



City of Dallas

CODE COMPLIANCE CHAPTER 27 HOUSING STANDARDS MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to offer a guide that will help in the understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable in regards to required minimum property standards and repairs applicable to residential and nonresidential structures. The guide is not intended to be a legal document or a substitute for Chapter 27 of the Dallas City Code. The numbered and lettered topics in this guide are not meant to match up with Chapter 27 due to summarization, paraphrasing, and emphasis on the most common violations found. For complete legal information on the Dallas City Code contained in Chapter 27, please refer to <http://library.amlegal.com>. Chapter 27 Minimum Property Standards are established with respect to utilities, facilities, and other physical components essential to make structures safe, sanitary, and fit for human use and habitation.

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Section 27.3 – Definitions:

- (1) BATHROOM means an enclosed space containing one or more bathtubs, showers, or both, and which may also include toilets, lavatories, or fixtures serving similar purposes.
- (2) BUILDING means a structure for the support or shelter of any use or occupancy.
- (3) CITY ATTORNEY means the city attorney of the city of Dallas and includes the assistants and other authorized representatives of the city attorney.
- (4) CONDOMINIUM has the meaning assigned in Chapter 82 of the Texas Property Code, as amended.
- (5) CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION means a corporation whose members are condominium unit owners in a condominium and who are charged with governing, operation, managing, or overseeing a condominium or its common elements.
- (6) CONSTRUCTION CODES means the *Dallas Building Code*, Chapter 53 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; *Dallas Plumbing Code*; Chapter 54 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; *Dallas Mechanical Code*, Chapter 55 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; *Dallas Electrical Code*, Chapter 56 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; *Dallas One-and Two-Family Dwelling Code*, Chapter 57 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; *Dallas Existing Building Code*, Chapter 58 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; *Dallas Fuel Gas Code*, Chapter 59, *Dallas Energy Conservation Code*; Chapter 60 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; *Dallas Green Construction Code*, Chapter 61 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; *Dallas Fire Code*, Chapter 16 of the Dallas City Code, as amended; and the *Housing Standards Manual*, as amended.
- (7) CRIME PREVENTION ADDENDUM means an addendum to a residential lease or rental agreement for the use of rental property as required by Section [27-43](#) of this chapter.
- (8) DALLAS ANIMAL WELFARE FUND means the Dallas Animal Welfare Fund as described in Section [7-8.4](#) of Chapter 7 of this code.
- (9) DEPARTMENT means the department designated by the city manager to enforce and administer this chapter.
- (10) DIRECTOR means the director of the department designated by the city manager to enforce and administer this chapter and includes representatives, agents, or department employees designated by the director.
- (11) DWELLING means a structure or building used, intended, or designed to be used, rented, leased, let, or hired out to be occupied, or that is occupied for living purposes.

- (12) DWELLING UNIT has the definition given that term in Section [51A-2.102](#) of the Dallas Development Code, as amended.
- (13) GRADED INSPECTION means an inspection of a rental property in which the property is given a score by the director based on the number of code violations found to exist on the premises.
- (14) HABITABLE ROOM means a space in a building or structure for living, sleeping, eating, or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage and utility spaces, and other similar areas, are not considered habitable rooms.
- (15) HOUSING STANDARDS MANUAL means the manual by that title and which is kept on file in the office of the city secretary.
- (16) INFESTATION means the presence, within or contiguous to structure of premises, of insects, rodents, vectors, or other pests.
- (17) KITCHEN means an area used, or designated to be used, for cooking or preparation of food.
- (18) LANDLORD has the same meaning as in Chapter 92 of the Texas Property Code, as amended.
- (19) MULTIFAMILY DWELLING means a multifamily use as defined in Section [51A-4.209](#)(b)(5) of the Dallas Development Code, as amended, or, for purposes of this chapter, three or more single dwelling units on the same premises and which are under common ownership.
- (20) MULTITENANT PROPERTY means property containing any of the following uses:
- (A) A multifamily dwelling as defined in this section.
 - (B) A lodging or boarding house as defined in Section [51A-4.205](#)(2) of the Dallas Development Code, as amended.
 - (C) A group residential facility as defined in Section [51A-4.209](#)(b) (3) of the Dallas Development Code, as amended.
 - (D) An extended stay hotel or motel as defined in Section [51A-4.205](#)(1.1) of the Dallas Development Code, as amended.
 - (E) A residential hotel as defined in Section [51A-4.209](#)(b) (5.1) of the Dallas Development Code, as amended.
- (21) OCCUPANT means a person who has possessory rights to and is actually in possession of a premise.
- (22) OPEN AND VACANT STRUCTURE means a structure that is, regardless of its structural condition
- (A) Unoccupied by its owners, lessees, or other invitees; and
 - (B) Unsecured from unauthorized entry to the extent that it could be entered or used by vagrants or other uninvited persons as a place of harborage or could be entered or used by children.

