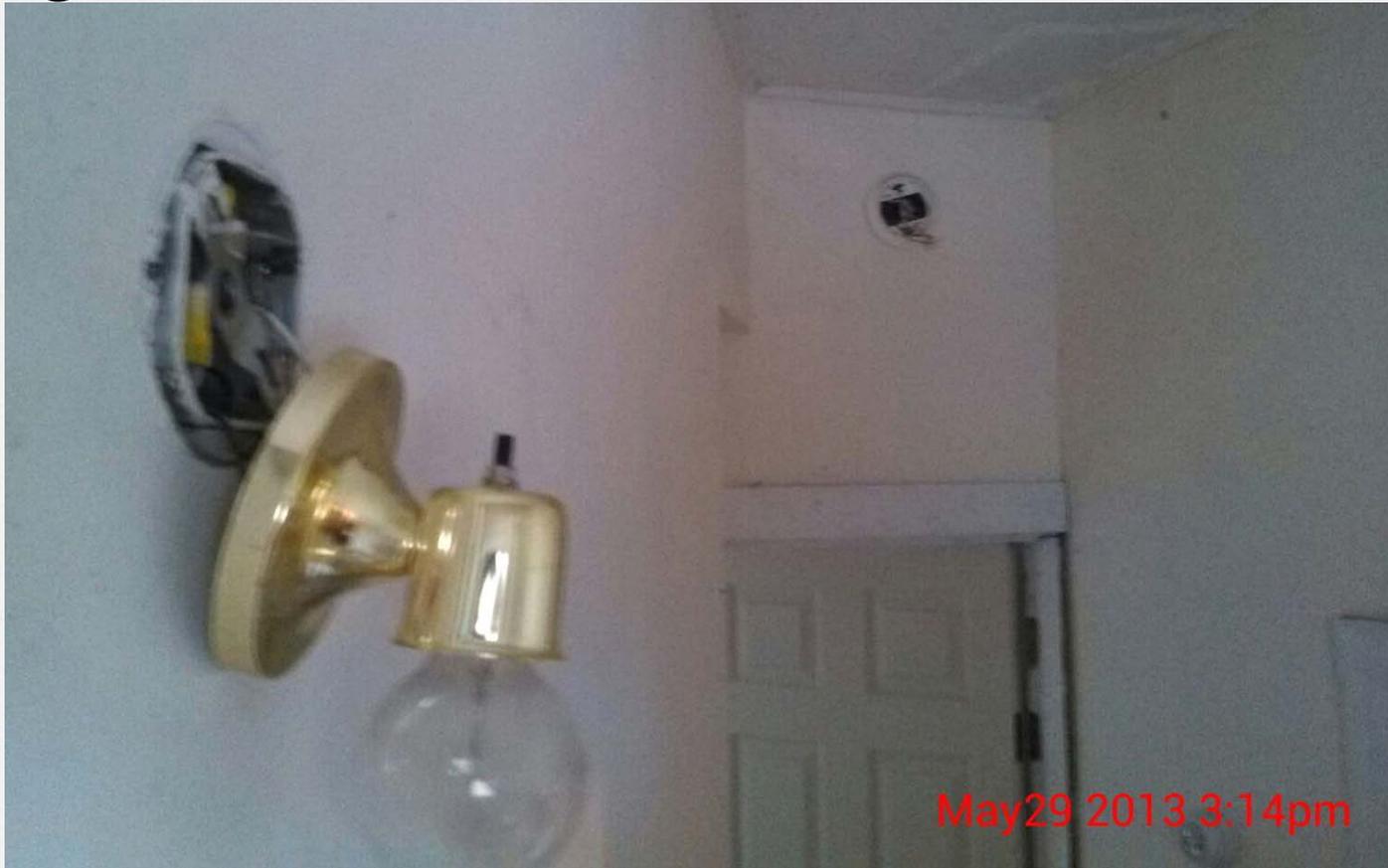


Mar13 2015 10:43am



Feb12 2013 3:56pm

If there is a kitchen, does it contain at least 2 duplex electrical outlets and 1 electrical light fixture?



