

Tips for Conducting Housing Inspections:

105 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 410.000: Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation, State Sanitary Code, Chapter II

Review Property Information

- Check your town/city's Assessors database to gather property's information such as:
 - Year built
 - Heating type (oil, gas, electric),
 - Number of units/stories, etc.
- Check property file for past housing cases.



Review Property Information

- When contacting occupant verify:
 - Children under 6 live in dwelling (homes built before 1978=Lead Inspection)
 - Best phone number to reach occupant.
- Offer a comprehensive inspection during all initial inspections.**
- **Document** every form of communication

What to prepare for a Housing Inspection?

- Grab proper equipment, such as:
 - [Inspection Report](#)
 - [Housing Code Regulations](#)
 - Clipboard
 - Calibrated Thermometers
 - Flashlight
 - Outlet & Voltage Tester
 - Measuring Tape (100 meter)
 - ID & business cards



During the Inspection

- Introduce yourself, state the purpose of the visit, present your credentials.
- Access should be granted by occupant or occupant's representative.
- Offer comprehensive inspection (if not already offered) & conduct one if the occupant so requests.**
- Note time of inspection.



During the Inspection

- Follow Conduct of Inspections (.620).
- Inspect areas required based on type of complaint when possible:
 - Pest Inspections (.620(D))
 - Excess Moisture Inspections (.620)
- Inspections shall include:
 - Condition alleged to be in violation AND Conditions Deemed to Endanger (.630(A))



Ending the Inspection

- Record all violations observed & identify code section.
- Provide a verbal summary of the conditions observed during the inspection to the occupant.
- Explain occupant the next steps.
- Provide a written summary if requested by the occupant.
- If possible, occupant may sign the report.



***During the heating season, if the complaint relates solely to the lack of heat pursuant to 410.160 or 410.180, a comprehensive inspection is not required. However, it should be conducted within 1 or 5 business days depending on the alleged violations. Alleged violations listed in .630(A) must be inspected within 1 business day and all others within 5 business days.*

Tips for Conducting Housing Inspections:

Prepare Order to Correct (OTC)

- Order must be in writing (.670(A)(1)).
- Include a statement of the violations.
- Describe your observations & be specific. *Ex) Smoke alarm in living room observed not working when tested during inspection.*
- Do not write how the violations should be fixed/repaired.
- Provide timeframe for compliance.

Prepare Order to Correct (OTC)

- Identify Conditions Deemed to Endanger.
- Include requirement for a reinspection (.670(B)(4)).
- Include a copy of the inspection report (.670(A)(2)).
- Include notice of the right to a hearing (.670(B)(2)).
- Include translated statement (.670(B)(5)).

Prepare Order to Correct (OTC)

- Include statement to owner (.670(B)(6)).
- Include a copy of the Occupant's Legal Rights and Responsibilities (.670(A)(3)).
- Provide copies to all affected parties (Occupant, Fire Dept, Building Dept, etc.).



Prepare Order to Correct (OTC)

- Must have proof of legal service (.680(B)):
 - Certified Return Receipt
 - Constable
 - Posting/Advertising
 - FedEx, UPS, or other means requiring electronic signature.
- Deliver In person or via first class mail (.680(C)).



After Mailing OTC

Document, document, document!

- Document any form of communication with affected parties throughout.
 - This is key if you were to take a housing case to court.
- Request a response in writing.
- Keep track of housing cases deadlines.



Re-Inspection

- After the date for compliance of violations conduct re-inspection:
 - Based on the shortest timeframe given for correction.
- Record re-inspection results
- Update responsible party on your findings.
- New Violations found during a re-inspection must be addressed in a new order.



Your case file should have any pertaining documents to the housing case: copies of inspections report; copies of correction; copies of invoice; copy of proof of services; copies of previous violations or complaints; and case notes that include any form of communication between affected parties.

Please visit the [Community Sanitation Program](#) website for memos, model housing forms & additional guidelines.



Central Massachusetts Public Health Training Hub

Resources: [Community Sanitation Program](#); Preparing for Court MetroWest Public Health Shared Services
Presentation by Halfmann Public Health Consulting, LLC