



## Director's Rule 15-2013

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this rule is to adopt a *weighted checklist* for the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance Program (RRIO) as directed by the City Council in SMC 22.214.050.L.

The weighted checklist is derived from sections of the Housing and Building Maintenance Code (HBMC) identified in SMC 22.214.050.M (see attachment 1). Each section of the weighted checklist contains specific maintenance items from the HBMC. The intent of the weighted checklist is to identify those maintenance items that must be met in order to register a rental property and pass an inspection under the RRIO Program.

Property owners will use the checklist to confirm that their rental properties and units currently meet the standards listed when they register or will meet the standards listed prior to being rented. Inspectors will use the checklist to validate that rental properties have been maintained according to the minimum standards listed.

This rule specifies:

- The methodology for using the weighted checklist
- Definitions of key terms used in the weighted checklist
- The weighted checklist standards

## RULE

### METHODOLOGY

The checklist includes specific items from the Seattle Housing & Building Maintenance Code (HBMC). At the top of each numbered checklist section is a description of the minimum requirements for a specific room or part of the unit. Below this description is a list of conditions that should be repaired if found.

#### Using the checklist when registering a rental property:

- Items with an asterisk (\*) indicate a significant maintenance issue that if present, must be fixed in order to register the unit.
- Items without an asterisk are also maintenance issues and should be repaired, but the unit can be registered if one or more is present.

#### Using the checklist for RRIO Inspection

- Items with an asterisk (\*) must be repaired before the unit can pass inspection and receive a Certificate of Compliance.
- Other items, if found, will not delay issuance of the Certificate of Compliance, but should be repaired for the unit to comply with the City's HBMC.

In units with shared kitchens and baths -- such as those in a Single Room Occupancy (SRO), rooming house or micro-housing property and any other structure having similar living accommodations -- will have the rental housing unit and common kitchen and bath areas inspected.



# RRIO Checklist

## Use of checklist:

Property owners will use the RRIO Checklist to confirm that their rental housing properties and units meet the requirements of the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance (RRIO) or, if units are vacant, they will meet the requirements prior to being rented.

Inspectors will use the checklist to validate that rental housing properties have been maintained according to the RRIO requirements.

The checklist includes specific items from the City of Seattle Housing & Building Maintenance Code (HBMC). At the beginning of each numbered checklist section is a general description of the minimum requirements for the structure or for specific rooms. Below the general description is a set of checklist items to be reviewed.

To use the checklist, review each checklist item. If the described condition is present, check the box. Once completed, if any items are checked see 1 and 2 below.

### 1. When registering a rental property

- Items with an asterisk (\*) and in bold face type indicate a significant maintenance issue that if present, must be fixed in order to register an occupied unit or before renting an unoccupied unit.
- Items without an asterisk are also maintenance issues and must be repaired to comply with the City's HBMC, but the unit can be registered or rented if one or more of these items are present.

### 2. When using the checklist for a RRIO inspection

- Items with an asterisk (\*) and in bold face type must be repaired before the unit can pass inspection and receive a Certificate of Compliance.
- Items without an asterisk are also maintenance issues and must be repaired to comply with the City's HBMC, but a Certificate of Compliance can be issued if one or more of these items are present.

If any requirement in this checklist is different than was authorized and constructed under a valid building permit, then the building permit requirement is the standard that must be met.

Units with shared kitchens and baths such as those in a Single Room Occupancy (SRO), rooming house, or micro-

housing property are considered individual rental housing units, and during RRIO inspections, both the individual rental housing unit and any associated common kitchen or bath areas will be inspected.

## Definitions:

As used in this checklist:

- **Habitable room:** means a space in a building occupied, used, designed, or intended to be used for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet compartments, closets, halls, laundry rooms, storage or utility space, and similar areas are not habitable rooms.
- **Good working order/well maintained/in good repair/safe and sound condition:** means the referenced item is functioning and can be used for its intended purpose as it is.
- **Structurally sound:** means the referenced element is capable of withstanding normal loads and forces.

## Limitations

This checklist is used solely to determine if a rental property meets the requirements of the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance, Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 22.214. It is not an evaluation of whether a property meets other City, State, or federal requirements. There may, however, be property conditions that should be addressed for other reasons.

# 1 Exterior: Structure, Shelter, and Maintenance

Roof, chimney, foundation, stairs, and decks are reasonably free of decay (e.g., severe cracks, soft spots, loose pieces, deterioration, or other indications that repair is needed); maintained in a safe, sound, and sanitary condition; and capable of withstanding normal loads and forces. The building and its components, including windows, should be reasonably weather-proof and damp-free.