- (23) OPERATING CONDITION means free of leaks, safe, sanitary, structurally sound, and in good working order.
- (24) OWNER means a person who has ownership or title of real property
- (A) Including, but not limited to:
 - (i) the holder of fee simple title;
 - (ii) the holder of a life estate;
 - (iii) the holder of a leasehold estate for an initial term of five years or more;
 - (iv) the buyer in a contract for deed;
 - (v) a mortgagee, receiver, executor, or trustee in control of real property; and
 - (vi) the named grantee in the last recorded deed; or
 - (B) The owner's representative with control over the property.
- (25) PERSON means natural person, corporation, organization, estate, trust, partnership, association, or other legal entity.
- (26) PEST means an invertebrate animal that can cause disease or damage to humans or building materials.
- (27) PLUMBING FIXTURES means gas pipes, water pipes, toilets, lavatories, urinals, sinks, laundry tubs, dishwashers, garbage disposal units, clothes-washing machines, catch basins, wash basins, bathtubs, shower baths, sewer pipes, sewage system, septic tanks, drains, vents, traps, and other fuel-burning or water-using fixtures and appliances, together with all connections to pipes.
- (28) PREMISES or PROPERTY means a lot, plot, or parcel of land, including any structures on the land.
- (29) PROPERTY MANAGER means a person who, for compensation, has managing control of real property, including an on-site manger of a building or structure.
- (30) PUBLIC SEWER means a sewer operated by a public authority or public utility and available for public use.
- (31) REGISTRANT means a person submitting a rental property registration or renewal application or a person whose application the director deems complete under [Article VII](#) of this chapter.
- (32) RENTAL PROPERTY means a multitenant property or a single dwelling unit that is leased or rented to one or more persons other than the owner of the property, regardless of whether the lease or rental agreement is oral or written, or the compensation received by the lessor for the lease or rental of the property is in the form of money, services, or any other thing of value.
- (33) SANITARY means any condition of good order and cleanliness that precludes the probability of disease transmission.
- (34) SECURITY DEVICE means has the definition given that term in Chapter 92 of the Texas Property Code, as amended.
- (35) SHORT-TERM RENTAL has the definition given that term in Section 156.001(b) of the Texas Tax Code, as amended.
- (36) SINGLE DWELLING UNIT means a single family or duplex, as defined in the Dallas Development Code, as amended, or a condominium dwelling unit.

- (37) SOLID WASTE means:
- (A) industrial solid waste as defined in Section 18-2(22) of the Dallas City Code, as amended; or
 - (B) municipal solid waste as defined in Section 18-2(28) of the Dallas city Code, as amended.
- (38) STRUCTURE means that which is built or constructed, an edifice or building of any kind, or any piece of work artificially built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner.
- (39) TOILET ROOM means a room containing a toilet or urinal but not a bathtub or shower.
- (40) URBAN NUISANCE means a premises or structure that:
- (A) is dilapidated, substandard, or unfit for human habitation and a hazard to the public health, safety, and welfare;
 - (B) regardless of its structural condition, is unoccupied by its owners, lessees, or other invitees and is unsecured from unauthorized entry to the extent that it could be entered or used by vagrants or other uninvited persons as a place of harborage or could be entered or used by children; or
 - (C) boarded up, fenced, or otherwise secured in any manner if:
 - (i) the structure constitutes a danger to the public even though secured from entry; or
 - (ii) the means used to secure the structure are inadequate to prevent unauthorized entry or use of the structure in the manner described by Paragraph (B) of this subsection.
- (41) VECTOR means an insect or other animal that is capable of transmitting a disease-producing organism.
- (42) WORKMANLIKE means executed in a skilled manner, for example, generally plumb, level, square, in line, undamaged, and without marring adjacent work.

Section 27.5 – Inspection

For the purpose of determining whether violations of this chapter or other city ordinances exist, the director is authorized, at a reasonable time, to inspect:

- (1) the exterior of a structure and premises that do not contain structure; and
- (2) the interior of a structure, if the owner, occupant, or person in control gives his permission to the director.



