



# City of South St. Paul Residential Rental Housing Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is Rental Property?**

Single-family, duplex, triplex, four-plex, apartments, condominiums, townhomes or another residential rental dwelling that is used for residential occupancy by one or more persons who are not the owner or a member of the owner's family.

For the purpose of this ordinance, family is defined as follows:

Family means those persons legally related to each other in a linear relationship such as spouses, grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren and siblings. Family does not include branching relationships such as aunts, uncles or cousins.

Boardinghouse means a building other than a motel or hotel where, for compensation and by prearrangement for definite periods, meals or lodging are provided for more than three (3) unrelated persons. No person shall operate a boardinghouse in any zoning district within the City, which means that no more than three (3) unrelated persons may reside in one rental dwelling.

### **Who needs to obtain a residential rental license?**

- 1) Every person who owns property and operates it as residential rental property needs to secure an annual (calendar year) license for the right to conduct this business within the community. The license must be secured each year and the premises must be inspected at least once every four years.

### **How do I get licensed?**

- 1) Come to City Hall and pick up an application, download the application from the City's website or request that we send you an application.
- 2) Arrange an inspection of each rental unit by a City-licensed Housing Evaluator and provide the required inspection form. It must be dated within 48 months of the application date.
- 2) Fill out the Rental Housing application in full and return it to the Licensing/Code Enforcement Division (125 Third Avenue North, South St. Paul, MN 55075). A copy of the final inspection report must be attached to the Rental Housing Application.
- 3) Pay the per unit fee.

### **Will South Metro Fire Department still be conducting inspections of rental property?**

The South Metro Fire Department will be independently inspecting common areas of multifamily housing property which include lobbies, elevators and stairways for life safety issues. However, City-licensed Housing Evaluators that you select from a list of City-licensed evaluators will do the more detailed inspection of each rental unit.

### **Do the Housing Evaluators work for the City? What is the price of the inspection?**

The City-licensed Housing Evaluators are independent contractors and are not employees of the City. To conduct their business within the City, they must be licensed and to become licensed, they must demonstrate possession of certain professional competence and a commitment to ethical business practices. The City will maintain a list of licensed Housing Evaluators as a convenience to individuals seeking a residential rental license.

As independent contractors, the Housing Evaluators may charge for their services at a rate set by the marketplace. If you are not satisfied with the price quoted to you for an inspection and preparation of the required reports, contact other Housing Evaluators who are licensed with the City.

**What is an Alternative inspection report?**

The City's new regulatory program recognizes that there may be acceptable alternative methods for securing appropriate inspection of rental units that does not involve a City-licensed Housing Evaluator. For example, an inspection report obtained for the purposes of receiving United States Department of Housing and Urban Development rental approval or for insurance-related or mortgage purposes are probably acceptable alternatives. The City's Building Official is given discretion to approve alternative inspection reports.

**Why do you need 24-hour contact information for 2 persons (except single family) and a current register of our tenants?**

Public Safety experience informs us that the City sometimes needs to act quickly in an emergency situation with our police, fire, or code enforcement staff. Having contact information for two persons helps us respond more effectively. The tenant register serves a similar purpose.

**What if I do not license my property as a rental unit?**

City Code makes it clear that the renting out of residential property is a regulated business activity in the City of South St. Paul. You must have a license to conduct this business. Failure to obtain the required rental license means that you are no longer authorized to conduct that business and an advisory notification will be sent to your tenants. The notice could impact their obligation to pay rent to you. The City may also issue you an administrative citation for failure to comply with City Code.

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