

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTERS 4, 5 AND 34 OF THE CITY CODE TO
INCREASE THE RENTAL DWELLING UNIT BUSINESS LICENSE FEE;
PROVIDE FOR CIVIL FINES FOR OWNERS OF RENTAL PROPERTIES AND
VACANT PROPERTIES; AND INCREASE VACANT REGISTRATION FEES**

#4694

Sponsor:

Council
Member
Guy

WHEREAS, a purpose of this legislation is to improve living conditions for residents who rent their residences and improve the housing stock of Wilmington through effective enforcement of the City Code; and

WHEREAS, another purpose of the legislation is to modernize the City's rental business license fee structure and provide additional resources for enforcement; and

WHEREAS, implementing a flat per unit rental business license fee will simplify the current fee structure and bring the City's fee structure in line with surrounding jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, City Council believes criminal penalties have not been sufficiently effective in deterring violations of the City Code provisions relating to vacant and rental properties; and

WHEREAS, City Council believes subjecting owners of vacant properties and rental properties that fail to comply with applicable City Code provisions to civil fines will have a more deterrent effect on this unlawful conduct; and

WHEREAS, City Council deems it necessary and proper to authorize the Department of Licenses and Inspections to issue citations and impose civil fines upon owners of vacant properties and rental properties that fail to comply with the requirements of Chapter 34; and

WHEREAS, City Council believes increased registration fees for long-standing vacant properties and increasing the fine for failure to register vacant properties will help to deter such property owners from allowing properties to remain vacant; and

WHEREAS, City Council believes that the requirement for registration of vacant properties should be increased from forty-five (45) consecutive days to six (6) months to provide property owners with a longer period to remedy a vacancy before imposing registration requirements; and

WHEREAS, City Council deems it necessary and proper to amend Chapters 4, 5, and 34 of the City Code to effectuate these changes.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON
HEREBY ORDAINS:**

SECTION 1. Chapter 4 of the City Code is hereby amended by deleting Section 4-27, 119.0, entitled "Authorizations of improvements to exteriors of vacant buildings or structures; procedures; liens for the costs incurred" in its entirety, and Section 4-27, 120.0, entitled "Annual registration of vacant buildings and registration fees" in its entirety.

SECTION 2. Chapter 34 of the City Code is hereby amended by deleting the entire chapter, and adopting a new Chapter 34 of the City Code, which shall be the document attached hereto as Exhibit A. Exhibit A shall constitute and be codified as Chapter 34 of the City Code. A blackline comparison of the current Chapter 34 of the City Code and the new Chapter 34 of the City Code is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

SECTION 3. Chapter 5 of the City Code is hereby amended at Section 5-101 by deleting the stricken language and by adding the underlined language to read as follows:

Sec. 5-101. - Schedule of fees.

* * *

Financial/real estate service:

Banks, trust company 723.00
Building and loan association 361.00
Collection agency 181.00
Condominium, conversion of apartments to condominium, per unit 60.00
Credit rating, reporting bureaus 181.00
Finance company 181.00
Holding company 120.00
Investment brokerage firm 723.00
Mobile home park operator 602.00
Office/commercial buildings 361.00
Real estate agency 241.00
Real estate agent/broker/appraiser 120.00
Rooming house 120.00

~~One or two~~ Rental dwelling units ~~50.00~~ 100.00 per unit, not to exceed a total fee of

10,120.00

~~Three or more dwelling units (plus an additional \$10.00 for each unit)~~ 120.00

Miscellaneous financial/real estate service 181.00

* * *

SECTION 4. This Ordinance shall become effective on January 1, 2020 upon its passage by City Council and approval by the Mayor.

First Reading..... July 11, 2019
Second Reading..... July 11, 2019
Third Reading.....

Passed by City Council,

President of City Council

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2019.

Mayor

SYNOPSIS: This Ordinance (“Ordinance”) amends Chapter 5 section 5-101 entitled “Schedule of Fees” by amending the section to increase the business license fee for rental dwelling units to \$100 per unit, not to exceed a total business license fee of \$10,120.00. This Ordinance amends Chapter 34 of the City Code by changing the enforcement of Chapter 34 with respect to vacant and rental properties from criminal enforcement to civil enforcement with civil fines for non-compliance. The Ordinance also makes additional changes to update and modernize Chapter 34. In addition, this Ordinance amends Chapter 4 by deleting Section 4-27, 119.0 (authorization for exterior improvements to vacant structures) and Section 4-27, 120.0 (annual vacant property registration fees), and incorporates these provisions into Chapter 34. Further, this Ordinance amends the annual vacant property registration fee provisions (previously found at Chapter 4, Section 4-27, 120.0; now located at Chapter 34, Section 34-210) to: (1) increase the registration fees for properties vacant 3 or more years; (2) require registration of buildings vacant for 6 consecutive months rather than 45 consecutive days; (3) impose a civil fine of \$500.00 for failing to register a vacant building within 30 days of the required time to register; (4) exempt vacant buildings owned by the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank Corporation (“Land Bank”) from registration requirements; and (5) provide that purchasers of a vacant building from the Land Bank be billed a vacant registration fee based on the duration of vacancy from the time he or she received the building from the Land Bank, rather than a vacant registration fee based on the duration of the vacancy prior to receiving the building.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT: The increase in billable revenue for the City as a result of the increase in the rental dwelling unit business license fee is estimated at approximately \$815,290.00 annually. The fiscal impact as a result of the other changes implemented by this Ordinance is unknown.

EXHIBIT A

Chapter 34 – HOUSING AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE CODE^[1]

Footnotes:

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Charter reference— General powers of city, § 1-102.

Cross reference— Buildings and building regulations, ch. 4; businesses, ch. 5; regulation of owners, operators or lessors of mobile homes or mobile home lots, § 5-100; consumer protection, ch. 9.

State Law reference— Landlord-tenant code, 25 Del. C. § 5101 et seq.; Delaware State Housing Code, 31 Del. C. § 4101 et seq.

ARTICLE I. - IN GENERAL

Sec. 34-1. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Basement means a portion of a building located partly underground, but having 3½ feet or more of its floor-to-ceiling height above the average level of the adjacent finished grade.

Building means a structure enclosed with exterior walls or fire walls, built, erected, or framed of component structural parts, designed for the housing shelter, enclosure or support of individuals, animals or property of any kind. When used herein “building” and “structure” shall be interchangeable except where the context clearly indicates otherwise.

Cellar means a portion of a building located partly or wholly underground, and having less than 3½ feet of its floor-to-ceiling height above the average level of the adjacent finished grade.

Civil fine shall mean a fine of \$250 unless another amount is specified in this Chapter. Where the Code provides alternative penalties or remedies, civil fines shall be cumulative and the imposition of any civil fines shall not prevent the appropriate City agency from invoking any other penalty or remedy provided for in the Code.

Dwelling means any house or building or portion thereof which is used or intended to be used in whole or in part as a home, residence or sleeping place of one or more human beings, either permanently or transiently.

Dwelling unit means any room or group of rooms located within a dwelling and forming a single habitable unit with facilities which are used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking and eating, including a mobile home for single-family use which meets the requirements of the building and zoning codes.

Enforcement officer means the commissioner of licenses and inspections of the department of licenses and inspections of the city or his authorized representatives.

Extermination means the control and elimination of insects; rodents or other pests by eliminating their harborage places; by removing or making inaccessible materials that may serve

as their food; by poisoning, spraying, fumigating, trapping; or by any other recognized and legal pest elimination methods approved by the enforcement officer.

Family means one adult occupant plus one or more persons who are legally related to such occupant as husband or wife, son or daughter, mother or father, mother-in-law or father-in-law, brother or sister, or any foster child or ward.

Garbage means animal and vegetable waste resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking and consumption of food.

Habitable room means a room or enclosed floor space used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking or eating purposes, excluding bathrooms, water closet compartments, laundries, pantries, foyers or communicating corridors, closets and storage spaces.

Hotel means any dwelling, or that part of any dwelling, in which sleeping accommodations are offered for pay by the owner or operator to four or more persons who are transients.

Hotel unit means any room or group of rooms forming a single habitable unit used or intended to be used for living and sleeping in a hotel, but not for cooking.

Infestation means the presence, within or around a dwelling, of any insects, rodents or other pests.

Multiple dwelling means any dwelling containing more than one dwelling unit.

Occupant means any person, over one year of age, living, sleeping, cooking or eating in, or having actual possession of, a dwelling unit or rooming unit.

Operator means any person who has charge, care or control of a building, or part thereof, in which dwelling units or rooming units are let.

Owner means any person who, alone or jointly or severally with others, shall have:

- (1) Legal title to any dwelling or dwelling unit, with or without accompanying actual possession thereof; or
- (2) Charge, care or control of any dwelling or dwelling unit, as owner or agent of the owner, or as executor, executrix, administrator, administratrix, trustee or guardian of the estate of the owner. Any such person thus representing the actual owner shall be bound to comply with the provisions of this chapter, and of rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, to the same extent as if he were the owner.

Plumbing means all of the following supplied facilities and equipment: gas pipes, gas-burning equipment, water pipes, garbage disposal units, waste pipes, water closets, sinks, installed dishwashers, lavatories, bathtubs, shower baths, installed clothes-washing machines, catchbasins, drains, vents and any other similar supplied fixtures, together with all connections to water, sewer or gas lines.

Premises means a lot, piece or parcel of land including the buildings or structures thereon.

Rental dwelling unit means any room or group of rooms located within one or more buildings and forming a single habitable unit with facilities which are used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking and eating, and which is let or rented to another for the purpose of living therein. Rental property shall have the same meaning as rental dwelling unit.

Remediation costs shall mean any and all costs and expenses incurred by the City of Wilmington to eliminate or remedy a violation of this chapter, including but not limited to, any demolition costs or repair costs.

Rooming house means any dwelling, or part thereof, containing four or more rooming units designed to be used for sleeping accommodations and to be let, for compensation, by the owner or operator thereof to four or more persons who are not husband or wife, son or daughter, mother or father, sister or brother, father-in-law or mother-in-law of the operator or owner.

Rooming unit means any room or group of rooms forming a single habitable unit used or intended to be used for living and sleeping, but not for cooking or eating purposes.

Rubbish means combustible and noncombustible waste materials, except garbage; and such term shall include paper, rags, cartons, boxes, wood, excelsior, rubber, leather, tree branches, yard trimmings, tin cans, metals, mineral matter, glass, crockery and dust, and the residue from the burning of wood, coal, coke and other combustible material.

Structure means an object or other construction created by the combination of materials for the purpose of occupancy, use or ornamentation, whether installed on, above or below the surface of a parcel of land, provided the word "structure" shall be construed when used herein as though followed by the phrase "or part or parts thereof and all equipment therein," unless the context clearly requires a different meaning.

Supplied means paid for, furnished or provided by, or under the control of, the owner or operator.

Unfit dwelling or *dwelling unit* means any dwelling or dwelling unit which:

- (1) Is so damaged, decayed, dilapidated, unsanitary, difficult to heat, unsafe or vermin-infested that it creates a hazard to the health or welfare of the occupants or the community;
- (2) Lacks illumination, ventilation or sanitary facilities adequate to protect the health or welfare of the public; or
- (3) Because of its general condition or location is unsanitary or otherwise dangerous to the health or welfare of the occupants or the public.

Whenever the words "dwelling," "dwelling unit," "rooming house," "rooming unit," "hotel," "hotel unit" and "premises," are used in this chapter, they shall be construed as though they were followed by the words "or any part thereof."

Vacant means a building or structure for which no person or persons actually, currently conducts a lawfully licensed business, or lawfully resides or lives in any part of the building as the legal or equitable owner(s) or tenant-occupant(s), or owner-occupants, or tenant(s) on a permanent, nontransient basis.

Week means a seven day period.

(Code 1968, § 34-1)

Cross reference— Definitions and rules of construction generally, § 1-2.

Sec. 34-2. - Compliance required.

All repairs, additions, alterations or replacements to structures, dwellings, dwelling units or premises to bring such structures, dwellings, dwelling units or premises into compliance with this chapter shall conform to all provisions of this Code and other city ordinances and regulations governing the construction, replacement, repair or alteration of such structures, dwellings, dwelling units and premises and the facilities and equipment contained therein.

(Code 1968, § 34-2)

Sec. 34-3. - Construction of chapter—Authority of city relative to nuisances.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed or interpreted to in any way impair or limit the authority of the city or any department or agency thereof to define and declare nuisances and to cause the removal or abatement of nuisances by appropriate proceedings as provided by law.

(Code 1968, § 34-12)

Sec. 34-4. - Same—Other city regulations.

- (a) The provisions of this chapter shall not be construed to abrogate the responsibility of any person to comply with the other provisions of this Code and any other zoning, building, fire, safety, electrical, plumbing or public health ordinance or regulation of the city.
- (b) In any case where a provision of this chapter is found to be in conflict with any other provision of this Code or with a provision of any zoning, building, fire, safety, electrical, plumbing or public health ordinance of this city, the provision which establishes the higher standard for the promotion and protection of the health and safety of the people shall prevail.

(Code 1968, § 34-13)

Sec. 34-5. - Right of access of owner, etc., for purposes of making required repairs, etc.

Every occupant of a structure, dwelling or dwelling unit shall give the owner thereof, or his agent or employee, access to any part of such structure, dwelling or dwelling unit, or its premises, at all reasonable times for the purpose of making such repairs or alterations as are necessary to effect compliance with the provisions of this chapter or with any lawful rule or regulation adopted or any lawful order issued pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-3)

Sec. 34-6. - Reprisals against tenant for reporting violations prohibited.

- (a) No owner, landlord, firm or corporation or any agent, officer or employee thereof shall threaten to take reprisals against any tenant for reporting or complaining of the existence or belief of the existence of any building maintenance, housing, health, sanitary or building code violation to any governmental authority.

- (b) Receipt of a notice to quit the leased premises without cause within 90 days after making such report or complaint shall create a rebuttable presumption that such notice is a reprisal against the tenant for making such report or complaint.

(Code 1968, § 34-7.1)

Sec. 34-7. - Unlawful lease-purchase practices.

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any owner to accept or retain any deposit of sums of money pursuant to any purported installment contract of sale, or any purported rental with an option to buy, or any purported lease-purchase of any dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming house in the city from any person in the absence of a duly executed written agreement for the same. It shall further be unlawful for any owner to refuse to make full refund of any deposit of sums of money paid by any person for such purported purposes in the absence of a duly executed written agreement for the same or to refuse to any such person occupancy of the subject premises without making full refund of any such deposit.
- (b) Complaints by any persons alleging violations of the provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall be filed with the office of the commissioner of licenses and inspections for investigation.
- (c) Any owner violating the provisions of this section shall be subject to and liable for a Civil Fine and any applicable remediation costs and shall make full restitution of any and all deposits of money paid to such owner by any person in violation of this section.

(Code 1968, § 34-17.2)

Sec. 34-8. - Proof of state of mind not required for strict liability violations.

It is unnecessary to prove the defendant's state of mind with regard to offenses under this chapter which constitute violations as the legislative purpose is to impose strict liability for such offenses.

(Ord. No. 94-002, § 6, 2-24-94)

Secs. 34-9—34-35. - Reserved.

ARTICLE II. - ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

DIVISION 1. - GENERALLY

Sec. 34-36. - Enforcement generally; initiation of prosecution for violations.

- (a) This chapter shall be enforced by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his authorized representatives or designees in the department of licenses and inspections, and the commissioner of licenses and inspections or any such authorized representative shall initiate criminal prosecutions for violations in the manner and form provided by law.