Do all other rooms contain at least 1 electrical light fixture?



Do all dwelling and rooming house building entrances have adequate lighting?



Do all common spaces in rooming houses and buildings with 2 or more dwelling units have adequate lighting?



Jan05 2012 10:36am

Are all electrical systems working?



Section 8

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS



*Is the home weather -tight and
water -tight?*



Is the home structurally sound with no obvious signs of structural deficiencies or unsafe conditions (such as holes in walls, buckling/bulging in floors/ceilings)?



Is the home free of:

a) Standing water?

B) Visual evidence of water intrusion such as damp building materials or water stains?









Sep 15 2014 1:35 PM

Is the home free of visual evidence of mold or mildew (associated with a musty smell, discoloration, and excess moisture) ?





Jun07 2012 11:40am

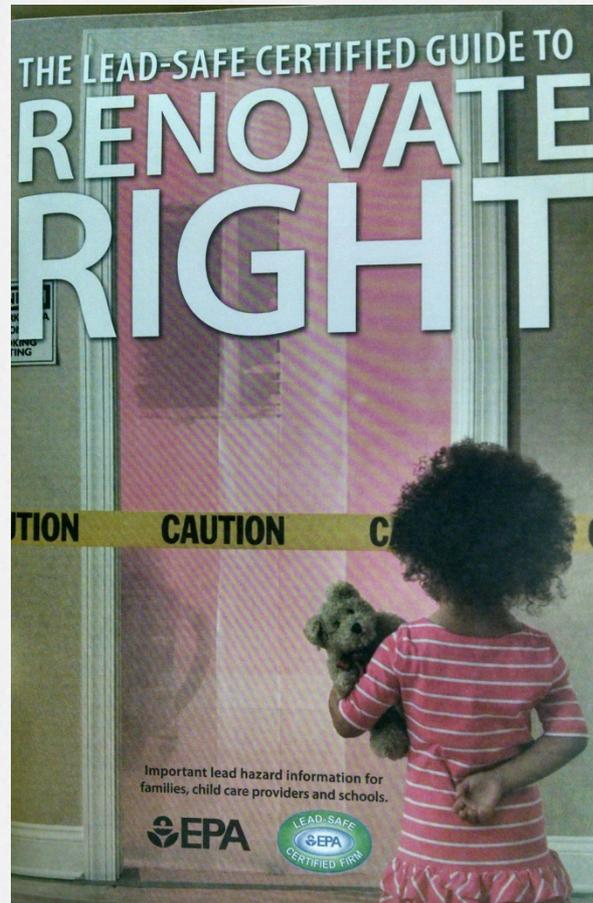
Has the home been tested for radon within the last 5 years?



Section 9
VERMONT LEAD LAW:
PRE 1978 HOMES ONLY

Was this home built before 1978?

Do any children under 6 years old reside at the home?



Has the landlord/owner submitted an Essential Maintenance Practices (EMP) compliance statement to VDH?

AN EMP Compliance Statement must be filed every 365 Days

Have tenants been given the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) pamphlet, “Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home”?

Have the tenants been given a signed EMP compliance statement by the building owner?

Are there posted notices in common spaces asking tenants to report chipped paint?



Is the inside of the home free of greater than 1 square foot of peeling or deteriorated paint on any interior surface (including on floorboards and stairwells)?



Is the outside of the home free of greater than 1 square foot of peeling or deteriorated paint on any exterior surface (including on floorboards and porches)?



Are there window well inserts in wooden windows installed before 1978?

Please note that replacement wooden windows installed in 1978 or later do not require inserts.



Are window wells (troughs) free of debris (paint chips, dust)?



Is the home interior free from visual evidence of paint chips?

Is the home exterior free from visual evidence of paint chips?



Review

- o **Be professional**
- o **Be fair**
- o **Be a good communicator**
- o **Maintain good records**
- o **Know when to call in outside help**

Remember to document your findings and actions!

Questions?