**1.1 Roof** must be maintained in a safe and sound condition and in good repair based on visual inspection.

\* a. Roof has holes and/or structural member is broken or decayed ☐

\* b. Roof is not weather-proof or has clear evidence of leaking ☐

**1.2 Chimney** is maintained in a safe and sound condition and in good repair with no major damage based on visual inspection (does not pose imminent danger).

a. Loose bricks at the top and/or masonry requires repointing at top ☐

b. Loose or missing bricks or masonry in middle or at chimney base ☐

\* c. Pulling away from structure, unstable, or otherwise at risk of falling ☐

**1.3 Foundation** is weather-proof, maintained, and structurally sound.

Foundation type: ☐ Post & Pier ☐ Running/continuous ☐ Concrete slab

a. Standing water in crawl space ☐

\* b. Foundation is failing: leaning, crumbling, missing pieces, broken. or deflected ☐

**1.4 Exterior stairs and decks** are safe, structurally sound, and in good repair.

\* a. Structural members are leaning, decayed, or detached ☐

\* b. Exterior decks or other platforms have broken, loose, decayed, or missing pieces ☐

\* c. Exterior stairs have broken, loose, decayed, or missing pieces ☐

\* d. Guardrails/intermediate rails on any landing, deck, or platform that are 30 inches or more above grade or other surfaces are missing, loose, or broken ☐

\* e. Handrails/intermediate rails on any flight with more than three risers are missing, loose, or broken ☐

**1.5 Door and window components and assemblies** are weatherproof, safe, secure, and maintained in good condition.

a. Weather stripping is missing or allowing air to enter ☐

b. Sills or frames have decayed wood or separated joints ☐

\* c. Windows or doors have missing pieces or are cracked and allowing weather or water to get inside ☐

**1.6 Exterior walls** are reasonably weathertight and watertight, structurally sound, rodent proof, and kept in a safe and sound condition

\* a. **Exterior walls allow water or weather penetration (e.g., seeping, leaking, coming in through a crack or hole)** ☐

\* b. **Exterior wall is failing: leaning, crumbling, missing pieces, broken, or deflected.** ☐

## 2 Interior: Structure, Shelter, and Maintenance

Walls, floors, stairs, and other structural components are reasonably free of decay, maintained in a safe and sound condition, and capable of withstanding normal loads and forces. Natural and mechanical lighting and ventilation is adequate and maintained in good working order for each habitable room in the unit.

**2.1 Ventilation:** all habitable rooms and bathrooms and laundry rooms have operable windows, or passive or mechanical ventilation in good working order and vented to the exterior.

\* a. **Any habitable room, bathroom, or laundry room does not have an operable window or other approved ventilation** ☐

\* b. **Kitchen fan, if used in place of operable windows, is not operable, clogged, or pulling air** ☐

\* c. **Bathroom and laundry room fan, if used in place of operable windows or operable passive ventilation, is not operable, pulling air, or vented to exterior** ☐

**2.2 Structural components** such as walls and floors are maintained in a safe and sound condition and in good repair. Wall, floor, and ceiling coverings must be dry and free of moisture.

a. **Wall, floor, or ceiling coverings are broken such that framing members are visually exposed** ☐

\* b. **Walls, floors, or ceilings are soft, spongy, or wet to the touch** ☐

\* c. **Interior load-bearing walls are not maintained in a safe and sound condition** ☐

\* d. **Floors are not maintained in a safe and sound condition** ☐

**2.3 Interior stairs and landings** must be maintained in a safe and sound condition and in good repair.

\* a. **Joists or posts are leaning, decayed, or detached** ☐

\* b. **Landings or other platforms have broken, loose, decayed, or missing pieces** ☐

\* c. **Interior stairs have loose, broken, decayed, or missing pieces** ☐

\* d. **Floors not maintained in a safe and sound condition** ☐

\* e. **Handrails/intermediate rails on any flight with more than three risers are missing, loose, or broken** ☐

### 3 Emergency Escape Windows and Doors

Every sleeping room built or permitted after August 10, 1972 must have an emergency escape window or door. Emergency escape windows must open to the exterior, have a minimum opening of 5.7 square feet with a minimum dimension of at least 24 inches high and at least 20 inches wide, and must not exceed a maximum sill height of 44 inches from the floor. In order to meet the total square footage requirement, a window size of nearly 2 by 3 feet is typically required. Sleeping rooms that were built under permit prior to August 10, 1972 are exempted from this requirement.