- (b) The department of licenses and inspections shall maintain records relating to the inspection of each property and shall make available to the office of the city solicitor such records for purposes of review and use as evidence in prosecutions for violations and the administration and enforcement of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-9)

Sec. 34-37. - Violations and penalties generally.

- (a) Except as otherwise specifically provided by this chapter and subsection (d) of this section, any person violating any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based on the provisions of this chapter or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections and approved by resolution of the city council for the enforcement or implementation of this chapter, or violating any provision of this chapter, or any provision of any such rule or regulation, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$250.00 for each offense of violating such order, or provision of this chapter, or provision of such rule or regulation up to a maximum fine of \$1,000.00 for each such offense, together with the costs and disbursements of prosecution. For any conviction of a violation that is the second conviction for the same violation as a previous violation which has not been corrected, the minimum fine for any person or corporation shall be not less than \$500.00 nor more than \$2,500.00; for the third conviction not less than \$1,000.00 nor more than \$5,000.00, which shall not be suspended; for the fourth conviction \$1,500.00; for the fifth and subsequent conviction of the same violation that still has not been corrected, the minimum fine for each conviction shall be not less than \$5,000.00, which shall not be suspended. Upon conviction of a violation of this chapter, the court may order the defendant to correct the violation by a date certain. If the defendant fails to correct the violation by the court ordered date, the court may impose a fine of \$50.00 per day to be calculated from the date of conviction to the date by which the court had ordered the violation to be corrected.
- (b) After conviction and punishment for violation of such order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this chapter or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections and approved by resolution of the city council for the enforcement or implementation of this chapter, if such person shall continue in violation of such order, such person shall be liable for further prosecution, conviction and punishment upon such same order, without any necessity of the commissioner of licenses and inspections issuing a new order until such order has been complied with.
- (c) Each week's failure to comply with any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this chapter or the provisions of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections and approved by resolution of the city council for the enforcement and implementation of this chapter, and each week's failure to comply with any provision of this chapter or any such rule or regulation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense and be punishable as such.
- (d) With respect to vacant properties and rental dwelling units only, any person owning a vacant property or a rental dwelling unit who violates any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based on the provisions of this chapter or any provision of any rule or regulation

adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement or implementation of this chapter, or violating any provision of this chapter, or any provision of any such rule or regulation shall be immediately subject to and liable for a civil fine of \$250 for such violation and any applicable remediation costs. Each week's failure following any applicable cure period to comply with any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this chapter or the provisions of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement and implementation of this chapter, and each week's failure following any applicable cure period to comply with any provision of this chapter or any such rule or regulation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense and be punishable by a fine in the same amount. Pursuant to title 25, chapter 29 of the Delaware Code, any civil fine imposed pursuant to the provisions of this subsection shall give rise to a lien. Any unpaid amounts of such fines may be added to local property tax billings for the property which was the subject of said violations. A civil fine authorized pursuant to this subsection shall not apply to owner occupied properties.

(Code 1968, § 34-8; Ord. No. 96-020, § 2, 4-12-96; Ord. No. 98-124, § 2, 10-19-98; Ord. No. 99-082(sub 1), § 3, 11-4-99; Ord. No. 99-008, § 3, 5-17-01; Ord. No. 03-075(sub 1), § 14, 12-4-03)

Sec. 34-38. - Notice of violation—Warning -- Contents, service, appeals.

- (a) Whenever the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee determines that there has been a violation, or that there are reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a violation, of any provision of this chapter or of any rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto, he shall give notice of such violation or alleged violation to the person responsible therefor. Such notice shall:
 - (1) Be put in writing;
 - (2) Include a description of the real estate sufficient for identification;
 - (3) Include a statement of the reason why it is being issued; and
 - (4) Allow at least 30 days from the date of such notice for the performance of any act it requires, unless otherwise provided in this chapter or in the event that the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee determines that a lesser period of time is essential to protect the health, safety or welfare of the occupants or of occupants of an adjacent property; or the dwelling is deemed unfit for habitation, in which case 3 days are required for the performance of any act it requires.
- (b) The notice of violation shall be served upon the owner or the operator or the occupant, as the case may require. Such notice shall be deemed to be properly served upon such owner or upon such operator or upon such occupant by mailing a copy thereof by either mail service or other form of delivery to both the property address and such other address(es) that have been designated for the receipt of property tax bills for such property, or if the letter with the copy is returned with a note showing it has not been delivered to him, by posting a copy thereof in a conspicuous place on or about the dwelling affected by the notice of violation. The commissioner of licenses and inspections may in his discretion require such notice to be served by delivering a copy thereof personally to such owner or such operator or such

occupant or by leaving a copy thereof at his usual residence in the presence of someone in the residence of suitable age and discretion who shall be informed of the contents thereof, as the circumstances may require. Any notice herein required shall, if mailed, be deemed to be effective upon the earlier to occur of five business days following the date of its mailing, the date of actual delivery or the date of posting on the property. When done in conjunction with certified or registered mail service, a copy of the notice may be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises and such a procedure shall be deemed the equivalent of personal service.

- (c) The owner, operator or occupant may appeal the notice to the board of license and inspection review. The appeal shall be in writing and filed within twenty calendar days after the receipt of the notice of violation. Any appeal to the board of license and inspection review shall be accompanied at the time of filing with a fee of \$50.00 which shall be refunded if the appeal is successful. The board of license and inspection review shall hear and decide appeals in accordance with its duly prescribed and promulgated rules, regulations and procedures.
- (d) Any owner, operator or occupant, as the case may require, who does not appeal the notice and does not perform the act or acts required under the notice, or who unsuccessfully appeals the notice and does not perform the act or acts required under the notice within the prescribed time period is in violation of this chapter and may be penalized pursuant to section 34-37.

(Code 1968, § 34-18(a)—(f); Ord. No. 91-082, § 1, 11-21-91; Ord. No. 95-074, § 1, 12-14-95; Ord. No. 96-077, § 1, 12-5-96; Ord. No. 98-124, § 2, 10-19-98)

Sec. 34-39. - Same—When not required.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter to the contrary, whenever any person fails to obtain the rental inspection of any dwelling, habitation or living unit as required by the provisions of section 34-45(a) or the limitation of occupancy notification required by section 34-86, no notice of such violation of section 34-45(a) and section 34-86 shall be required, before civil fines are imposed or legal proceedings, actions or prosecutions are brought.

(Code 1968, § 34-18(g); Ord. No. 96-077, § 1, 12-5-96)

Sec. 34-40. – Deleted.

Sec. 34-41. - Inspection of structures, buildings, dwellings, etc., generally; right of entry of enforcement officer.

- (a) The enforcement officer is hereby authorized and directed to make inspections to determine the condition of structures, buildings, dwellings, dwelling units, hotel units, rooming units and premises located within this city, in order that he may perform his duty of safeguarding the health and safety of the occupants of structures and the general public. For the purpose of making such inspections the enforcement officer is hereby authorized to enter, examine and survey between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. all structures, buildings, dwellings, dwelling units, hotel units, rooming units and premises. The owner or occupant of every structure, building, dwelling, dwelling unit, hotel unit, and rooming unit, or the person in charge thereof, shall give the enforcement officer free access to such structure, building, dwelling, dwelling unit, hotel unit or rooming unit and its premises during such time for the

purpose of such inspection, examination and survey; provided, that such inspection, examination or survey shall not have for its purpose the undue harassment of such owner or occupant and that such inspection, examination or survey shall be made so as to cause the least amount of inconvenience to such owner or occupant consistent with the efficient performance of the duties of the enforcement officer.

- (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the entry of the enforcement officer:
 - (1) At any time when an actual emergency which tends to create an immediate danger to public safety exists; or
 - (2) At any time when such an inspection, examination or survey may be requested by such owner or occupant.
- (c) Any person who opposes or impedes an officer or authorized agent or employee of the department of licenses and inspections in the execution of his duty under this chapter shall be deemed guilty of a violation of this chapter. In addition, if an officer or authorized agent or employee of the department of licenses and inspections is denied entrance to a building for purposes of inspection, he may, upon showing of probable cause, obtain a warrant for purposes of entering and inspecting the building, dwelling, land or premises.

(Code 1968, § 34-6; Ord. No. 94-002, § 5, 2-24-94)

Charter reference— Inspections generally, §§ 5-704, 8-412.

Sec. 34-42. – Deleted.

Sec. 34-43. - No inspection of property prior to sale or other transfer to be required.

- (a) No inspection of any dwelling, dwelling unit, hotel, or rooming house in the city shall be required nor shall any inspection be performed by the department of licenses and inspection for enforcement or implementation of the provisions of this chapter and the rules and regulations of the department prior to or in connection with any agreement of sale or conveyance or other transfer of any such property. This provision shall not affect inspections other than those heretofore required in connection with the sale or other transfer of property.
- (b) The provisions of this section shall not be construed as in any way a limitation upon or modification of any of the other inspection, notice, compliance and enforcement provisions of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-17)

Sec. 34-44. - Recordation of certain agreements of sale; responsibility of seller for violations.

- (a) Whenever an agreement of sale is entered into containing provisions for the retention of legal title by the seller and providing for deferred installment payments by the buyer for the sale of any dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming house or hotel in the city, the seller shall record such agreement in the county recorder's office.

- (b) The responsibility for complying with this chapter shall not be affected by such sales agreement. The seller shall remain responsible for code violation compliance imposed upon the owner or person in charge and the buyer shall have the burden of assuming the tenant's responsibilities enumerated in this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-17.1)

Sec. 34-45. - Inspections of rented or leased dwellings or buildings for residential occupancy, to include installment sales; no warranty of condition.

(a) *Inspection of a rental dwelling or building.* Any person who leases or rents any dwelling or any dwelling unit, regardless of whether that person has a valid rental dwelling business license, shall cause the same to be inspected by the commissioner of licenses and inspections, or his designee every three years. An initial rental inspection shall be required for each such dwelling or building consistent with a rental inspection schedule set by the commissioner of licenses and inspections. The three-year period referenced in this subsection shall be calculated based upon the rental inspection schedule set by the commissioner of licenses and inspections. Inspections of dwellings or buildings required under this subsection may consist of a random sampling of units in the dwelling or building as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee. The purpose of all rental inspections shall be enforcement of the provisions of the City Code concerning life safety items which include, but are not limited to: smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, heating sources, hot water sources, electrical systems, sanitary disposal sources, water damage, roofs and means of egress and ingress. The provisions of this section shall apply to the lease or rental of any dwelling or dwelling unit whether it is to be leased to the current tenant or to a new tenant and whether the same is to be done by the current owner or a new owner.

- (1) If an inspection reveals the building has no violations, the commissioner of licenses and inspections may extend the inspection period required under this subsection for a subsequent inspection from three years to four years.
- (2) If the dwelling unit is unoccupied at the time of the rental inspection, any violations cited during the rental inspection shall be corrected prior to permitting any tenant or lessee or any other persons to occupy such dwelling or dwelling unit. If the dwelling unit is occupied at the time of the rental inspection, any violations cited during the rental inspection shall be corrected within the time period designated by the commissioner of the department of licenses and Inspections or his designee, and the property owner shall cause dwelling unit to be re-inspected upon correction of the violation(s).

- (b) *Installment sales.* Whenever any person sells any dwelling, dwelling unit, building or rooming house in the city wherein there is a retention of title by the seller and a deferred installment payment plan is set forth in the contract or lease agreement, the seller shall comply with the inspection requirements of subsection (a) of this section and the provisions of section 34-43 shall not be applicable to any such seller of property who or which is subject to the provisions of this subsection.
- (c) *Disclaimer of warranty of condition.* Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as any manner of warranty or guarantee by the city or by its agent, the department of licenses

and inspections, that any particular property at any particular time fully complies with the provisions of this chapter and all rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto or that any violations of this chapter and the rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto cited by the department of licenses and inspections are necessarily the only violations existing in or upon a particular property at any particular time or that corrections of violations of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto which have been cited by the department of licenses and inspections are necessarily full and complete corrections such that no other violations exist in or upon any particular property at any particular time.

- (d) *Fee.* If more than one re-inspection is necessary to determine compliance with any violation cited during the initial rental inspection, an additional fee in the amount of \$50.00 will be assessed for each re-inspection, commencing with a second re-inspection. Said re-inspection fee may be waived for good cause shown at the discretion of the code enforcement officer.
- (e) Condition of business license. Compliance with the requirements of this section is a condition of a rental dwelling unit business license issued pursuant to chapter 5, sec. 5-92.

(Code 1968, § 34-17.3; Ord. No. 99-083(sub 1), § 1, 11-4-99; Ord. No. 06-016(sub 1), § 1, 4-6-06)

Secs. 34-46—34-60. - Reserved.

DIVISION 2. - DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS

Sec. 34-61. - Power and duty of department—Specific functions enumerated.

The department of licenses and inspections shall be the department primarily responsible for the administration and enforcement of this chapter. In that regard, it shall:

- (1) Maintain code enforcement performance records and prepare management reports;
 - (a) On a quarterly basis, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall provide a report to the City Council committee charged with oversight of the department. Such report shall include information related to the results of rental inspections performed and any other information the commissioner believes should be included;
- (2) Maintain files for all housing code enforcement inspections;
- (3) Conduct housing inspections in response to citizen complaints to the extent possible;
- (4) Conduct systematic housing inspections;
- (5) Supervise the conduct of all city-sponsored demolition activities;
- (6) Conduct rental inspections;
 - (a) As it relates to rental inspections conducted pursuant to sec. 34-45, a minimum of 1500 units located on separate parcels shall be inspected annually.
- (7) Conduct sanitation code enforcement inspections;
- (8) Conduct building inspections for all privately financed construction;

- (9) Conduct all final inspections of properties involved in rehabilitation loan and grant programs; and
- (10) Whenever conducting any code enforcement inspection, distribute information regarding the housing programs of the city and rental programs to owner occupants and tenant occupants.

(Code 1968, § 34-3.1)

Sec. 34-62. - Same—Generally; inspection not to imply warranty.

- (a) The department of licenses and inspections is hereby granted the sole and exclusive power and duty to enforce and administer the provisions of this chapter and all rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto.
- (b) The commissioner of licenses and inspections shall require that the language of disclaimer be printed beneath a heading in boldface print of "DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY" on all notices of violations, orders and letters of compliance issued by the department of licenses and inspections.
- (c) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as in any way a warranty or guarantee by the city or its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, that:
 - (1) Any particular property is at any particular time in full and complete compliance with the provisions of this building maintenance and housing code or with the provisions of any other state or municipal statutes, ordinances, rules or regulations.
 - (2) A particular property which has been cited for a particular violation of the housing code does not at any particular time have other violations of this housing code or of any other state or municipal statute, ordinance, rule or regulation.
 - (3) A property where corrections of violations of this building maintenance and housing code have been satisfactorily made does not have at any particular time other violations of this building maintenance and housing code or of any other state or municipal statute, ordinance, rule or regulation which has not been cited.
- (d) Neither the city nor its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, warrants or guarantees and the city and its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, hereby expressly disclaim any warranty or guarantee of the condition of any particular property at any particular time. The condition of any property and its compliance with the provisions of this chapter and with any other state or municipal statute, ordinance rule or regulation shall at all times be the responsibility of the owner or his legal agent.

(Code 1968, § 34-4)

Sec. 34-63. - Rules and regulations.

