

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What was the purpose in creating such an ordinance?*

A: The Township recognized the need for an organized inspection and registration program for residential rental units in order to ensure rental units meet all applicable building, existing structures, fire, health, safety and zoning codes, and to provide an efficient system for compelling landlords to correct violations and maintain, in proper condition, rental property within the Township. The safety of the tenants is paramount.

2. *What properties are required to be registered with the Township?*

A: All residential rental properties need to be registered. The registration needs to be renewed each year. This includes any properties where an owner may live, but rents out rooms to individual(s).

3. *What is the cost to register a property?*

A: The cost to register a property is \$15.00 per unit. Once a property has been inspected, or a complaint is found to be valid and violations are found, the next year's registration would be \$30.00. As long as a unit is in compliance with this, and other Township Ordinances, the registration fee would remain at \$15.00.

4. *How often will a unit be inspected?*

A: Each unit shall be inspected on a biennial basis. That means once every 2 years. If a unit is in compliance, that unit will have its next biennial inspection waived. If a complaint is filed with the Township and found to be valid, therefore making said unit not in compliance, the following biennial inspection shall not be waived. Newly constructed rental units will have their first biennial inspection waived. Each unit must be registered however, annually. **It is not true that a unit has to be inspected every time a tenant changes.**

5. *Are there any properties exempt from inspection?*

A: Rental units that were constructed prior to January 1, 1990, shall be exempt from all biennial inspections until there has been a change in occupancy of the rental unit. New rental units (units 4 years old or newer) that have been issued a certificate of occupancy after October 15, 2000, shall be exempt from the initial biennial inspection. If a valid complaint is not filed regarding the rental unit within the two years following the waived initial inspection, then the next biennial inspection of the rental unit shall also be waived.

6. *Are there exemptions for registration of a unit?*

A: No. All units must be registered each year at the Township Office with the Department of Planning and Community Development, Rental Housing Inspection Department. The registration form may be obtained at the Township Office, or online and mailed to the Township or dropped off.

7. *What is the process for registering a unit?*

A: A registration form and a tenant information form must be filled out, signed and returned to the Township office, attn: Tami Arsenault. Forms may be obtained online, however forms will not be accepted unless they are signed. Email-ed forms will not be accepted. A form may be mailed to you upon request. Call or leave a message at (616)895-6295 ext. 34. The forms must be accompanied with the appropriate registration fee. It is \$15.00 for initial registration per

unit, and \$15.00 for each unit each year thereafter for those that are in compliance. Units found in non-compliance will have a registration fee of \$30.00 the following registration.

8. *What is the basis for inspections?*

A: 1. A complaint is received indicating that there is a violation of the standards or provisions of any Ordinance adopted by the Township or any state law.

2. An observation by the Department of Planning and Community Development or Township Staff, Allendale Community Policing Officers, Allendale Township Fire Chief, or Ottawa County Sheriff's Department, of a violation of the standards or the provisions of any Ordinance adopted by the Township or any state law.

3. A report or observation that a dwelling unit is unoccupied and unsecured or is damaged by fire.

4. The registration or renewal and certification of a rental unit as required by the Rental Housing Registration Ordinance 2004-15.

5. The need to determine compliance with a notice or an order issued by the Township.

6. An emergency observed or reasonably believed to exist.

7. A request for an inspection by the property owner.

8. Requirements of law where a dwelling is to be demolished by the Township or where ownership is to be transferred to the Township.

9. *Will an owner receive notice for scheduled inspections?*

A: Yes. For regular, biennial inspections, an owner will receive a reminder card 60 days in advance. All appointments need to be made with Tami Arsenault, the Rental Housing Inspector at (616)895-6295 ext. 34. If any subsequent inspections are required, a reminder notice will not be sent.

10. *Are there penalties involved?*

A: Yes.

1. If at any time an inspection is scheduled and the owner or responsible local agent fails to appear, an inspection fee shall be assessed against the owner and/or the responsible local agent, and no inspection shall be completed until the inspection fee is paid in full.

2. If violations are found on any unit, and repairs are not made, a municipal civil infraction may be issued; subject to the procedures and sanctions contained in Ordinance No. 1995-1. Please refer to the Planning and Community Development's Building and Zoning Home page under "see zoning ordinances" and go to Article 30. Increased civil fines (1st=\$50.00, 2nd=\$250.00, 3rd=\$500.00) may be imposed for repeat violations within a twelve (12) month period.

11. *What happens when a transfer of ownership occurs?*

A: When there is a transfer of ownership on any rental unit, and a current certificate of compliance exists, then the inspection shall be waived. If there is not a current certificate of compliance, then an inspection shall be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days following the notification of the transfer of ownership as required by Section 4(c) of the Rental

Housing Registration Ordinance No. 2004-15. The Rental Housing Inspector needs to be notified and a new registration form needs to be filled out within 60 days of transfer of ownership, as well as notifying residents in each unit. If a transfer of ownership occurs and there is a current certificate of compliance on file, then the new owner will only have to pay the registration upon the expiration of the current registration. It will still be required that the new owner fill out a new registration form.

12. *Can a unit be occupied without a certificate of compliance?*

A: No. No person shall lease, rent, occupy, or otherwise allow a rental unit within the Township to be occupied without first registering the rental unit, an inspection is completed where required, a certificate of compliance shall be issued and posted on the premises, and all imposed fees are to be paid in full.