\* 3.1 Emergency escape window or door is missing, blocked, or inaccessible.

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\* 3.2 Emergency escape windows do not meet size or sill height requirements.

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### 4 Room Size and Condition

All rooms used as living or sleeping rooms must meet minimum requirements for square footage and must not have dirt floors.

4.1 Dwelling unit does not have at least one habitable room that is 120 square feet (square footage requirements do not apply to units comprised of a single habitable room such as a Single Room Occupancy, rooming house, or micro-housing unit).

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\* 4.2 Any habitable room except the kitchen measures less than seven (7) feet in any floor dimension.

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\* 4.3 Any sleeping room measures smaller than 70 square feet in size.

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\* 4.4 Dirt floor is present in any room used as a living area.

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### 5 Heating System

Every bathroom and habitable room must have a functioning, properly ventilated, and permanently-installed heat source.

5.1 Heat source in the unit is permanent, working, and in good repair.

\* a. Required permanently-installed heating equipment/device is defective or missing in any habitable room or bathroom

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5.2 Temperature can be maintained at a minimum of 68°F when exterior temperature is 24°F or higher.

\* a. Permanently-installed heater is not capable of maintaining required temperature in any habitable room or bathroom

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**5.3 Fuel-burning appliances**, where allowed, must be of an approved type, properly installed, and maintained in good working order.

\* a. **Unvented portable fuel-burning heater is present in a sleeping room or bathroom** ☐

\* b. **Any gas, wood, or fuel-burning heat source lacks proper ventilation** ☐

## 6 Electrical Standards

All electrical equipment and wiring must be approved and maintained in safe and sound condition and in good working order.

\* 6.1 **Exposed unprotected wiring is evident in any room.** ☐

\* 6.2 **Any electrical equipment (meter bays, service panel, subpanels, shutoff) is improperly installed or connected, tampered with, or unsafe.** ☐

\* 6.3 **Any habitable room, including kitchen, does not have an operable light fixture and an electrical outlet, or two electrical outlets.** ☐

\* 6.4 **Any bathroom, laundry room, utility room, common hallway, stairway, or porch does not have an operable light fixture.** ☐

## 7 Plumbing and Hot Water

Plumbing systems must be properly installed, functional, sanitary and maintained in good condition. Water temperature reaches at least 100°F after running water for two minutes.

\* 7.1 **Running water temperature is below 100°F.** ☐

7.2 Any individual unit water heater is set above 120°F. ☐

\* 7.3 **Evidence that plumbing is not connected to an approved sewer or not functioning properly.** Evidence includes, for example: strong sewer gas smell in the basement or outside of unit, major leaking of basement plumbing pipes, numerous clogged or very slow drains. ☐

## 8 Sanitation Standards: Bathrooms

Every unit has at least one directly accessible bathroom (primary bathroom) that includes an operable toilet, sink, and tub or shower, all in safe and sound condition and sanitary working order. Does not apply to a legally established SRO/rooming house/micro-housing unit that does not have a bathroom, although any associated common or shared bathroom must meet these standards.

\* **8.1 No fully functional or properly functioning bathroom that must include sink, toilet, and tub or shower.** ☐

8.2 The only access from a bedroom to the only bathroom is through another bedroom. ☐

\* **8.3 Tight-fitting door missing if bathroom is in a food preparation area.** ☐

\* **8.4 Toilet does not flush, is broken, leaks at the base, or is not secure to the floor.** ☐

8.5 Sink:

\* **a. Dripping faucets, cracked or chipped porcelain, slow drain, or broken but operable handles or knobs** ☐

\* **b. Is not operable such as cracked through, faucet cannot turn on, or no hot and cold water** ☐

\* **c. Under sink plumbing pipes or connectors are leaking** ☐

8.6 Shower or bathtub:

a. Dripping faucets, cracked or chipped porcelain, slow drain, broken but operable handles or knobs ☐

\* **b. Is not operable such as cracked through, faucet cannot turn on, or no hot and cold water** ☐

\* **c. Plumbing pipes or connectors are leaking** ☐

8.7 Bathroom Counter is missing tile, pieces are broken, is made of a porous material, or is pulling away from the wall. ☐

8.8 Wall, floor, or ceiling coverings:

a. Broken such that floor, wall, or ceiling studs or joists are visually exposed ☐

\* **b. Soft, spongy, or wet to the touch** ☐



## 9 Sanitation Standards: Kitchen

Every unit has a kitchen with a sink, counter, cabinets, cooking appliance, and refrigerator maintained in safe, sound, and sanitary condition. This does not apply to units comprised of a single habitable room such as a Single Room Occupancy, rooming house, or micro-housing unit when the unit does not have a kitchen. Common kitchen must meet these standards.