The department of licenses and inspections is hereby authorized and empowered to adopt rules and regulations necessary for the proper enforcement of this chapter; provided, that any such rules and regulations are approved by the City's administrative board. Such rules and regulations adopted by such department and approved by the City's administrative board shall have the same

force and effect as the provisions of this chapter, and the penalty for violation thereof shall be the same as the penalty for violation of the provisions of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-5)

Sec. 34-64. - Liability of officers, etc., of department of licenses and inspections.

No member, officer or agent of the department of licenses and inspections shall be sued or held to liability for any act done or omitted in good faith and with ordinary discretion on behalf of or under such department or pursuant to the charter of the city or any statutes, ordinances or rules and regulations under which such department has authority to act.

(Code 1968, § 34-7)

State Law reference— Tort immunity of local officials, 10 Del. C. § 4011.

Sec. 34-65. – Emergencies and emergency orders.

(a) Whenever the commissioner of licenses and inspections finds that an emergency exists with respect to a building, structure or other property condition which requires immediate action to protect the public health or safety, he may, without notice or hearing, issue an order reciting the existence of such emergency and requiring that action be taken as he deems necessary to address the emergency. Notwithstanding the other provisions of this chapter, such order shall be effective immediately. Any person to whom such order is directed shall comply therewith immediately.

(b) When, in the opinion of the building official, there is an actual and immediate danger of collapse or failure of a building or structure or any part thereof that would endanger life or public health or safety, the code official shall cause the necessary work to be done, whether it be by demolition, shoring or other method as determined by the building official, in order to render such building or structure, or part thereof, temporarily or permanently safe, whether or not the legal procedure herein prescribed has been instituted.

(c) Following the performance of any work by the city or its designee to address an emergency that exists with respect to a building, structure or other property condition, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall provide a notice to the owner or owners of the applicable building, structure or real property that describes the work that was performed.

(d) Any amounts incurred by the City or its designee to address an emergency that exists with respect to a building, structure or other property condition, along with legal interest accrued thereon from the date of expenditure, shall be reimbursed to the city, on demand, by the person or persons who were the owner or owners of the applicable building, structure or real property at the time such work was commenced. The city may maintain an action of law in debt or assumpsit against the owner or owners to recover the sums of money so expended, plus lawful interest and costs.

(e) Any amounts incurred by the City or its designee to address an emergency that exists with respect to a building, structure or other property condition, along with legal interest accrued

thereon from the date of expenditure, shall be a lien on the lands and premises on which such work was performed.

(Code 1968, § 34-24)

Sec. 34-66. - Right of commissioner to bring legal proceedings, etc.

No provision or requirement contained in this chapter for a hearing shall in any way whatsoever affect or impair the right of the commissioner of licenses and inspections or city solicitor, or their respective designees, to bring at any time such legal proceedings, actions or prosecutions as are otherwise permitted by law or ordinance.

(Code 1968, § 34-23)

Secs. 34-67—34-85. - Reserved.

DIVISION 3. - LIMITATION OF OCCUPANCY NOTIFICATION AND RENTAL REGISTRATION

Sec. 34-86. - Limitation of occupancy notification and rental registration—Required.

- (a) Upon approval and issuance of the business license required by section 5-34 for the renting or letting of dwelling units, the department of licenses and inspections shall inspect each dwelling unit for the purpose of determining the maximum permitted occupancy thereof in accordance with the applicable provisions of this chapter. The commissioner of licenses and inspections or his authorized representative shall issue to the owner or operator of the dwelling unit or units a limitation of occupancy notification stating the maximum occupancy permitted in each dwelling unit. The owner or operator shall not rent or let a dwelling unit until a limitation of occupancy notification is issued by the department of licenses and inspections for that unit.
- (b) Such limitation of occupancy notification shall not be construed or interpreted as implying in any way that the particular dwelling or dwelling unit is in compliance or conformity with the provisions of this chapter or any rule or regulation for the enforcement or implementation of this chapter adopted by the department of licenses and inspections or any ordinance or other law or regulation of the city or the state.
- (c) Any owner or operator who fails to obtain a business license required by section 5-34 or register a dwelling unit or who rents or lets to another a dwelling unit prior to the issuance of a limitation of occupancy notification shall be subject to and liable for a civil fine of \$500.00 per rental unit. This provision supersedes the penalty provided in section 1-5.

(Code 1968, § 34-11; Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(a), 7-2-92; Ord. No. 96-014, § 1, 4-16-96; Ord. No. 03-074, § 4, 11-20-03)

Sec. 34-87. - Reserved.

Editor's note— Ord. No. 03-074, § 5, adopted Nov. 20, 2003, repealed section 34-87 in its entirety. Former section 34-87 pertained to application and fee for rental unit registration, and derived from the Code of 1968, § 34-14; Ord. No. 96-014, § 1, adopted April 16, 1996.

Sec. 34-88. - Same—Copy to be given to tenant.

The owner or operator of any dwelling or dwelling unit to whom a limitation of occupancy notification has been issued under the provisions of this division shall give the person to whom the dwelling or dwelling unit is let or rented a copy of the notification at the time of letting or renting.

(Code 1968, § 34-16; Ord. No. 96-014, § 1, 4-16-96; Ord. No. 03-074, § 6, 11-20-03)

Secs. 34-89—34-110. - Reserved.

Editor's note— Ord. No. 03-074, § 7, adopted Nov. 20, 2003, repealed section 34-89 in its entirety. Former section 34-89 pertained to certificates submitted with application for registration, and derived from the Code of 1968, § 34-15.

DIVISION 4. - CONDEMNATION AND PLACARDING OF UNFIT DWELLINGS, ETC.

Sec. 34-111. - Compliance.

The designation of buildings, structures, dwellings or dwelling units as unfit for human habitation and the procedure for the condemnation and placarding of such buildings, structures, unfit dwellings or dwelling units shall be carried out in compliance with the requirements set forth in this division.

(Code 1968, § 34-25)

Sec. 34-112. – Right of condemnation.

- (a) Any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall find to have any of the following defects may be condemned as unfit for human habitation:
 - (1) One which is so damaged, decayed, dilapidated, unsanitary, difficult to heat, unsafe or vermin-infested that it creates a hazard to the health or welfare of the occupants or of the public;
 - (2) One which lacks illumination, ventilation or sanitary facilities adequate to protect the health or welfare of the occupants or of the public;
 - (3) One which, because of its general condition or location, is unsanitary or otherwise dangerous to the health or welfare of the occupants or of the public.
 - (4) One which lacks adequate exit facilities; or
 - (5) One which constitutes a fire hazard.

- (b) Any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit may be condemned as unfit for human habitation by the commissioner of licenses and inspections if the owner or occupant fails to comply with any order based on the provisions of this chapter or any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto; provided, that such building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit is, in the opinion of the commissioner of licenses and inspections unfit for human habitation by reason of such failure to comply.

(Code 1968, § 34-26)

Sec. 34-113. - Notice of condemnation.

Whenever the commissioner of licenses and inspections has condemned a building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit as unfit for human habitation, he shall give notice of such condemnation to the owner. Such notice shall:

- (1) Be put in writing;
- (2) Include a description of the real estate sufficient for identification;
- (3) Include a statement of the reason why it is being issued;
- (4) Include a description of the repairs and improvements required to bring the condemned building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit into compliance with the provisions of this chapter and any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto;
- (5) Include an explanation of the owner's right to appeal the notice in accordance with the provisions of section 34-38; and
- (6) Be served upon the owner; provided, that such notice shall be deemed to be properly served upon such owner if a copy thereof is delivered to him personally or if not found by leaving a copy thereof at his usual place of abode, in the presence of someone of the family of suitable age and discretion who shall be informed of the contents thereof, or by sending a copy thereof by registered mail with return receipt requested to his last known address, or, if the registered letter with the copy is returned with a receipt showing it has not been delivered to him by posting a copy thereof in a conspicuous place in or about the dwelling affected by the notice.

(Code 1968, § 34-27)

Sec. 34-114. - Appeal.

The owner of a building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit that has been condemned as being unfit for human habitation may appeal such determination as provided in section 34-38(c).

(Code 1968, § 34-28; Ord. No. 94-002, § 5, 2-24-94)

Sec. 34-115. - Placarding generally.

After a building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit has been condemned as being unfit for human habitation, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall cause a placard to be posted

to such building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit, in one or more conspicuous places, bearing the following words: "Condemned as Unfit for Human Habitation."

(Code 1968, § 34-29; Ord. No. 94-002, § 5, 2-24-94)

Sec. 34-116. - Vacation of structure, dwellings, etc., condemned and placarded.

- (a) Any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as being unfit for human habitation by the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall be vacated within a reasonable time as required by such commissioner, but in any event not later than ten days after the property has been condemned and placarded. No owner or operator shall permit any person to occupy any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded by the commissioner of licenses and inspections after the date on which such commissioner has required the affected building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit to be vacated.
- (b) Any owner or operator or tenant or any other person who occupies any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation by the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall do so entirely at that person's own risk. It shall be the duty of the owner or operator or the agent of the owner or operator to ensure that any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation is vacated and not occupied. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as in any manner imposing upon the city or its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, any liability whatsoever for the health or safety of any person who occupies or continues to occupy any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation.
- (c) Any person who refuses to comply with an order of the commissioner of the department of licenses and inspections to vacate and continues to occupy any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation, or any person who occupies any such building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit after placarding, may be forcibly removed from the premises by the police department and the premises shall thereafter be closed. The premises shall not again be occupied until the defect(s) which caused the building, structure, or dwelling to be declared to be unfit is/are remedied and written approval of the commissioner is obtained.
- (d) Any violation of this Section 34-116 is subject to penalty pursuant to section 34-37 and any applicable remediation costs.

(Code 1968, § 34-30; Ord. No. 99-110, § 1, 10-21-99; Ord. No. 00-072, § 1, 10-19-00)

Sec. 34-117. - Use of condemned and placarded dwellings, etc.; removal of placard.

No structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation shall again be used for human habitation until written approval is secured from, and such placard is removed by, the commissioner of licenses and inspections. The commissioner of licenses and inspections shall remove such placard whenever the defects upon which the condemnation and placarding action were based have been eliminated.

(Code 1968, § 34-31)

Sec. 34-118. - Unauthorized defacing or removal of placard.

No person shall deface or remove the placard from any structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned as unfit for human habitation and placarded as such, except as provided in section 34-117.

(Code 1968, § 34-32)

Sec. 34-119. - Condemned dwellings declared nuisances, etc.

All structures and dwellings condemned as unfit for human habitation within the provisions of this chapter are hereby declared to be public nuisances and shall be repaired or vacated as provided by this chapter and shall be subject to such other actions as are available at law.

(Code 1968, § 34-33)

Secs. 34-120—34-185. - Reserved.

DIVISION 5. - OCCUPANCY OF CERTAIN RENTAL UNITS, VIOLATING CHAPTER, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS

Sec. 34-186. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this division, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Commissioner of licenses and inspections means the commissioner or his duly authorized delegate.

Landlord means the owner of a dwelling unit or a building containing multiple dwelling units for residential purposes.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.1)

Cross reference— Definitions and rules of construction generally, § 1-2.

Sec. 34-187. - Landlord's permit.

Whenever the owner of property shall by affidavit swear or affirm to the commissioner of licenses and inspections that because of vandalism, malicious mischief or any other valid security reason, he has been unable to meet all of the requirements of the city building maintenance and housing code as they relate to those requirements other than those basic to human safety and health, the commissioner, upon the applicant's payment of a \$25.00 fee, may grant a temporary certificate allowing such premises to be rented under the following conditions:

- (1) That the landlord have a bona fide tenant who is willing to rent the premises in their present condition and resides therein.

- (2) That the landlord shall have already engaged the services of a licensed contractor and obtained the necessary permits if required. Wherein the landlord states that he intends to correct the violation himself, he will be required to sign an affidavit to this effect. All work must be completed within a 90-day period.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(a))

Secs. 34-188—34-199. — Reserved.

DIVISION 6. IMPROVEMENTS TO EXTERIORS OF VACANT BUILDINGS.

34-200. — Authorizations of improvements to exteriors of vacant buildings or structures; procedures; liens for the costs incurred.

- (a) Authorization. The Department of Licenses and Inspections is authorized to initiate the making of improvements to the exteriors of vacant buildings or structures in accordance with this section and pursuant to the provisions of 25 Del. C. ch. 29 (§ 2901 et seq.) and 25 Del. C. ch. 46 (§ 4601 et seq.).

- (1) Eligible buildings or structures. If the owner has failed to rehabilitate or demolish:

- i. A building that is vacant or abandoned and deemed to be unsafe, or
- ii. Any other building or structure that is vacant and amendable to rehabilitation if made secure, the commissioner of licenses and inspections may recommend that exterior improvements be made or caused to be made to such building or structure so as to render the building or structure safe and secure and to prevent further structural damage from rain and other natural causes, and that a lien be duly recorded in order that the city may recover the costs incurred by public expenditure for the same.

- (2) Types of improvements. Exterior improvements, authorized herein, may include, but are not limited to: Repairs to or replacement of any of the structural components of such buildings or structures, sidewalks in the right-of-way or on the lot on which the building or structure is located, steps, porches, railings, columns, windows, doors, exterior painting, brick pointing and roofing, and any other repairs or replacements deemed appropriate to protect and secure the structural integrity of the building or structure and to prevent further damage that would render the building or structure unsafe. The costs incurred by the city for any such improvements shall be referred to as "exterior improvement costs." Such exterior improvement costs incurred by the city shall be recorded by lien in accordance with the provisions of 25 Del. C. ch. 46 (§ 4601 et seq.).

- (3) Approval and certification of improvements to be made. The commissioner of licenses and inspections, his duly authorized designee, the director of real estate

and housing and the director of planning, or the duly authorized designee of each of the same, shall by majority approval of a written authorization certify that specific exterior improvements shall be made to a building or structure, identified by street address and tax parcel number, in accordance with this subsection. Such written authorization shall be forwarded to the procurement and records division and to the finance director with specifications prepared for the particular improvements authorized to be made and for no other improvements. In an emergency affecting the public safety as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee, the rendering of exterior improvements to secure the structure may be expedited in lieu of the requirements of this certification subsection.

- (4) Notice to owner. When exterior improvements have been authorized as aforesaid and specifications for the same have been prepared, the department of licenses and inspections shall provide notice to the record owner or owners of the subject building or structure and to any record lien holders that such exterior improvements will be undertaken and the date of commencement of the same. For purposes of this subsection, the mailing of a certified letter, return receipt requested, at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the exterior improvements, to the last known address of the record owner, owners or lien holders and notifying same of the address of the property to be improved, the tax parcel number, the condition of the property and the legal right of the city to obtain a judgment against the owner and a lien against the property after completion of the exterior improvements, shall be deemed to be sufficient notice.
- (b) Costs incurred as debt owing to city. Whatever expenses are incurred in relation to authorized exterior improvements pursuant to this subsection shall be paid by the city treasurer out of monies in the treasury and the owner or owners shall be jointly and severally liable to the city for the full amount so expended. Whenever exterior improvement costs have been incurred as aforesaid, the expenditure of public funds, for exterior improvements to any vacant or abandoned building deemed to be unsafe or any other vacant building or structure, following notice to the owners, being the costs so incurred, with legal interest thereon from the date of expenditure, shall be reimbursed to the city, on demand, by the person or persons who were the owner or owners of such building or structure at the time such work of exterior improvement commenced. The city may maintain an action of law in debt or assumpsit against the owner or owners to recover the sums of money so expended, plus lawful interest and cost. When any person is found guilty, whether by trial or admission, of violating any provision of this chapter or chapter 4, in any instance in which such person, at the time of sentencing for such violation, also has not reimbursed the city for the costs incurred by the city in making or causing to be made any exterior improvements, pursuant to this subsection, to any building or structure regarding which such person or persons have been found guilty, as provided, the court shall order such person or persons to make full restitution to the city for such exterior

improvement costs in addition to and not in lieu of any fines which the court may impose.