Section 27.11 (a) (c) – Minimum Property Standards

General: Minimum property standards apply to vacant and occupied buildings, properties, and structures must comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including the construction codes. Written leases must be provided by owners in English, Spanish, or Vietnamese upon the occupant's request. An owner who enters into a written lease shall, upon the occupant's request provide the occupant with a written lease in the occupant's primary language, if the primary language is English, Spanish or Vietnamese.

Repairs: All repairs must be performed in a workmanlike manner in accordance to federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including the construction codes.

Property standards: An owner shall maintain the premise in operating condition without any holes, excavations, or sharp protrusions, and without any other object or condition that exists on the land and is reasonable capable of causing injury to a person.



Section 27.11 (d) – Structural and Material Standards

An owner shall maintain structural members free from deterioration. Construction material would include wood, gypsum products, glass, fiberglass, paper, canvas, fabric, plastic, vinyl, masonry, ceramic, plaster, brick, rock, stucco, slate, concrete, asphalt, tin , copper, steel, iron, aluminum, and other metals in operating condition.

- (1) **Roofs:** owner shall maintain roofs in operating condition free of leaks, holes, charred, or deteriorated roofing materials, rotted wood, and other unsafe conditions. Maintain gutters and downspouts, if any, in operating condition and securely fastened.



MISSING SHINGLES



CURLING SHINGLES



ROOF RIDGE SAGS



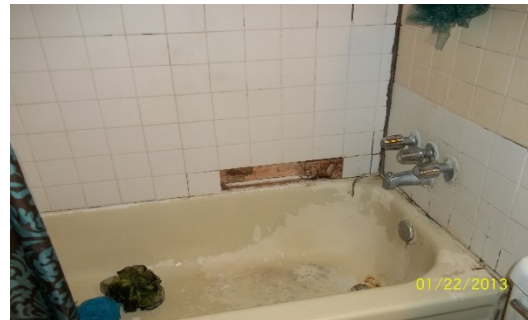
FALLEN GUTTER



- (2) **Chimneys and towers:** an owner shall maintain chimneys, cooling towers, smoke stacks, and similar appurtenances in operating condition.
- (3) **Foundations:** owner shall maintain foundations and foundation components in operating condition and keep foundation components securely fastened.

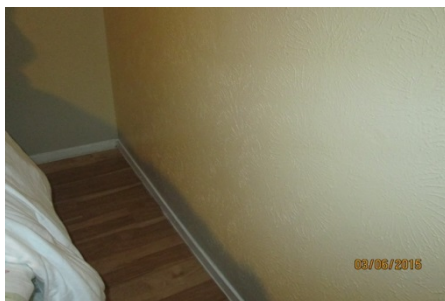


- (4) **Floors:** maintain all flooring in operating condition, free from holes, cracks, and decay and trip hazards.
- (5) **Shower enclosures:** maintain shower enclosures floors and walls in operating condition, free of holes, cracks, breaches, decay, rust and rot.

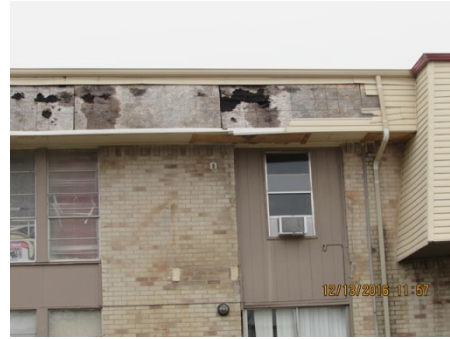


(6) **Countertop and backsplashes:** an owner shall maintain kitchen and bathroom countertop and backsplashes surrounding kitchen sinks and lavatory sinks in operating condition free of decay, rust, and rot.

(7) **Interior walls, ceilings, and surfaces; doors:** owner shall maintain all interior walls and ceilings in operating condition, eliminate collapse hazards. Maintain interior surfaces, including windows and doors in operating condition. Repair, remove, or cover all peeling, chipping, flaking paint. Repair all cracked or loose plaster, wood, or other defective surface conditions.



(8) **Exterior walls, windows and doors:** an owner shall maintain all exterior walls in operating sound condition. Maintain glass surfaces of exterior windows, skylights and doors in weather tight condition.



(9) **Balconies:** an owner shall maintain all balconies, landings, porches, decks in operating and securely secured. This will consist of support posts, columns, and canopies.



(10) **Handrails:** all handrails must be maintained in operation condition and secured and anchored.



- (11) **Steps/Stairways:** an owner shall maintain steps and stairways in operating condition securely fastened and anchored and free from trip hazards. Seal any cracks or breaches in lightweight concrete steps, balconies and walkways.