\* **9.1 Dwelling unit does not have a kitchen that must include sink, counter, cabinets, cooking appliance, and refrigerator.** ☐

9.2 Counter is missing tile, pieces are broken, is made of a porous material, or is pulling away from the wall. ☐

9.3 Refrigerator/freezer if provided by landlord:

a. Missing a handle or seal is compromised ☐

\* **b. Is inoperable and not in good working condition** ☐

9.4 Cooking appliance (if provided by landlord):

a. One or more parts are inoperable or missing but appliance still has food cooking capability. ☐

\* **b. Not rated for indoor use or entire appliance is inoperable** ☐

9.5 Sink:

a. Dripping faucets, cracked or chipped porcelain, slow drain, or broken but operable handles or knobs ☐

\* **b. Not operable such as cracked through, faucet cannot turn on, or no hot and cold water** ☐

\* **c. Under sink plumbing assemblies including any piping, faucet risers, traps, or sink connectors are leaking** ☐

9.6 Gas piping:

\* **a. Gas piping is leaking, kinked, crushed, or pulling away from the wall (NOTE: if leak detected, evacuate and call 911 immediately)** ☐

b. Gas shutoff valve not located within 3 feet of appliance ☐

9.7 Wall, floor, or ceiling coverings:

a. Broken such that floor, wall or ceiling studs or joists are visually exposed ☐

\* **b. Soft, spongy, or wet to the touch** ☐

# 10 Owners' Obligations

Property owners are responsible for ensuring that the property is free of excess trash; insects and rodents have been exterminated; unit and building doors lock with a deadbolt or deadlatch; and working smoke detectors are installed outside sleeping rooms.

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10.1 Garbage/rubbish is accumulated outside of trash receptacles.

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\* 10.2 Visible evidence of rodents or insects such as bedbugs, ants, cockroaches, or silverfish.

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\* 10.3 Door frames or jambs are broken and do not allow unit or building doors to close and lock securely.

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\* 10.4 Smoke detectors missing, not functional, or not centrally located in hallways outside sleeping rooms.

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## Other Considerations

These items are not currently part of the City's Housing and Building Maintenance Code and are not part of the RRIO inspection or registration criteria. We strongly recommend these two requirements be met in all rental housing units.

- Seattle Building Code requires that smoke detectors be installed and working in every sleeping room and centrally located outside sleeping rooms.
- Washington State law requires that carbon monoxide detectors be installed outside of each separate sleeping area, in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom and on each level of the residence.

# Attachment 1

## RRIO Checklist References to Seattle Housing & Building Maintenance Code

RRIO Checklist Heading	RRIO Code Reference	HBMC Related Code References
Exterior: Structure, Shelter, and Maintenance	SMC 22.214.050.M(3) SMC 22.214.050.M(5)	SMC 22.206.060 SMC 22.206.080.A
Interior: Structure, Shelter, and Maintenance	SMC 22.214.050.M(3) SMC 22.214.050.M(4) SMC 22.214.050.M(5) SMC 22.214.050.M(7)	SMC 22.206.060, SMC 22.206.070 SMC 22.206.080.A SMC 22.206.100 (ref 040.A&B)
Emergency Escape Windows and Doors	SMC 22.214.050.M(9)	SMC 22.206.130.J
Room Size and Condition	SMC 22.214.050.M(1)	SMC 22.206.020.A SMC 22.206.070
Heating System	SMC 22.214.050.M(6)	SMC 22.206.090
Electrical Standards	SMC 22.214.050.M(8)	SMC 22.206.110.A
Plumbing and Hot Water		SMC 22.206.050.E SMC 22.206.050.F
Sanitation Standards: Bathrooms	SMC 22.214.050.M(2)	SMC 22.206.050.A, E, F & G
Sanitation Standards: Kitchen	SMC 22.214.050.M(2)	SMC 22.206.050.D, E, F & G
Owners' Obligations	SMC 22.214.050.M(10) SMC 22.214.050.M(11) SMC 22.214.050.M(12) SMC 22.214.050.M(13)	SMC 22.206.160.A1, A3, A11, B4