- (c) Entering of lien. When the city expends public funds for the purpose of exterior improvements to any vacant or abandoned building or structure deemed to be unsafe or any other vacant building or structure within the city, after such notice as aforesaid, the city may enter a lien for the amount so expended, with interest accrued thereon, on the lands and premises on which such work of exterior improvements was performed by means of the department of finance and the city solicitor forwarding directions to the prothonotary for New Castle County for the entering of such exterior improvement liens in a docket for the same.
- (d) Satisfaction. When the department of finance and the city solicitor have determined the exterior improvement costs and interest, the entering of the lien shall be done by forwarding to the prothonotary the information as aforesaid. Whenever any such lien is satisfied by payment, the department of finance and the city solicitor may so advise the prothonotary in order that there shall be entered in the prothonotary's records the date of final payment and the words 'satisfied in full' pursuant to 25 Del. C. § 4603(d).
- (e) Rules and regulations. The department of licenses and inspections may adopt rules and regulations as deemed necessary and proper for the administration of this subsection, subject to approval by the administrative board.

Secs. 34-201 – 34-209. – Reserved.

DIVISION 7 – REGISTRATION OF VACANT BUILDINGS AND REGISTRATION FEES.

Sec. 34-210. – Annual registration of vacant buildings and registration fees.

- (a) Purpose. The purpose of this section requiring the registration of all vacant buildings and the payment of registration fees is to assist the city government, particularly the department of licenses and inspections (DLI) in protecting the public health, safety and welfare, to monitor the number of vacant buildings in the city to assess the effects of the condition of those buildings on nearby businesses and the neighborhoods in which they are located, particularly in light of fire safety hazards and unlawful, temporary occupancy by transients, including illicit drug users and traffickers, and to require of the owners of such vacant buildings their registration and the payment of related fees, and to promote substantial efforts to rehabilitate such vacant buildings. The provisions of this section are applicable to the owners of such vacant buildings as set forth herein and are in addition to and not in lieu of any and all other applicable provisions of this chapter, the health and sanitation code, and any other applicable provisions of the Wilmington City Code.

- (b) *Definitions and applicability; registration statement and fees.*
- (1) *Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them as follows:*
- (A) *Boarded:* A building or structure subject to the provisions of this section shall be deemed to be "boarded" if in place of one or more exterior doors, other than a storm door, or of one or more windows, there is a sheet or sheets of plywood or similar material covering the space for such door or window.
- (B) *Exterior maintenance and major systems:* The phrase "exterior maintenance and major systems" shall mean the safe and lawful maintenance of the facade, windows, doors, roof, and other parts of the exterior of the building and the maintenance of its major systems consisting of the roof, the electrical and plumbing systems, the water supply system, the sewer system, and the sidewalk, drive-way, if any, area of the lot, as applicable and as enforced by the department of licenses and inspections.
- (C) *Occupied:* Any building or structure shall be deemed to be occupied if one or more persons actually conducts a lawful business or resides in all or any part of the building as the licensed business-occupant, or as the legal or equitable owner/occupant(s) or tenant(s) on a permanent, nontransient basis, or any combination of the same. For purposes of this section, evidence offered to prove that a building is so occupied may include, but shall not be limited to, the regular receipt of delivery of regular mail through the U.S. Postal Service; proof of continual telephone, electric, gas, heating, water and sewer services; a valid city business license, or the most recent, federal, state, or city income tax statements indicating that the subject property is the official business or residence address of the person or business claiming occupancy; or proof of pre-rental inspection.
- (D) *Occupancy ready:* Any building that is vacant, but has been recently rehabilitated and a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion has been issued by the department of licenses and inspections allowing the building to be lawfully occupied, or if the property has not been recently rehabilitated, the property meets all minimum code requirements and may be immediately occupied. Whether a building is "occupancy ready" shall be determined by department of licenses and inspections through an inspection of the building. The classification "occupancy ready" shall only apply to the vacant registration requirements of this section, and does not apply to any other section of the code.
- (E) *Open:* A building or structure subject to the provisions of this section shall be deemed to be "open" if any one or more exterior doors other than a storm door is broken, open and, or closed but, without a properly functioning lock to secure it, or if one or more windows is broken or not capable of being locked and secured from intrusion, or any combination of the same.

- (F) *Owner*: An owner of the freehold of the premises or any lesser estate therein, a mortgagee, a vendee-in-possession, assignee of rents, receiver, executor, trustee, lessee, agent or any other person, firm or corporation that is directly or indirectly in control of a building subject to the provisions of this section, and as set forth below.
 - (G) *Vacant*: A building or structure shall be deemed to be vacant if no person or persons actually, currently conducts a lawfully licensed business, or lawfully resides or lives in any part of the building as the legal or equitable owner(s) or tenant-occupant(s), or owner-occupants, or tenant(s) on a permanent, nontransient basis.
- (2) *Applicability*. The requirements of this section shall be applicable to each owner of any building that is not a dwelling that shall have been vacant for more than 6 consecutive months and to each owner of residential property consisting of one or more vacant dwellings that shall have been vacant at least 6 consecutive months. Each such owner shall cause to be filed a notarized registration statement, which shall include the street address and parcel number of each such vacant building, the names and addresses of all owners, as hereinafter described, and any other information deemed necessary by the department of licenses and inspections. The registration fee(s) as required by subsection (b)(3) of this section shall be billed by the department of licenses and inspections and shall be paid by the first business day of January of each year. For purposes of this section, the following shall also be applicable:
- (A) If the owner is a corporation, the registration statement shall provide the names and residence addresses of all officers and directors of the corporation and shall be accompanied by a copy of the most recent annual franchise tax report filed with the secretary of state;
 - (B) If an estate, the name and business address of the executor of the estate;
 - (C) If a trust, the name and address of all trustees, grantors, and beneficiaries;
 - (D) If a partnership, the names and residence addresses of all partners with an interest of ten percent or greater;
 - (E) If any other form of unincorporated association, the names and residence addresses of all principals with an interest of ten percent or greater;
 - (F) If an individual person, the name and residence address of that individual person.
- (3) *Registration statement and fees; local agent*. If none of the persons listed, as above, is shown at an address within the state, the registration statement also shall provide the name and address of a person who resides within the state and who is authorized to accept service of process on behalf of the owners and who shall be designated as a responsible, local party or agent, both for purposes of notification in the event of an emergency affecting the public health, safety or welfare and for purposes of service of any and all notices or registration statements as herein authorized and in connection herewith. Registration shall be required for all vacant buildings, whether vacant and secure, vacant and open, vacant and boarded, or occupancy ready and shall be required within 30 days of

whenever any building has remained vacant for at least six consecutive months and within 30 days of a change in ownership of a building that has been vacant at least six consecutive months. In no instance shall the registration of a vacant building and the payment of registration fees be construed to exonerate the owner, agent or responsible party from responsibility for compliance with any other building code or housing code requirement. One registration statement may be filed to include all vacant buildings of the owner so registering. The owner of the vacant property as of November 1 of each calendar year shall be responsible for the payment of the non-refundable registration fee, except buildings deemed "occupancy ready" by the department of licenses and inspections and actively for sale or lease shall be exempt from imposition of the annual registration fee. However, buildings deemed "occupancy ready" by the department of licenses and inspections shall only be exempt from imposition of the annual registration fee for no more than 2 consecutive billing cycles. Except as provided in subsection (b)(3)(ix)(A) below, said fee shall be billed by the department of licenses and inspections and based on the duration of the vacancy as determined by the following scale:

- (i.) No fee for properties that are vacant for less than one year;
- (ii.) \$500.00 for properties that are vacant for at least one year but less than two years;
- (iii.) \$1,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least two years but less than three years;
- (iv.) \$5,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least three years but less than four years;
- (v.) \$10,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least four years but less than five years;
- (vi.) \$12,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least five years, but less than six years;
- (vii.) \$14,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least six years, but less than seven years;
- (viii.) \$16,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least seven years, but less than eight years; and
- (ix.) \$18,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least eight years, and an additional \$2,000.00 for each year in excess of eight years.

- (A) The vacant registration fee billed to a housing provider meeting the criteria for non-profit organizations as defined by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and who receives a vacant building directly from the city or who receives public funds from the city for the acquisition, rehabilitation or redevelopment of a vacant building shall not be based on the duration of the vacancy prior to the non-profit housing provider receiving the vacant building from the city or receiving the funds from the city, but rather from the time it received the vacant building or funds from the city. This provision shall be retroactive to May 1, 2003.

- (B) The vacant registration fee billed to the purchaser of a property from the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank Corporation shall not be based on the duration of the vacancy prior to purchase, but rather from the time the purchaser received the vacant building from the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank Corporation.
- (4) Appeal rights. The owner shall have the right to appeal the imposition of the registration fees to the Licenses and Inspection Review Board, upon filing an application in writing with the applicable \$50.00 non-refundable filing fee to the Department of Licenses and Inspections no later than 30 calendar days after the date of the billing statement. On appeal, the owner shall bear the burden of providing satisfactory objective proof of occupancy, as defined in Section 34-500(b)(1)(C).
- (5) One time waiver of registration fee. A one-time waiver of the registration fee, or an extension of a waiver for up to 12 months from the date of the billing statement immediately following the waiver, may be granted by the Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections upon application of the owner and upon review and advice of the law department, within 30 calendar days from the date of the bill for the registration fee, if the owner
- (i.) Demonstrate with satisfactory proof that he/she is in the process of demolition, rehabilitation, or other substantial repair of the vacant building; and
 - (ii.) Objectively demonstrates the anticipated length of time for the demolition, rehabilitation, or other substantial repair of the vacant building; or
 - (iii.) Provides satisfactory proof that he/she was actively attempting to sell or lease the property during the vacancy period.
- (6) Four-year waiver. Upon application by the owner and satisfaction of subsection (b)(5) above, the commissioner may, upon advice and review of the law department, grant a one-time four year waiver of the registration fee, or an extension of a waiver for up to 12 months from the date of the billing statement immediately following the waiver, if the owner meets the criteria for non-profit organizations as defined by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. With regard to an extension of a waiver only, the time period of the extension shall commence from the date of the billing statement (November 1 of the applicable calendar year) and, in no event, shall the extension exceed 12 months. An extension of a waiver shall only be granted once.
- (7) Delinquent registration fees as a lien. After the owner is given notice of the amount of the registration fee due, except for those owners that have properly perfected an appeal pursuant to subsection (b) (4) above, and the owner fails to pay the amount due, said amount shall constitute a debt due and owing to the city, and the city may commence a civil action to collect such the unpaid debt.

- (c) Duty to amend registration statement. If the status of the registration information changes during the course of any calendar year, it is the responsibility of the owner, responsible party or agent for the same to contact the department of licenses and inspections within 30 days of the occurrence of such change and advise the department in writing of those changes.
- (d) Exceptions. This section shall not apply to any building owned by the United States, the state, the city, nor to any of their respective agencies or political subdivisions and the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank Corporation.
- (e) Violations; penalties.
 - (1) The failure or refusal for any reason of any owner, or agent of an owner acting on behalf of the owner, to pay any fees required to be paid pursuant to the provisions of this section, within 30 days after they become due, shall be subject to and liable for a fine pursuant to sec. 34-37.
 - (2) The failure or refusal for any reason of any owner, or agent of an owner acting on behalf of the owner, to register a vacant building as required by subsection (b)(3) above, shall be subject to and liable for a civil fine of \$500.00.
- (f) Abatement of delinquent vacant registration fees. Upon application of the owner, the city, in its discretion, may enter into an agreement with the owner of a vacant property whereby the city agrees to void all delinquent vacant registration fees owed by the owner if the owner obtains a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion for the property within six (6) months of the date of the agreement such that the building may be lawfully occupied.
 - (1) Eligibility. At the time of application, the owner must provide the following documentation to the Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections:
 - (i) Proof that he or she owns the property; and
 - (ii) A detailed scope of the work required to obtain a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion for the property; and
 - (iii) Objective, satisfactory proof that he or she has adequate funds and/or financing to complete all work necessary to obtain a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion within six (6) months of the date of the agreement; and
 - (iv) If applicable, satisfactory proof that a licensed contractor has been engaged to perform the required work; and
 - (v) Satisfactory proof that the intended use of the property conforms with all zoning requirements; and
 - (vi) The owner must be current on all other city obligations, including but not limited to charges related to taxes, water, sewer, stormwater, permits, registration fees, business licenses, parking tickets, civil penalties, and red light tickets.
 - (2) If the owner satisfies subsection (f)(1), and the city enters into an agreement

with the owner as contemplated by subsection (f), the city shall not file a monition action against the subject property for the length of the agreement. However, the delinquent vacant registration fees shall remain a lien against the property.

- (3) Delinquent vacant registration fees subject to the agreement contemplated by subsection (f) shall only be voided under this subsection if the owner obtains a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion for the property within six (6) months of the date of the agreement such that the building may be lawfully occupied. If the owner fails to obtain a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion within the six (6) month time period, the delinquent vacant registration fees remain liens on the property, and the property is subject to monition by the city.
- (4) A decision by the city not to enter into an agreement under this subsection shall not be subject to appeal.

Secs. 34-211 – 34-230. – Reserved.

ARTICLE III. - MINIMUM STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS^[2]

Footnotes:

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Cross reference— Lead paint, § 13-131 et seq.

DIVISION 1. - GENERALLY

Sec. 34-231. - Basic equipment and facilities.

No person shall occupy as owner-occupant or let to another for occupancy any dwelling or dwelling unit, for the purpose of living, sleeping, cooking or eating therein, which does not comply with the following requirements:

- (1) *Kitchen sink.* Every dwelling unit shall contain a kitchen sink in good working condition and properly connected to the city water and sewer system.
- (2) *Toilet room, toilet and lavatory.* Every dwelling unit shall contain a room which affords privacy to a person with such room and which is equipped with a flush water closet and a lavatory basin in good working condition and properly connected to the city water and sewer system.
- (3) *Bathroom, bathtub or shower.* Every dwelling unit shall contain, within a room which affords privacy to a person within such room, a bathtub or shower in good working condition and properly connected to the city water and sewer system, and these facilities may be situate in the same room as those required by subsection (2) of this section.

- (4) *Hot and cold water.* Every kitchen sink, lavatory basin and bathtub or shower required under the provisions of subsections (1), (2) and (3) of this section shall be properly connected with both hot and cold water lines.
- (5) *Garbage disposal and garbage and rubbish storage facilities.* Every dwelling unit shall have adequate garbage disposal facilities or garbage storage containers and adequate rubbish storage facilities, the type and location of which are approved by the enforcement officer. Garbage shall be kept in storage containers separate from rubbish storage containers. Every dwelling unit shall have a sufficient number of metal or plastic containers covered with a watertight metal or plastic lid and of a capacity of not less than 15 gallons nor more than 100 gallons.
- (6) *Water-heating facilities.* Every dwelling unit shall have supplied water-heating facilities which are properly installed, are maintained in a safe and good working condition, are properly connected with hot water lines required under the provisions of subsection (4) of this section, and are capable of heating water to such a temperature as to permit an adequate amount of water to be drawn at every required kitchen sink, lavatory basin, bathtub or shower at a temperature of not less than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Such supplied water-heating facilities shall be capable of meeting the requirements of this subsection when the dwelling or dwelling unit heating facilities required under the provisions of section 34-234(5) are not in operation.
- (7) *Means of egress.* Every dwelling unit shall have safe, unobstructed means of egress leading to safe and open space at ground level which complies with applicable city and state regulations.
- (8) *Maintenance of plumbing and plumbing fixtures.* All plumbing, water closets and other plumbing fixtures in a dwelling unit shall be maintained in good order and repair and in accordance with the requirements of the city building code and plumbing code.
- (9) *Penalty.* Any violation of this section is subject to a penalty pursuant to section 34-37. In accordance with section 34-37, any owner-occupant who violates this section shall not be subject to a civil fine as provided for in section 34-37(d), but rather shall only be subject to sections 34-37(a)-(c).