- (12) **Fence, retaining walls and barriers:** owner shall maintain all fences, retaining walls, barriers in operating condition in accordance with the Dallas Development Code. A multi-tenant or single family/ duplex property where the wall is not shared with another property must repair or replace rotted, missing, fire-damaged or broken wooden slots and support post. Repair or replace broken, missing, or bent metal posts, torn, cut or ripped metal fencing materials.



Section 27-11 (e) – Utility and Appliance Standards:

- (1) **Air Conditioning:** an owner shall provide and maintain in operating condition, refrigerated air equipment capable of maintaining a room temperature of at least 15 degrees cooler than the outside temperature, but in no event higher than 85°F in each habitable room. Installation of window-mounted air condition unit(s) must be in compliance with construction codes. Using an extension cord to power the unit would be an electrical violation and fire hazard. Window units must be installed as directed by the Manufacturer’s Installation Instructions.



- (2) **Heating:** an owner shall provide and maintain in operating condition, heating facilities capable of maintaining a room temperature of least 15° warmer than the outside temperature, but in no event lower than 68°F in each habitable room.
- (3) **Appliances:** if appliances are provided in a rental dwelling unit, the owner shall maintain those appliances, including portable heating units, portable air conditioning units, cook stoves, refrigerators, dishwasher, garbage disposals, ventilation hoods, washing machines and clothes dryers and appliance connections in operating condition.



Section 27-11 (f) – Plumbing Standards:

- (1) **Plumbing systems:** An owner shall maintain all plumbing pipes, fittings and valves necessary to supply and conduct natural fuel gases, sanitary drainage, storm drainage or potable water in operation condition.

Commentary: Operating condition means free of leaks, safe, sanitary, structurally sound and in good working order. Prevent mold to surface from moisture.

Examples of Mold:



All plumbing fixtures free of cross-connections and condition that permit backflow into the potable water supply.

Fuel gas distribution systems shall be maintained in a leak free condition in accordance with the construction codes. If distribution system has been compromised, an owner shall have the system pressure tested and repaired in accordance with the Dallas Fuel Gas Code, Chapter 60 of the Dallas City Code.

- (2) **Plumbing fixtures:** an owner shall provide each dwelling unit with a kitchen equipped with a kitchen sink, a minimum of one toilet, lavatory sink and either a bathtub or shower, or combination of bathtub and shower.

Keep all plumbing fixtures connected to an approved potable water supply system. Equip toilets and urinals with cold potable water under pressure necessary for safe and sanitary conditions. Keep all plumbing fixtures connected to a public sewer system or approved private sewage disposal system.

Cap each sewer cleanout opening with an approved plug, except when the sewer line is being serviced.



Missing Wall Clean-out Plug



Missing Clean-out cap



- (3) **Water heating equipment:** an owner shall maintain all water heating equipment, including an existing fuel-fired water heater in operating condition. Maintain a pressure relief valve with an approved drain line.

Provide and maintain in operating condition water heating equipment that supplies hot water at a minimum temperature of 110°F, measured at the water outlet to every required plumbing fixture.

Vent all fuel-fired water heating equipment as required by the construction codes.

Maintain all boilers and central heating plants in operating condition.

Commentary: Water Heater replacements require a permit and inspection, even if a homeowner installs it. A property owner can't legally do plumbing work requiring a permit on rental property unless they are a licensed plumber themselves.

Improperly installed water heaters are one of the most common plumbing violations found in existing homes, mainly concerning the safety device called the temperature and pressure relief valve (T&P Valve) and the installation or lack of the drain line.



White piping (PVC) is not an approved material for hot water piping.



Vent on this gas water heater is sloped downward inhibiting correct draft, causing possible spillage of carbon monoxide and combustion products into living space.

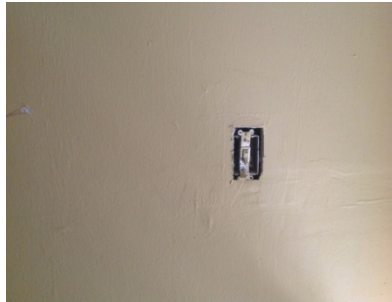
No drain line installed on T&P valve. If valve opens superheated and pressurized water could flood the interior of the house.

Section 27-11 (g) – Electrical Standards:

An owner shall maintain all electrical equipment in operating condition.

- (1) Maintain all electrical circuits and outlets sufficient to safely carry a load imposed by normal use of appliances, equipment and fixtures.
- (2) Maintain in each habitable room, bathroom, hallway and stairway of a dwelling use at least one electric lighting outlet. Electric lighting outlet must be controlled by a wall switch unless a wall switch is not required by construction code.
- (3) Use of an extension cords and flexible cords in accordance with the construction codes and not as substitutes for permanent wiring.

