



Topic:

Long-Term Rental Registry Inspections – Methodology and Policy

Effective Date:

Immediately

Background and Analysis:

Spokane Municipal Code 10.57.040 and RCW 59.18.125 outline various standards and expectations regarding the regulations of long-term rental housing. The Code Enforcement Department has been charged with establishing a methodology that will be utilized for conducting both cause-based and periodic/proactive inspections at long-term rental properties. Below is the initial methodology that the Code Enforcement Department will be utilizing for such inspections beginning in 2024. The below priorities are intended to efficiently utilize staff's time and deploy resources where they are most likely to be needed, based on staff's experience and in consideration of the scoping of other existing programs. The methodology is an internal policy document that is subject to change as registry and inspection data is gathered. Staffing will be based on a district model, so resources will be distributed city-wide, and in every neighborhood.

Code Enforcement - Long-term Rental Property Inspection Methodology:

- A) **Cause based inspections:** *Code Enforcement staff has responded to complaints at rental properties for years and will continue to do so.*
- 1) Coordinating inspections in response to citizen complaints will be the top priority for the staff assigned to this program.
- B) **Periodic/Proactive Inspections:** *Staff will prioritize periodic/proactive inspections in the order of priority listed below.*
- 1) Any rental property that had confirmed violations (not just complaints) the previous year. This is essentially a cause-based inspection.
 - a. Any similarly situated properties owned by the same individual/agency. *This makes sense for launching the program – this is the best data we have for estimating what locations will be the most safety sensitive and best uses of our time.*
 - 2) Code Enforcement staff will focus on the below property types in order of priority. *Note: This is based on staff's experience in the field as well as knowledge of SFD's new multi-family and commercial building inspection programs.*
 - a. single family homes
 - b. duplexes
 - c. triplex
 - d. Multi-family properties
 - i. <20 units – representative sample of no more than 4 units (RCW)
 - ii. >21 units – representative sample of no more than 20 percent of units (RCW)
 - a. If violations are observed, additional units may be inspected (up to all)
 - 3) Any property type where the rental unit(s) was newly constructed with a new certificate of occupancy being issued within 5 years.
 - 4) Lastly, properties at which the previous year's inspection previous year found no violations.
 - a. Staff will prioritize inspections at properties with no recent confirmed violations no more than once every 3 years, per RCW.
 - b. If a complaint is received and a violation verified during the 3 year window, the property would then be subject to a periodic inspection the following year as detailed in B (1).