(Code 1968, § 34-41; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 3, 10-19-06)

Sec. 34-232. - Smoke-detection devices; requirements.

(a) *Installation required.*

- (1) *Dwellings.* All structures and dwellings shall be equipped with smoke detectors and fire protection equipment as required by the provisions of chapter 4 and the city's building code.
- (2) *Unlawful acts:* In addition to and not in lieu of any other provisions of this section and of this Code, it shall be unlawful for any person responsible for the installation of a smoke detector to fail to so install it. It shall be unlawful for any person to tamper with, damage or render inoperative, such as, but not exclusively, by disconnecting electrical wiring or by removing the batteries from any smoke detector.

- (b) *Type of detection devices.* Detection devices shall be of the photo-electric or ionization type and shall be electric, 110 volts, alternating current, or battery-powered smoke detectors, Underwriters' Laboratory or Factory Mutual Approved.
- (1) Electric units shall be direct-wired on a separate circuit on the line side of service equipment, immediately fused with proper size fuse. Detector wiring shall be minimum 14 gauge wire. All wiring shall comply with the National Electric Code and shall be performed by registered, licensed electricians.
- (2) Battery-powered units shall be permitted only in structures built prior to 1983 or not substantially renovated since 1983. Where battery-powered units are permitted, the battery shall be of the type approved for the detector and shall provide a minimum of 12 months' service. Battery-powered units shall be equipped with an audible sounding device to alert occupants of the need for battery replacements. In rental dwelling units where battery-powered devices are permitted, after installation of the detection device at the landlord's expense, in accordance with subsection (a) of this section, it shall be the tenant's responsibility, unless otherwise provided in the tenant's lease agreement, to:
- a. Make periodic inspections of the unit to determine that it is in proper working order;
 - b. Notify the landlord of any malfunction of such detection device which the landlord shall then repair or replace at his own expense; and
 - c. Replace the batteries when necessary during the entire term of the rental agreement.
- (c) *Audible signal.* Detection devices shall be equipped with an audible sounding device that provides a steady signal with a minimum decibel rating of 85 decibels.
- (d) *Number of devices required.* A minimum of one device shall be required in one-story and two-story single-family dwelling units. Dwelling units consisting of three or more stories shall be equipped with a minimum of two devices. Buildings containing two or more dwelling units shall be equipped with a minimum of one device for each individual dwelling unit. The minimum requirement of this section is that one detector shall be installed on the first floor level at or near the stairs leading to the second floor level, or one detector shall be placed at the second floor level at or near the top of the stairs. In dwellings having basements or cellars, an additional smoke detector shall be installed at or near the top of the stairs leading from the basement or cellar to the first floor level. This section shall not limit the number of detectors required in residential buildings, where the design, arrangement or configuration of the interior would require additional detectors in additional areas of the protected premises, when in the judgment of the authority having jurisdiction, placement of additional detectors is necessary for the protection of the occupants.
- (e) *Authority having jurisdiction.* The commissioner of licenses and inspections and the fire marshal shall have concurrent jurisdiction for purposes of enforcing compliance with this section. The authority vested in the commissioner of licenses and inspections for enforcement of the provisions of the housing and building codes for purposes of conformity with the provisions of this section may be delegated to the office of the fire marshal.
- (f) *Supervision of enforcement.* All general contractors, subcontractors and their agents who install electric, 110-volt alternating-current powered smoke-detection devices shall be registered with the office of the city fire marshal in order to sell, distribute, furnish or install smoke-detection equipment within the city. It shall be the responsibility of the contractor,

installer, or seller of electrical 110-volt, alternating current-powered smoke detectors to certify in writing to the commissioner of licenses and inspections that such device is in compliance with this section. This subsection shall not apply to persons who perform the actual installation of smoke detectors in dwelling units they own; however, such installations shall still require any applicable inspections required by the building code.

(Code 1968, § 34-41.1; Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(b), 7-2-92)

State Law reference— Basic equipment and facilities, 31 Del. C. § 4116 et seq.; residential smoke detectors, 16 Del. C. § 1622 et seq.

Sec. 34-232.1. - Carbon monoxide alarm devices; requirements.

Every building of residential or mixed occupancy, in which there are one or more residential units, shall be equipped with approved carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with this chapter.

- (1) *Location.* Not less than one approved carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed in each residential unit. The alarm shall be installed within 40 feet of each room used for sleeping purposes. The carbon monoxide alarm should be placed so it will be easily audible in all sleeping rooms. The carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

In every hotel and motel, one approved carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed for every 10,000 square feet of floor area, or fraction thereof, (1) on every floor on which a fossil fuel-burning boiler or furnace is located, and (2) on every floor on which sleeping rooms are heated by any type of warm air heating plant that burns fossil fuel. The floor area shall be computed separately for each floor. The carbon monoxide alarm should be placed so it will be easily audible to all sleeping rooms. The carbon monoxide detector shall be installed according to the manufacturer's specifications.

- (2) *Exemptions.* The following residential units and hotels/motels shall not be required to have carbon monoxide alarms:
 - a. A residential unit in a building or hotel/motel that does not rely on combustion of fossil fuel for heat, ventilation or hot water, and is not sufficiently close to any ventilation source of carbon monoxide, as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his or her designee, to receive carbon monoxide from that source.
 - b. A residential unit or hotel/motel that:
 1. Is heated by steam, hot water or electric heat;
 2. Is not connected by ductwork or ventilation shafts to any room containing a fossil fuel-burning boiler or heater; and
 3. Is not sufficiently close to any ventilated source of carbon monoxide, as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee, to receive carbon monoxide from that source.

- (3) *Dwelling units heated by space heaters.* Each dwelling unit or hotel/motel employing space heating equipment that is located within the dwelling unit or hotel/motel room and that burns fossil fuel shall be equipped with at least one carbon monoxide alarm. The carbon monoxide alarm should be installed according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- (4) *Standards.* Every approved carbon monoxide alarm shall comply with all applicable federal and state regulations, and shall bear the label of a nationally recognized standard testing laboratory, and shall meet the standard of UL 2034 or its equivalent. The commissioner of licenses and inspections may issue rules and regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter, for the implementation and administration of the provisions of this chapter relating to carbon monoxide alarms.
- (5) *Battery removal violations.* It shall be unlawful for any person to remove batteries from a carbon monoxide alarm required under this chapter, or in any way to make inoperable a carbon monoxide alarm required under this chapter, except that this provision shall not apply to any building owner or manager or his agent in the normal procedure of replacing batteries.
- (6) *Owner's and tenant's responsibilities.* The owner of a structure shall install the carbon monoxide alarm(s) and supply required carbon monoxide testing and maintenance information to at least one adult tenant in each dwelling unit. The tenant shall test, provide general maintenance, and replace required batteries for carbon monoxide alarms located in the tenant's dwelling unit.
- (7) *Building heated by central fossil fuel powered heating unit.* The owner or owner's agent of every residential building with more than one unit within the building that is heated by one main central fossil fuel powered heating unit, and that is not exempted under this section, shall install one approved carbon monoxide alarm on the floor containing the central heating unit. The owner shall test, provide general maintenance, and replace required batteries for carbon monoxide alarms located in this area. The carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- (8) *Fossil fuel defined.* Whenever used in this chapter, the term "fossil fuel" shall include coal, natural gas, kerosene, oil, propane and wood.

(Ord. No. 01-003(sub 1), § 1, 3-15-01)

Sec. 34-233. - Mobile home fire safety requirements.

Any mobile home shall be equipped with smoke detection devices as described in section 34-232 of both the electric type and the battery-powered type as backup detection devices, both of which detection devices shall be located outside of bedrooms, between the bedrooms, and the living room. Each mobile home shall be equipped with at least one handheld fire extinguisher to be located in the kitchen area. No propane bottled gas shall be permitted in any mobile home unless an alternative fuel supply is not available. No portable kerosene stove or other fuel burning portable appliances for heating or cooking shall be permitted; portable means any stove except one designed for and connected to a flue outlet. Each mobile home shall be equipped with an automatic sprinkler system of a type approved by the commissioner of licenses and inspections and the fire department.

Violations of this section shall be punishable as provided in section 34-232 for violations of that section.

(Code 1968, § 34-41.2)

State Law reference— Fire safety requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4118.

Sec. 34-234. - Light, ventilation and heating; pest control.

No person shall occupy as owner-occupant or let to another for occupancy any dwelling or dwelling unit, for the purpose of living therein, which does not comply with the following requirements:

- (1) *Window or skylight for light in habitable rooms.* Every habitable room shall have at least one window or skylight facing directly to the outdoors. The minimum total window area, measured between stops, for every habitable room shall be ten percent of the floor area of such room. Whenever walls or other portions of structures face a window of any such room and such light-obstruction structures are located less than three feet from the window and extend to a level above that of the ceiling of the room, such a window shall not be deemed to face directly to the outdoors and shall not be included as contributing to the required minimum total window area. Whenever the only window in a room is a skylight-type window in the top of such room, the total window area of such skylight shall equal at least ten percent of the total floor area of such room.
- (2) *Ventilation of habitable rooms.* Every habitable room shall have at least one window or skylight which can easily be opened, or such other device as will adequately ventilate the room. The total of openable window area in every habitable room shall be equal to at least 50 percent of the minimum window area size or minimum skylight-type window size, as required in subsection (1) of this section, except where there is supplied some other device affording adequate ventilation and approved by the enforcement officer.
- (3) *Light and ventilation for bathrooms, etc.* Every bathroom and water closet compartment shall comply with the light and ventilation requirements for habitable rooms contained in subsections (1) and (2) of this section.
- (4) *Electrical outlets and fixtures.* Every habitable room of any dwelling shall contain at least one electric convenience outlet. Every such outlet and fixture shall be properly installed, shall be maintained in good and safe working condition, and shall be connected to the source of electric power in a safe manner.
- (5) *Heating facilities generally.* Every dwelling shall have supplied heating facilities which are properly installed, are maintained in safe and good working condition, and are capable of safely and adequately heating all habitable rooms, bathrooms and water closet compartments in every dwelling unit located therein to a temperature of at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit, at a distance of three feet above flood level when the outdoor temperature is at or above zero degrees Fahrenheit.
- (6) *Space heater requirements.* Every supplied space heater shall comply with all of the following requirements:

- a. No space heater burning solid, liquid or gaseous fuels shall be of the portable type.
 - b. Every space heater burning solid, liquid or gaseous fuel shall be properly vented to a chimney or duct leading to outdoor space.
 - c. Every space heater shall have a fire-resistant panel beneath it.
 - d. Every space heater shall comply with all the requirements of the building code and fire code of the city and the equipment shall be approved by the electrical department of the Middle Department Association of Fire Underwriters.
- (7) *Minimum temperatures.* Every owner or operator of any dwelling who rents, leases or lets for human habitation any dwelling unit contained within such dwelling on terms, either expressed or implied, to supply or furnish heat to the occupants thereof, shall maintain therein a minimum temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. of each day and 60 degrees Fahrenheit between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. of each day, whenever the outdoor temperature shall fall below 50 degrees Fahrenheit during such hours. Whenever a dwelling is heated by means of a furnace, boiler or other heating apparatus under the control of the owner or operator of the dwelling, such owner or operator, in the absence of a written contract or agreement to the contrary, shall be deemed to have contracted, undertaken or bound himself to furnish heat in accordance with the provisions of this subsection to every dwelling unit which contains radiator, furnace heat duct outlets or other heating apparatus outlets.
- (8) *Lighting of public halls and stairways.* Every common area, public hall and stairway in every multiple dwelling containing three or more dwelling units shall be adequately lighted at all times. Every common area, public hall and stairway in structures devoted solely to dwelling occupancy and containing not more than two dwelling units may be supplied with conveniently located light switches, controlling an adequate lighting system which may be turned on when needed, instead of fulltime lighting. The owner or operator shall have the following responsibilities:
- a. The owner or operator of any multiple dwelling shall have the duty of providing and the responsibility for proper maintenance of the structure's lighting system.
 - b. The owner or operator shall be responsible for having the wiring in the lighting system so arranged that the owner or operator is the party directly responsible for payment of all utility charges for that part of the lighting system by which the lighting required in this section of all common areas, public halls and stairways is provided.
- (9) *Screens, etc.—For insect control.* During that portion of each year when the enforcement officer deems it necessary for protection against mosquitoes, flies and other insects, every window or other device with openings to outdoor space, used or intended to be used for ventilation, shall be supplied with screens covering at least 33 percent of the window area; provided, that such screens shall not be required during such periods in rooms deemed by the enforcement officer to be located high enough in the upper stories of buildings as to be free from such insects, and in rooms located in areas of this city which are deemed by the enforcement officer to have so few such insects as to render screens unnecessary. This subsection shall not apply to those buildings which have central air conditioning approved by the building official.

- (10) *Same—For rodent control.* Every basement or cellar window used or intended to be used for ventilation, and every other opening to a basement which might provide an entry for rodents, shall be supplied with a screen or such other device as will effectively prevent their entrance.
- (11) *Penalty.* Any violation of this section is subject to a penalty pursuant to section 34-37. In accordance with section 34-37, any owner-occupant who violates this section shall not be subject to a civil fine as provided for in section 34-37(d), but rather shall only be subject to sections 34-37(a)-(c).

(Code 1968, § 34-42)

State Law reference— Light, ventilation and space requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4115; extermination, 31 Del. C. § 4121.

Sec. 34-235. - Space, use and location requirements.

No person shall occupy or let to another for occupancy any dwelling or dwelling unit, for the purpose of living therein, which does not comply with the following requirements:

- (1) *Floor space of dwelling units.* Every dwelling unit shall contain at least 150 square feet of floor space for the first occupant thereof and at least 100 additional square feet of floor space for every additional occupant thereof, regardless of age, the floor space to be calculated on the basis of total habitable room area, exclusive of stairways.
- (2) *Floor space of sleeping rooms.* In every dwelling unit of two or more rooms, every room occupied for sleeping purposes by one occupant shall contain at least 70 square feet of floor space, and every room occupied for sleeping purposes by more than one occupant shall contain at least 50 square feet of floor space for each occupant thereof.
- (3) *Use of cellar space.* No cellar space shall be used as a habitable room or dwelling unit unless it fully complies with the building code as adopted and amended in chapter 4 of this Code and the floor and walls are impervious to leakage of underground and surface runoff water and are insulated against dampness.
- (4) *Use of basement space.* No basement space shall be used as a habitable room or dwelling unit unless it shall have been shown to the satisfaction of the building official to comply with the building code as adopted and amended in chapter 4 of this

Code and the floors and walls are impervious to leakage of underground and surface runoff of water and are insulated against dampness.