Examples of Electrical Hazards:



Section 27-11 (h) – Lighting Standards: (*ONLY FOR MULTI-TENANT PROPERTIES*)

- (1) **General:** An owner shall not wire lighting in common areas into individual dwelling units. An owner shall maintain overall illumination of four foot candles for exterior lighting on the premise.
- (2) **Exterior lighting:** An owner shall maintain illumination from dusk until dawn along pedestrian pathways, plazas, courtyards, building entrances, parking areas, carports, driveways and other outdoor common areas; in addition to stairwells, landings and breezeways.



Violation – security light not in working order.



Violation - security light not in working order.



Violation abated – security light illuminating area.

Section 27-11 (i) – Health Standards:

(1) **Infestations:** Infestation is the presence of insects, rodents, vectors, or other pests, within or contiguous to a structure or the premises. The owner of a building, structure or property, including a vacant or occupied one or two family dwelling, or multifamily dwelling, shall eliminate the infestation using a per licensed under the Texas Structural Pest Control Act, as amended, and repair any condition that contributes to an infestation.

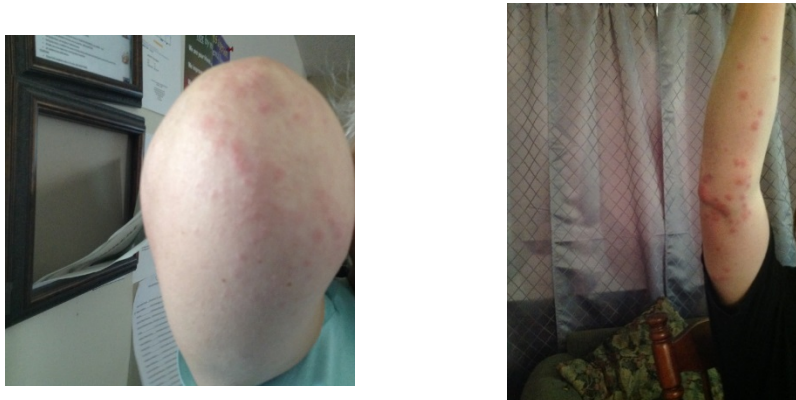
If the building, structure, or property is a rental property, the owner shall provide a notice to the tenants at least 48 hours before taking steps to eliminate an infestation. Notice must be in writing and must include the method being used to eliminate the infestation. A tenant may in writing waive the 48 hour requirement.



Bed bug blood trails from excretions and spots on walls. Bedbug found in mattresses.



Infestation of roaches on walls and under kitchen sinks. Excretion of roaches



Bed Bug Bites on Occupants

- (2) **Swimming pools, spas, ponds and fountains:** Water in swimming pools, spas, ponds, and fountains must be maintained to prevent the breeding or harborage of insects. All swimming pools, spas, ponds and fountains must be maintained in operating condition.

Fences or other barriers enclosing swimming pools, spas, ponds and fountains must be maintained in operating condition.

- (3) **Sewage overflow:** an owner shall sanitize all areas contaminated by sewage overflow immediately after servicing is completed.



Violation



Violation



Abated w/ sanitizing area

- (4) **Vacant dwelling units:** an owner shall maintain the interiors of all vacant dwelling units free of solid waste. The owner of vacant dwelling unit must store any swimming pool chemicals, cleaning chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, fertilizers, paints, solvents gasoline, gasoline-powered equipment, or combustible materials of any kind in accordance with the construction codes and the Dallas Development Code, as amended.

Section 27-11 (j) – Security Standards:

An owner of a multifamily dwelling other than one exempt from registration under this chapter, shall:

- (1) Provide and maintain security devices in each dwelling unit as required by Sections, 92.153, 92.154, and 92.155 of the Texas Property Code, as amended. texaspropertycode.org



Keyless deadbolt device on each exterior door.

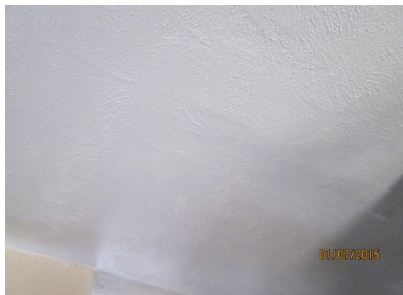
A doorknob lock or key deadbolt device on each exterior door.



A door viewer on each exterior door.

EXAMPLES of DO'S and DON'TS - WORKMANLIKE WORK

Do



Don't