(Code 1968, § 34-43)

State Law reference— Space requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4115.

Sec. 34-236. - Responsibilities of owners.

- (a) No person shall own a building or structure within the city which does not comply with the following requirements, particularly with respect to any evidence of decay of any of the items enumerated:
- (1) *Foundations, exterior walls and roofs.* Every foundation, exterior wall and roof shall be weathertight, watertight, rodentproof and insectproof. Any evidence of decay of a foundation, exterior wall or roof shall be a violation of this section.
 - (2) *Interior partitions, walls, floors and ceilings.* Every interior partition, wall, floor and ceiling shall be capable of affording privacy and shall be kept in a good state of repair and in a clean and sanitary condition. Any evidence of decay shall be a violation of this section.
 - (3) *Drainage and removal of rain water from roofs.* All rain water shall be so drained and conveyed from every roof so as to not cause dampness in the walls, ceilings or floors of any habitable room or of any bathroom, toilet room or floors of any habitable room or of any bathroom, toilet room, basement or cellar. Any evidence of decay of a roof shall be a violation of this section.
 - (4) *Windows, exterior doors and basement hatchways.* Every window, exterior door and basement hatchway shall be weathertight and rodentproof. Any evidence of decay of a window, exterior door or basement hatchway shall be a violation of this section.
 - (5) *Exterior wood and metal surfaces.* All exterior wood and metal surfaces shall be protected from the elements and against decay by paint or other approved protective coating applied in a workmanlike fashion. Any evidence of decay such as cracking, scaling, peeling or loose paint or decay of any other protective coating, regardless of the type of surface painted or upon which any other protective coating has been placed, shall be a violation of this section. With regard to surfaces other than wood or metal, once the decaying paint or protective covering is removed, a property owner shall repaint or re-apply any other protective coating if a protective coating is necessary to protect the surface from decay or otherwise make it weather tight.
 - (6) *Stairways, porches, etc.* Every inside and outside stairway, every porch, and every appurtenance thereto shall be so constructed as to be safe to use and capable of supporting the load that normal use may cause to be placed thereon. Any evidence of decay of a stairway, porch, etc., shall be a violation of this section.
 - (7) *Plumbing fixtures; water and waste pipes.* Every supplied plumbing fixture and water and waste pipe shall be properly installed and maintained in good sanitary working condition. Any evidence of decay of such plumbing fixture, water pipe or waste pipe shall be a violation of this section.
 - (8) *Chimneys and smoke pipes.* Every chimney and every supplied smoke pipe shall be adequately supported.
 - (9) *Toilet room and bathroom floors.* Every toilet room, floor surface and bathroom floor surface shall be maintained so as to be impervious to water and shall be kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

- (10) *Facilities, equipment and utilities generally.* Every supplied facility, piece of equipment or utility which is required under this chapter shall be so constructed or installed that it will function properly and shall be maintained in good working condition.
- (11) *Removing, discontinuing, etc., services, facilities, equipment or utilities.* No owner or operator shall cause any service, facility equipment or utility which is required to be supplied under the provisions of this chapter to be removed from, shutoff from or discontinued for any occupied building, except for such temporary interruption as may be necessary while actual repairs, replacements or alterations are in the process of being made.
- (12) *Pest control.* Every owner of a building shall be responsible for the extermination of insects, rodents or other pests on the premises. Whenever infestation exists in any building or any part of any building, extermination thereof shall be the responsibility of the owner and extermination must be performed by a licensed exterminator.
- (13) *Cleanliness, etc., of communal, shared or public areas.* Every owner of a building shall be responsible for maintaining in a clean and sanitary condition all communal, shared or public areas of the building and the premises thereof.
- (14) *Cleanliness, etc., of occupied buildings generally.* No owner shall occupy or rent to any other person for occupancy or allow any other person to occupy any vacant building or any part thereof, unless it is clean, sanitary and in compliance with all provisions of this chapter and all rules and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.
- (15) *Open ditches or excavations.* All open ditches or excavations that present a safety or health hazard shall be filled or protected to eliminate such hazard.
- (16) *Drainage generally.* All parts of all buildings and premises shall be so drained as to prevent unsanitary accumulation of water in cellars or basements or any nuisance to or excessive drainage upon sidewalks and adjoining properties.
- (17) *Fences.* All fences located on an individual's property shall be maintained in good condition. Evidence of disrepair such as large holes, collapsed sections, missing sections, missing or broken railings and/or posts, shall be a violation of this section.
- (b) Any person violating any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based on the provisions of this section or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement or implementation of this section, or violating any provision of this section, or any provision of any such rule or regulation, shall be subject to a penalty pursuant to section 34-37 and any applicable remediation costs.
- (c) Each week's failure to comply with any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections, based upon the provisions of this section, or the provisions of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections before the enforcement and implementation of any provision of this section or any such rule or regulation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense and be punishable as such.
- (d) When, in the opinion of the commissioner of licenses and inspections, the structural integrity of any structure is potentially compromised, the commissioner of licenses and inspections may order that a structural analysis be performed by a licensed structural engineer to determine the integrity of the structure. The structural engineer shall submit a detailed report

on how to repair or address any hazardous situation presented by such structure. The cost of the structural engineer's report shall be classified as an enforcement cost and shall be recoverable from the owner of the property.

(Code 1968, § 34-44; Ord. No. 97-092, § 1, 12-4-97

State Law reference— Responsibilities of owners and occupants, 31 Del. C. § 4120.

Sec. 34-237. - Responsibilities of occupants; penalties for violations.

- (a) The occupants of every dwelling or dwelling unit shall comply with the following requirements:
 - (1) *Cleanliness and sanitation generally.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit shall keep in a clean and sanitary condition that part of the dwelling, dwelling unit and premises thereof which he occupies and controls.
 - (2) *Disposal of rubbish.* Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall dispose of all his rubbish in a clean and sanitary manner by placing it in the rubbish containers required by sections 34-231 and 13-7.
 - (3) *Disposal of garbage.* Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall dispose of all his garbage and any other organic waste which might provide food for rodents in a clean and sanitary manner by placing it in the garbage disposal facilities or garbage storage containers required by sections 34-231 and 13-7.
 - (4) *Screens, storm doors and windows.* Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall be responsible for handling all screens and double or storm doors and windows whenever the same are required under the provisions of this chapter or of any rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto, except where the owner has agreed to supply such service.
 - (5) *Pest control.* Every occupant of a dwelling containing a single dwelling unit shall be responsible for the extermination of any insects, rodents or other pests therein or on the premises; and every occupant of a dwelling unit in a dwelling containing more than one dwelling unit shall be responsible for such extermination whenever his dwelling unit is the only one infested. The owner's responsibilities are as follows:
 - (a) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this subsection, whenever infestation is caused by failure of the owner to maintain a dwelling in a ratproof or reasonably insect-proof condition, extermination shall be the responsibility of the owner.
 - (b) Whenever infestation exists in two or more of the dwelling units in any dwelling, or in the shared or public parts of any dwelling containing two or more dwelling units, extermination thereof shall be the responsibility of the owner.
 - (6) *Plumbing fixtures.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit shall keep all plumbing fixtures therein in a clean and sanitary condition and shall be responsible for the exercise of reasonable care in the proper use and operation thereof.
 - (7) *Heating facilities.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit shall be responsible for the exercise of reasonable care, proper use and proper operation of supplied heating facilities.

- (8) *Care and use generally.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit which is let or rented from another shall be responsible for the exercise of reasonable care and the proper use of the dwelling unit and its component parts and supplied facilities and equipment such as screens, screen doors, garbage and rubbish containers. No occupant of a dwelling unit which is let or rented from another shall neglect the maintenance of the dwelling unit such that it has an injurious effect on the health, safety or welfare of the occupants themselves or of immediate neighbors.
- (b) Any person violating any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based on the provisions of this section or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement or implementation of this section, or violating any provision of this section, or any provision of any such rule or regulation, shall be subject to a penalty pursuant to section 34-37 and any applicable remediation costs.
- (c) Each week's failure to comply with any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this section or the provisions of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement and implementation of any provision of this section or any such rule or regulation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense and be punishable as such.

(Code 1968, § 34-45; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 3, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Responsibilities of owners and occupants, 31 Del. C. § 4120.

Secs. 34-238—34-265. - Reserved.

DIVISION 2. - PREREQUISITES TO COMPLIANCE^[3]

Footnotes:

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Editor's note— Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), §§ 4, 5, adopted Oct. 19, 2006, repealed sections 34-267, 34-268, in their entirety and renumbered former sections 34-269—34-278 as new sections 34-267—34-276. Former sections 34-267, 34-268 pertained to garbage and rubbish storage and disposal, and derived from the Code of 1968, §§ 34-47, 34-48.

Sec. 34-266. - Plumbing and plumbing fixtures.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to plumbing and plumbing fixtures unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) *Contamination of water supply generally.* All plumbing is so designed and installed as to prevent contamination of the water supply through backflow, backsiphonages and any other method of contamination.

- (2) *Direct connection to nonpotable water supply.* All plumbing is so designed and installed that no potable water supply line or plumbing fixture is directly connected to a nonpotable water supply.
- (3) *Cross-connections.* Every water supply line is so constructed that there is no possibility of a cross-connection between a potable and a nonpotable water supply line in accordance with the building code.
- (4) *Condition of water supply lines, valves.* Every water supply line is in good working condition and every valve therein is in good working condition.
- (5) *Water supply inlets.* Every water supply inlet is located above the flood level of any installed sink, lavatory, bathtub or automatic washing and similar water-using fixture, or above some unobstructible overflow thereof; and there are no submerged inlets, except submerged inlets installed with a vacuum breaker of a type approved by the enforcement officer.
- (6) *Traps in waste lines.* The waste line of every water-using fixture is trapped.
- (7) *Draining and condition of waste line drains.* Every waste line drains freely without obstruction or leaks.
- (8) *Maintenance and cleanliness generally.* All plumbing and plumbing fixtures are maintained in good working condition, and all plumbing fixtures are kept clean.
- (9) *Water pressure.* Water pressure is adequate when it permits a flow of two gallons per minute of water from any open water faucet at all times.
- (10) *Construction, etc., of flush toilets.* Every flush water closet or toilet shall be constructed with a bowl and trap made in one piece, which is of such shape and form and which holds a sufficient quantity of water so that no fecal matter will collect on the surface of the bowl and which is equipped with flushing rims which permit the bowl to be properly flushed and scoured when water is discharged through the flushing rims.

(Code 1968, § 34-46; Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(f), 7-2-92)

State Law reference—Plumbing requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4116.

Sec. 34-267. - Gas facilities.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to gas facilities unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) *Venting.* All gas-burning hot water heaters and space heaters are properly vented to a chimney or duct leading to outdoor space.
- (2) *Condition of pipes generally.* Every gas pipe is sound and tightly put together, with no leaks.
- (3) *Corrosion or obstruction of pipes.* No gas pipe is corroded or obstructed so as to reduce gas pressure or volume.
- (4) *Pipe material.* Every gas appliance is connected to a gas line with metal piping.

- (5) *Gas pressure.* Gas pressure is adequate to permit a proper flow of gas from all open gas valves at all times.

(Code 1968, § 34-49; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

Sec. 34-268. - Electric wiring and facilities generally.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to electric wiring and facilities unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) *Insulation of wire.* Every exposed electric wire has insulation which is in good condition.
- (2) *Installation of switch and outlet plates.* Every switch plate and outlet plate is properly fastened in position.
- (3) *Short circuits, etc.* No short circuit or break exists in any electric line.
- (4) *Functioning, etc., of fixtures and outlets.* Every fixture and outlet functions properly and is properly fastened in place.
- (5) *Shock hazards.* No obvious shock hazard exists. In order to eliminate the potential for shock hazards, particularly in bathrooms and kitchens, the installation and maintenance in good order of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), as defined in the National Electrical Code 1996 Edition, shall be required in all dwelling units.
- (6) *Temporary wiring.* No temporary wiring is used, except extension cords which run directly from portable electric fixtures to convenience outlets, and which do not lie underneath floor-covering materials or extend through doorways, transoms or other similar apertures through structural elements.

(Code 1968, § 34-50; Ord. No. 98-037, § 1, 4-2-98; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Electrical facilities, 31 Del. C. § 4118.

Sec. 34-269. - Heating and heating facilities generally.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to heating and heating facilities unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) *Central systems generally.* When the dwelling or dwelling unit is heated by a central heating system:
 - a. The central heating unit is in good operating condition.
 - b. Every heat duct, steam pipe and hot water pipe is free of leaks and functions so that adequate heat is delivered where intended.
 - c. Every seal between the sections of a hot air furnace is in good repair.
- (2) *Portable heaters.* There are no portable heaters burning solid, liquid or gaseous fuels.

- (3) *Smoke pipes and chimneys.* Every smoke pipe and every chimney is adequately supported and maintained in such condition that there will be no leakage or backing up of noxious gases.

(Code 1968, § 34-51; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Heating facilities, 31 Del. C. § 4117.

Sec. 34-270. - Lighting.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to lighting unless every public hall, stairway and foyer has sufficient lighting through windows or from electric lights to provide illumination of at least one foot-candle on every part of such areas at all times of the day and night, except as otherwise provided by section 34-234(8).

(Code 1968, § 34-52; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Lighting requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4115.

Sec. 34-271. - Insect and rodent control.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to exclusion of insects and rodents unless it complies with sections 34-234(9) and 34-234(10) and with the requirement that every basement or cellar window shall be supplied with a heavy wire screen of not larger than one-fourth-inch mesh.

(Code 1968, § 34-53; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Extermination, 31 Del. C. § 4121.

Sec. 34-272. - Roofs.

The roof of every dwelling shall be tight and have no defects that admit rain.

(Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(g)(34-54), 7-2-92; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Roofs, 31 Del. C. § 4113(f).

Sec. 34-273. - Stairs and porches.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to stairs and porches unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) *Holes, grooves and cracks.* Every flight of stairs and porch is free of holes, grooves and cracks which are large enough to constitute possible accident hazards.
- (2) *Rails generally.* Every stairwell, and every flight of stairs which is more than three risers high, has rails not less than two feet, six inches, measured vertically from the nose of the

treads to the top of the rail, and every porch which is more than three risers high has rails not less than three feet, six inches above the platform.

- (3) *Fastening and maintenance of rails, etc.* Every rail and balustrade is firmly fastened and is maintained in good condition.
- (4) *Settling, etc.* No flight of stairs has settled more than one inch out of its intended position or has pulled away from supporting or adjacent structures.
- (5) *Supports.* No flight of stairs has rotting or deteriorating supports.
- (6) *Treads, height.* The treads of every flight of stairs are uniform in height and comply with the building code as adopted and amended in chapter 4 of this Code.
- (7) *Condition, etc., generally.* Every stair tread is sound and is securely fastened in position.
- (8) *Strength.* Every stair tread is strong enough to bear a concentrated load of at least 400 pounds without danger of breaking through.
- (9) *Porches, floors.* Every porch has a sound floor.
- (10) *Porch supports.* No porch has rotting or deteriorating supports.

(Code 1968, § 34-56; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

Sec. 34-274. - Bathroom and water closet compartment floors.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to water closet compartment and bathroom floors unless every water closet compartment floor and bathroom floor is made of terrazzo, tile, smooth concrete, dense hardwood with tightly fitting joints, rubber, asphalt tile, linoleum or other similar material providing a surface which is reasonably impervious to water and is easily cleanable; or such floor is made of one of the denser soft woods, with tightly fitting joints, and is covered with varnish, lacquer or other similar coating providing a surface which is reasonably impervious to water and is easily cleanable.

(Code 1968, § 34-57; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference—Plumbing facilities, 31 Del. C. § 4116.

Sec. 34-275. - General sanitation.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to general sanitation unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) *Floors and floor coverings.* Every floor and floor covering is kept reasonably clean and is not littered or covered with dirt, dust, garbage, human or animal fecal matter, or any other unsanitary thing.
- (2) *Walls and ceilings.* Every wall and ceiling is reasonably clean and is not littered or covered with dust, dirt, cobwebs or greasy film.
- (3) *Stagnant water.* No stagnant water is allowed to accumulate or stand anywhere about the premises.

(Code 1968, § 34-58; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

Sec. 34-276. - All windows to be operable.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to windows unless every window is operable and readily opened and closed. The requirements of this section shall mean that both parts of a double-hung window shall be moveable up and down and that any window that opens outward or that opens inward shall be maintained so as to do so. This provision shall apply to type R-3 one- and two-family dwellings only.

(Ord. No. 98-077, § 1, 7-30-98; Ord. No. 98-135, § 1, 11-20-98; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06; Ord. No. 14-023, § 1, 6-5-14)

Secs. 34-277—34-300. - Reserved.

ARTICLE IV. - HOTELS AND ROOMING HOUSES^[4]

Footnotes:

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Cross reference— Rooming house license, § 5-91.

DIVISION 1. - GENERALLY

Sec. 34-301. - Compliance required.

No person shall operate a hotel or a rooming house, or shall occupy or let to another for occupancy any hotel unit in any hotel or any rooming unit in any rooming house, except in compliance with the provisions of every section of this chapter except the provisions of section 34-231 and section 34-237.

(Code 1968, § 34-59)

Sec. 34-302. - Operation and occupancy of rooming houses, generally.

- (a) Every rooming unit located within a rooming house shall comply with the requirements for dwelling units as established in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, and rooming houses shall, in addition, be subject to the following special requirements:
 - (1) Each rooming house owner or operator within the city shall file, on or before January 1 of each year, a notarized registration statement listing the street address and parcel number of each such rooming house and the number of rooming units therein, together with an annual registration of rooming house fee of \$100.00 per rooming house. Such registration fee is in addition to and not in lieu of the license fee requirements of chapter 5 of this Code and is in addition to and not in lieu of the permit fee requirements of this article. Such registration statement and fees shall be filed with the revenue division of the department of finance.

- (2) The department of licenses and inspections and the fire department shall inspect such registered rooming houses at least once per year.
- (b) *Standards of operation.*
- (1) The floor space requirements for rooming houses shall be a minimum of 70 square feet per rooming unit, except in instances of occupancy by more than one person in which case the minimum floor space requirements shall be 70 square feet per person occupying such room unit.
 - (2) Each floor of a rooming house shall be equipped with a smoke detector of the hard wired variety, an emergency lighting system, and at least one fire extinguisher; in addition, at least one smoke detector shall be installed in the basement of the rooming house building.
 - (3) Each floor of a rooming house shall have a common hallway, and each individual rooming unit shall contain at least one window; in addition, fire escapes shall be provided to service the third floor of a building where rooming units exist, with unobstructed access to such fire escapes. In no case shall access to any fire escape be located solely within a rooming unit or within or through any other private or normally closed room.
 - (4) Partitions used in rooming house construction shall consist of two-by-four wood or steel studs and shall be covered on both sides with one hour fire-rated drywall.
 - (5) The use of paneling in buildings dedicated to rooming house use is prohibited unless such paneling or any finish wall covering carries a minimum class C fire rating; in no case shall paneling be permitted in common hallway or stairway areas and the commissioner of licenses and inspection shall be empowered to order the removal of paneling from such common areas.
 - (6) Common doorways between adjoining rooming house buildings shall be permitted only with the specific approval of the commissioner of licenses and inspections; any such doorway between rooming house buildings shall be equipped with a fire-rated class B door and permission shall be granted by the commissioner only upon a showing of exceptional need for the same by the owner or operator thereof.
 - (7) A common or central kitchen facility in a rooming house may be maintained on an optional basis, but only after securing specific permission to do so from the city's department of licenses and inspections; in no case shall the use of hot plates or similar portable cooking devices be permitted in a rooming unit, or in any other area of a rooming house.
 - (8) In addition to and not in lieu of the requirements of section 34-338, the department of licenses and inspections and the fire marshal's office shall inspect or cause to be inspected the electrical system in rooming houses and shall order the upgrading of such electrical system if such upgrading is necessary to meet the demands to be placed upon the electrical system and to assure the safety of rooming house occupants and nearby residents.

(Code 1968, § 34-59.1; Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(h), 7-2-92)

Sec. 34-303. - Guest register.

The operator of a hotel or a rooming house shall keep a list of all occupants up to date at all times in a permanently bound volume and such volume shall be available for inspection by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his authorized representative.

(Code 1968, § 34-60)

Sec. 34-304. - Toilet, etc., facilities.

At least one flush water closet, lavatory basin and bathtub or shower, properly connected to a water and sewer system, approved by the enforcement officer and in good working condition, shall be supplied for each six persons or fraction thereof residing within a hotel and for each four persons or fraction thereof residing within a rooming house, excluding members of the operator's family who shall have their own facilities; provided, that in a hotel or rooming house where rooms are let only to males, flush urinals may be substituted for not more than one-half the required number of water closets. All such facilities shall be so located within the dwelling as to be reasonably accessible from a common hall or passageway to all persons sharing such facilities. Every lavatory basin and bathtub or shower shall be supplied with hot water at all times. No such facilities shall be located in a basement except by written approval of the enforcement officer. All such facilities shall be located within a room which affords privacy and when not provided within a hotel unit or rooming unit, they shall not be more than one story removed from the hotel unit or rooming unit intended to be served by such facilities.

(Code 1968, § 34-61)

Sec. 34-305. - Bedding and towels.

The operator of every hotel or rooming house shall change supplied bed linen and towels therein at least once each week, and prior to the letting of any room to any occupant. The operator shall be responsible for the maintenance of all supplied bedding in a clean and sanitary manner.

(Code 1968, § 34-62)

Sec. 34-306. - Floor space requirements for hotels.

Every room in a hotel occupied for sleeping purposes by one person shall contain at least 70 square feet of floor space, and every such room occupied for sleeping purposes by more than one person shall contain at least 50 square feet of floor space for each occupant thereof.

(Code 1968, § 34-63)

Sec. 34-307. - Means of egress generally.

Every hotel unit and every rooming unit shall have safe, unobstructed means of egress leading to safe and open space at ground level as required by the enforcement officer or the fire marshal.

(Code 1968, § 34-64)

Sec. 34-308. - Separate access required.

There shall be for each dwelling unit and for each rooming unit in a rooming house and for each hotel unit in a hotel a separate access either to a hallway, landing, stairway or street.

(Code 1968, § 34-65)

Sec. 34-309. - Maintenance generally.

The operator of every hotel or rooming house shall be responsible for the sanitary maintenance of all walls, floors and ceilings, and for maintenance of a sanitary condition in every other part of the hotel or rooming house. He shall be further responsible for the sanitary maintenance of the entire premises when the entire structure or building is leased or occupied by the operator.

(Code 1968, § 34-66)

Sec. 34-310. - Dwelling units to comply with established requirements.

Every dwelling unit located within a hotel or a rooming house shall comply with all of the requirements for dwelling units as established in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-67)

Sec. 34-311. - Preparing or cooking food in hotels—Generally.

No occupant of a hotel shall prepare or cook food in a hotel unless such food is prepared or cooked in a dwelling unit contained therein.

(Code 1968, § 34-68)

Sec. 34-312. - Same—Communal kitchens prohibited.

No communal kitchen shall be contained in any hotel.

(Code 1968, § 34-69)

Sec. 34-313. - Preparing or cooking food in sleeping rooms of rooming houses.

Food shall not be prepared or cooked in any room in a rooming house used for sleeping purposes.

(Code 1968, § 34-70)

Secs. 34-314—34-335. - Reserved.

DIVISION 2. - OPERATION PERMIT

Sec. 34-336. - Required.

- (a) No person shall operate a hotel or a rooming house unless he holds a valid hotel permit or rooming house permit, issued by the commissioner of licenses and inspections in the name of such operator and for the specific dwelling or dwelling unit. The operator shall apply to the commissioner of licenses and inspections for such permit, which shall be issued by such commissioner upon compliance by the operator with the applicable provisions of this chapter and of any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto. Such permit shall be displayed in a conspicuous place within the hotel or rooming house at all times. No such permit shall be transferable.
- (b) Every person holding such a permit shall give notice in writing to the commissioner of licenses and inspections within 24 hours after having sold, transferred, given away or otherwise disposed of ownership of, interest in, or control of any hotel or rooming house. Such notice shall include the name and address of the person succeeding to the ownership or control of such hotel or rooming house. The new owner or operator of a hotel or a rooming house shall also notify the commissioner of licenses and inspections within ten days of any transfer of such hotel or rooming house to the new owner. Every hotel permit and every rooming house permit shall expire at the end of one year following its date of issuance, unless sooner suspended or revoked as provided by this article.

(Code 1968, § 34-71)

Sec. 34-337. - Application generally.

The application for a hotel permit or a rooming house permit as required by this article shall be made on forms furnished by the department of licenses and inspections. Such application shall include:

- (1) The name and address of the operator and the name and address of the owner if the operator is not the owner.
- (2) The location of the hotel or rooming house including the street and number of each entrance.
- (3) The number of hotel units or rooming units occupied or available for occupancy and the number of persons who may be accommodated in accordance with the occupancy provisions of this chapter and with the provisions of other applicable municipal ordinances and regulations.
- (4) Such other information as the commissioner of licenses and inspections may require.

(Code 1968, § 34-72)

Sec. 34-338. - Fire marshal's certificate to accompany application.

Every applicant for a hotel permit or a rooming house permit as required by this article shall procure from the fire marshal a certificate to the effect that the buildings and premises for which the permit is desired are free from fire hazards and comply with all provisions of chapter 12 and other fire laws, ordinances and rules and regulations applicable thereto and designed for fire

protection and control. Such certificate shall be filed with the commissioner of licenses and inspections at the time the application for a permit is made.

(Code 1968, § 34-73)

Sec. 34-339. - Application fees.

Accompanying the application for a rooming house permit or a hotel permit, as required by this article, there shall be an initial application fee in the amount of \$10.00 for the initial application plus \$5.00 for each rooming unit within a rooming house and \$5.00 for each hotel unit within a hotel. There shall be no annual renewal fees.

(Code 1968, § 34-74)

Sec. 34-340. - Hearing upon denial of application.

Any person whose application for a permit to operate a hotel or a rooming house has been denied may request and shall be granted a hearing on the matter before the board of licenses and inspections review under the procedure provided by section 34-34.

(Code 1968, § 34-75)

Sec. 34-341. - Issuance generally.

A hotel permit or a rooming house permit shall be issued by the commissioner of licenses and inspections to the operator or owner upon reasonable proof:

- (1) That the hotel or rooming house complies with the applicable provisions of this chapter and with the rules and regulations issued thereunder and with other applicable municipal ordinances and regulations; and
- (2) That a certificate of occupancy and a certificate of zoning have been issued by the department of licenses and inspections pursuant to the provisions of chapter 48 of this Code.

(Code 1968, § 34-73)

Sec. 34-342. - Effect of issuance.

The issuance of a hotel permit or a rooming house permit under this article shall not in any way signify or imply that the hotel or rooming house conforms with the zoning ordinance of the city, the building code of the city or other municipal or state regulations.

(Code 1968, § 34-77)

Sec. 34-343. - Procedure for suspension.

Whenever upon inspection of any hotel or rooming house the enforcement officer finds that conditions or practices exist which are in violation of any provision of this chapter or of any rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto, the enforcement officer shall give notice in writing to the operator of such hotel or rooming house that unless such conditions or practices are corrected within a reasonable period, to be determined by the enforcement officer, the operator's hotel permit or rooming house permit will be suspended. At the end of such period the enforcement officer shall reinspect such hotel or rooming house, and if he finds that such conditions or practices have not been corrected, he shall give notice in writing to the operator that the latter's permit has been suspended. Upon receipt of notice of suspension, such operator shall immediately cease operation of such hotel or rooming house, and no person shall occupy for sleeping or living purposes any hotel unit or rooming unit therein.

(Code 1968, § 34-78)

EXHIBIT B

Chapter 34 — HOUSING AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE CODE¹¹

Footnotes:

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Charter reference— General powers of city, § 1-102.

Cross reference— Buildings and building regulations, ch. 4; businesses, ch. 5; regulation of owners, operators or lessors of mobile homes or mobile home lots, § 5-100; consumer protection, ch. 9.

State Law reference— Landlord-tenant code, 25 Del. C. § 5101 et seq.; Delaware State Housing Code, 31 Del. C. § 4101 et seq.

ARTICLE I. - IN GENERAL

Sec. 34-1. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Basement means a portion of a building located partly underground, but having 3½ feet or more of its floor-to-ceiling height above the average level of the adjacent finished grade.

Building means a structure enclosed with exterior walls or fire walls, built, erected, or framed of component structural parts, designed for the housing shelter, enclosure or support of individuals, animals or property of any kind. When used herein “building” and “structure” shall be interchangeable except where the context clearly indicates otherwise.

Cellar means a portion of a building located partly or wholly underground, and having less than 3½ feet of its floor-to-ceiling height above the average level of the adjacent finished grade.

Civil fine shall mean a fine of \$250 unless another amount is specified in this Chapter. Where the Code provides alternative penalties or remedies, civil fines shall be cumulative and the imposition of any civil fines shall not prevent the appropriate City agency from invoking any other penalty or remedy provided for in the Code.

Dwelling means any house or building or portion thereof which is used or intended to be used in whole or in part as a home, residence or sleeping place of one or more human beings, either permanently or transiently.

Dwelling unit means any room or group of rooms located within a dwelling and forming a single habitable unit with facilities which are used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking and eating, including a mobile home for single-family use which meets the requirements of the building and zoning codes.

Enforcement officer means the commissioner of licenses and inspections of the department of licenses and inspections of the city or his authorized representatives.

Extermination means the control and elimination of insects; rodents or other pests by eliminating their harborage places; by removing or making inaccessible materials that may serve

as their food; by poisoning, spraying, fumigating, trapping; or by any other recognized and legal pest elimination methods approved by the enforcement officer.

Family means one adult occupant plus one or more persons who are legally related to such occupant as husband or wife, son or daughter, mother or father, mother-in-law or father-in-law, brother or sister, or any foster child or ward.

Garbage means animal and vegetable waste resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking and consumption of food.

Habitable room means a room or enclosed floor space used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking or eating purposes, excluding bathrooms, water closet compartments, laundries, pantries, foyers or communicating corridors, closets and storage spaces.

Hotel means any dwelling, or that part of any dwelling, in which sleeping accommodations are offered for pay by the owner or operator to four or more persons who are transients.

Hotel unit means any room or group of rooms forming a single habitable unit used or intended to be used for living and sleeping in a hotel, but not for cooking.

Infestation means the presence, within or around a dwelling, of any insects, rodents or other pests.

Multiple dwelling means any dwelling containing more than one dwelling unit.

Occupant means any person, over one year of age, living, sleeping, cooking or eating in, or having actual possession of, a dwelling unit or rooming unit.

Operator means any person who has charge, care or control of a building, or part thereof, in which dwelling units or rooming units are let.

Owner means any person who, alone or jointly or severally with others, shall have:

- (1) Legal title to any dwelling or dwelling unit, with or without accompanying actual possession thereof; or
- (2) Charge, care or control of any dwelling or dwelling unit, as owner or agent of the owner, or as executor, executrix, administrator, administratrix, trustee or guardian of the estate of the owner. Any such person thus representing the actual owner shall be bound to comply with the provisions of this chapter, and of rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, to the same extent as if he were the owner.

Plumbing means all of the following supplied facilities and equipment: gas pipes, gas-burning equipment, water pipes, garbage disposal units, waste pipes, water closets, sinks, installed dishwashers, lavatories, bathtubs, shower baths, installed clothes-washing machines, catchbasins, drains, vents and any other similar supplied fixtures, together with all connections to water, sewer or gas lines.

Premises means a lot, piece or parcel of land including the buildings or structures thereon.

Rental dwelling unit means any room or group of rooms located within one or more buildings and forming a single habitable unit with facilities which are used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking and eating, and which is let or rented to another for the purpose of living therein. Rental property shall have the same meaning as rental dwelling unit.

Remediation costs shall mean any and all costs and expenses incurred by the City of Wilmington to eliminate or remedy a violation of this chapter, including but not limited to, any demolition costs or repair costs.

Rooming house means any dwelling, or part thereof, containing four or more rooming units designed to be used for sleeping accommodations and to be let, for compensation, by the owner or operator thereof to four or more persons who are not husband or wife, son or daughter, mother or father, sister or brother, father-in-law or mother-in-law of the operator or owner.

Rooming unit means any room or group of rooms forming a single habitable unit used or intended to be used for living and sleeping, but not for cooking or eating purposes.

Rubbish means combustible and noncombustible waste materials, except garbage; and such term shall include paper, rags, cartons, boxes, wood, excelsior, rubber, leather, tree branches, yard trimmings, tin cans, metals, mineral matter, glass, crockery and dust, and the residue from the burning of wood, coal, coke and other combustible material.

Structure means an object or other construction created by the combination of materials for the purpose of occupancy, use or ornamentation, whether installed on, above or below the surface of a parcel of land, provided the word "structure" shall be construed when used herein as though followed by the phrase "or part or parts thereof and all equipment therein," unless the context clearly requires a different meaning.

Supplied means paid for, furnished or provided by, or under the control of, the owner or operator.

Unfit dwelling or *dwelling unit* means any dwelling or dwelling unit which:

- (1) — Is so damaged, decayed, dilapidated, unsanitary, difficult to heat, unsafe or vermin-infested that it creates a hazard to the health or welfare of the occupants or the community;
- (2) — Lacks illumination, ventilation or sanitary facilities adequate to protect the health or welfare of the public; or
- (3) — Because of its general condition or location is unsanitary or otherwise dangerous to the health or welfare of the occupants or the public.

Whenever the words "dwelling," "dwelling unit," "rooming house," "rooming unit," "hotel," "hotel unit" and "premises," are used in this chapter, they shall be construed as though they were followed by the words "or any part thereof."

Vacant means a building or structure for which no person or persons actually, currently conducts a lawfully licensed business, or lawfully resides or lives in any part of the building as the legal or equitable owner(s) or tenant-occupant(s), or owner-occupants, or tenant(s) on a permanent, nontransient basis.

Week means a seven day period.

(Code 1968, § 34-1)

Cross reference— Definitions and rules of construction generally, § 1-2.

Sec. 34-2. - Compliance required.

All repairs, additions, alterations or replacements to structures, dwellings, dwelling units or premises to bring such structures, dwellings, dwelling units or premises into compliance with this chapter shall conform to all provisions of this Code and other city ordinances and regulations governing the construction, replacement, repair or alteration of such structures, dwellings, dwelling units and premises and the facilities and equipment contained therein.

(Code 1968, § 34-2)

Sec. 34-3. - Construction of chapter—Authority of city relative to nuisances.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed or interpreted to in any way impair or limit the authority of the city or any department or agency thereof to define and declare nuisances and to cause the removal or abatement of nuisances by appropriate proceedings as provided by law.

(Code 1968, § 34-12)

Sec. 34-4. - Same—Other city regulations.

- (a) — The provisions of this chapter shall not be construed to abrogate the responsibility of any person to comply with the other provisions of this Code and any other zoning, building, fire, safety, electrical, plumbing or public health ordinance or regulation of the city.
- (b) — In any case where a provision of this chapter is found to be in conflict with any other provision of this Code or with a provision of any zoning, building, fire, safety, electrical, plumbing or public health ordinance of this city ~~existing on July 3, 1962~~, the provision which establishes the higher standard for the promotion and protection of the health and safety of the people shall prevail.

(Code 1968, § 34-13)

Sec. 34-5. - Right of access of owner, etc., for purposes of making required repairs, etc.

Every occupant of a structure, dwelling or dwelling unit shall give the owner thereof, or his agent or employee, access to any part of such structure, dwelling or dwelling unit, or its premises, at all reasonable times for the purpose of making such repairs or alterations as are necessary to effect compliance with the provisions of this chapter or with any lawful rule or regulation adopted or any lawful order issued pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-3)

Sec. 34-6. - Reprisals against tenant for reporting violations prohibited.

- (a) — No owner, landlord, firm or corporation or any agent, officer or employee thereof shall threaten to take reprisals against any tenant for reporting or complaining of the existence or belief of the existence of any building maintenance, housing, health, sanitary or building code violation to any governmental authority.

(b) — Receipt of a notice to quit the leased premises without cause within 90 days after making such report or complaint shall create a rebuttable presumption that such notice is a reprisal against the tenant for making such report or complaint.

(Code 1968, § 34-7.1)

Sec. 34-7. - Unlawful lease-purchase practices.

(a) — It shall be unlawful for any owner to accept or retain any deposit of sums of money pursuant to any purported installment contract of sale, or any purported rental with an option to buy, or any purported lease-purchase of any dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming house in the city from any person in the absence of a duly executed written agreement for the same. It shall further be unlawful for any owner to refuse to make full refund of any deposit of sums of money paid by any person for such purported purposes in the absence of a duly executed written agreement for the same or to refuse to any such person occupancy of the subject premises without making full refund of any such deposit.

(b) — Complaints by any persons alleging violations of the provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall be filed with the office of the commissioner of licenses and inspections for investigation and prosecution in the municipal court.

(c) — Any owner violating the provisions of this section shall upon conviction thereof before the municipal court be fined an amount up to \$500.00 and liable for each such violation plus the Civil Fine and any applicable remediation costs of prosecution and shall make full restitution of any and all deposits of money paid to such owner by any person in violation of this section.

(Code 1968, § 34-17.2)

Sec. 34-8. - Proof of state of mind not required for strict liability violations.

It is unnecessary to prove the defendant's state of mind with regard to offenses under this chapter which constitute violations as the legislative purpose is to impose strict liability for such offenses.

(Ord. No. 94-002, § 6, 2-24-94)

Sec. 34-9. — Violations and penalties; community service.

Upon conviction of any person for any violation of the provisions of this chapter, the judicial sentencing official may prescribe a certain number of hours of community service to be provided by the convicted person to the city's department of public works in street cleaning activities for any such housing code violation, the penalty for which is a fine of no less than \$250.00 and no more than \$1,000.00 for the first offense; no less than \$500.00 and no more than \$2,500.00 for the second offense; and no less than \$1,000.00 and no more than \$5,000.00 for the third and subsequent offenses; said hours of community service to be either in addition to such fine or in lieu of such fine as the sentencing official deems appropriate. The department of public

~~works shall coordinate the administration of this section with the state office of probation and parole.~~

(Ord. No. 98-098, § 2, 9-30-98; Ord. No. 03-075(sub 1), § 13, 12-1-03)

Secs. 34-109—34-35. - Reserved.

ARTICLE II. - ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

DIVISION 1. - GENERALLY

Sec. 34-36. - Enforcement generally; initiation of prosecution for violations.

- (a) — This chapter shall be enforced by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his authorized representatives or designees in the department of licenses and inspections, and the commissioner of licenses and inspections or any such authorized representative shall initiate criminal prosecutions for violations in the manner and form provided by law.
- (b) — The department of licenses and inspections shall maintain records relating to the inspection of each property and shall make available to the office of the city solicitor such records for purposes of review and use as evidence in prosecutions for violations and the administration and enforcement of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-9)

Sec. 34-37. - Violations and penalties generally.

- (a) — Except as otherwise specifically provided by this chapter and subsection (d) of this section, any person violating any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based on the provisions of this chapter or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections and approved by resolution of the city council for the enforcement or implementation of this chapter, or violating any provision of this chapter, or any provision of any such rule or regulation, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$250.00 for each ~~period of one to seven days of each~~ offense of violating such order, or provision of this chapter, or provision of such rule or regulation up to a maximum fine of \$1,000.00 for each such offense, together with the costs and disbursements of prosecution, ~~or by imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment, for the first conviction.~~ For any conviction of a violation that is the second conviction for the same violation as a previous violation which has not been corrected, the minimum fine for any person or corporation shall be not less than \$500.00 nor more than \$2,500.00; for the third conviction not less than \$1,000.00 nor more than \$5,000.00, which shall not be suspended; for the fourth conviction \$1,500.00; for the fifth and subsequent conviction of the same violation that still has not been corrected, the minimum fine for each conviction shall be not less than \$5,000.00, which shall not be suspended. Upon conviction of a violation of this chapter, the court may order the defendant to correct the violation by a date certain. If the defendant fails to correct the violation by the court ordered date, the court may impose a fine

of \$50.00 per day to be calculated from the date of conviction to the date by which the court had ordered the violation to be corrected.

- (b) After conviction and punishment for violation of such order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this chapter or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections and approved by resolution of the city council for the enforcement or implementation of this chapter, if such person shall continue in violation of such order, such person shall be liable for further prosecution, conviction and punishment upon such same order, without any necessity of the commissioner of licenses and inspections issuing a new order until such order has been complied with. ~~Any notice herein required shall, if mailed, be deemed to be effective upon mailing. When done in conjunction with certified or registered mail service, a copy of the notice may be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises and such a procedure shall be deemed the equivalent of personal service.~~
- (c) ~~Each day's~~ week's failure to comply with any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this chapter or the provisions of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections and approved by resolution of the city council for the enforcement and implementation of this chapter, and each ~~day's~~ week's failure to comply with any provision of this chapter or any such rule or regulation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense and be punishable as such.
- (d) Pursuant to title 25, chapter 29 of the Delaware Code, any fines imposed by any court for violations of this chapter shall give rise to a lien(s). ~~The(d)~~ With respect to vacant properties and rental dwelling units only, any person owning a vacant property or a rental dwelling unit who violates any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based on the provisions of this chapter or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement or implementation of this chapter, or violating any provision of this chapter, or any provision of any such rule or regulation shall be immediately subject to and liable for a civil fine of \$250 for such violation and any applicable remediation costs. Each week's failure following any applicable cure period to comply with any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this chapter or the provisions of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement and implementation of this chapter, and each week's failure following any applicable cure period to comply with any provision of this chapter or any such rule or regulation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense and be punishable by a fine in the same amount. Pursuant to title 25, chapter 29 of the Delaware Code, any civil fine imposed pursuant to the provisions of this subsection shall give rise to a lien. Any unpaid amounts of such fines may be added to local property tax billings for the property which was the subject of said violation. "Fines" shall also include any violations. A civil judgment entered fine authorized pursuant to section 4104 of title 11 of the Delaware Code this subsection shall not apply to owner occupied properties.

(Code 1968, § 34-8; Ord. No. 96-020, § 2, 4-12-96; Ord. No. 98-124, § 2, 10-19-98; Ord. No. 99-082(sub 1), § 3, 11-4-99; Ord. No. 99-008, § 3, 5-17-01; Ord. No. 03-075(sub 1), § 14, 12-4-03)

Sec. 34-38. - Notice of violation—Warning -- Contents, service, appeals.

- (a) Whenever the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee determines that there has been a violation, or that there are reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a violation, of any provision of this chapter or of any rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto, he shall give notice of such violation or alleged violation to the person responsible therefor. Such notice shall:
- (1) Be put in writing;
 - (2) Include a description of the real estate sufficient for identification;
 - (3) Include a statement of the reason why it is being issued; and
 - (4) Allow at least 4530 days from the date of such notice for the performance of any act it requires, unless otherwise provided in this chapter or in the event that the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee determines that a lesser period of time less than 45 days is essential to protect the health, safety or welfare of the occupants or of occupants of an adjacent property; or the dwelling is deemed unfit for habitation, in which case 3 days are required for the performance of any act it requires.
- (b) The notice of violation shall be served upon the owner or the operator or the occupant, as the case may require. Such notice shall be deemed to be properly served upon such owner or upon such operator or upon such occupant by mailing a copy thereof by either mail service or other form of delivery to his last known address both the property address and such other address(es) that have been designated for the receipt of property tax bills for such property, or if the letter with the copy is returned with a note showing it has not been delivered to him, by posting a copy thereof in a conspicuous place on or about the dwelling affected by the notice. of violation. The commissioner of licenses and inspections may in his discretion require such notice to be served by delivering a copy thereof personally to such owner or such operator or such occupant or by leaving a copy thereof at his usual residence in the presence of someone in the residence of suitable age and discretion who shall be informed of the contents thereof, as the circumstances may require. Any notice herein required shall, if mailed, be deemed to be effective upon the earlier to occur of five business days following the date of its mailing, the date of actual delivery or the date of posting on the property. When done in conjunction with certified or registered mail service, a copy of the notice may be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises and such a procedure shall be deemed the equivalent of personal service.
- (c) Such notice shall provide that the persons so notified The owner, operator or occupant may appeal the violation notice to the board of license and inspection review. The appeal shall be in writing and filed within tentwenty calendar days after the receipt of the notice of violation notice. Any appeal to the board of license and inspection review shall be accompanied with a nonrefundable fee of \$50.00 at the time of filing with a fee of \$50.00 which shall be refunded if the appeal is successful. The board of license and inspection review shall hear and decide appeals in accordance with its duly prescribed and promulgated rules, regulations and procedures.
- (d) Any owner, operator or occupant, as the case may require, who does not appeal the notice and does not perform the act or acts required under the notice, or who unsuccessfully appeals the notice and does not perform the act or acts required under the notice within the

prescribed time period is in violation of this chapter and may be penalized pursuant to section 34-37.

(Code 1968, § 34-18(a)—(f); Ord. No. 91-082, § 1, 11-21-91; Ord. No. 95-074, § 1, 12-14-95; Ord. No. 96-077, § 1, 12-5-96; Ord. No. 98-124, § 2, 10-19-98)

Sec. 34-39. - Same—When not required.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter to the contrary, whenever any person fails to obtain the prerental~~rental~~ inspection of any dwelling, habitation or living unit as required by the provisions of section 34-45(a) or the limitation of occupancy notification required by section 34-86, no notice of such violation of section 34-45(a) and section 34-86 shall be required, before civil fines are imposed or legal proceedings, actions or prosecutions are brought.

(Code 1968, § 34-18(g); Ord. No. 96-077, § 1, 12-5-96)

Sec. 34-40. -Issuance of warnings~~Deleted~~.

- (a) ~~At the discretion of the commissioner of licenses and inspections or any of his designees who are authorized by the commissioner to do so, a written warning may be issued on a form approved by the commissioner and the city solicitor to the owner, agent, or person in control of any building or structure concerning violations of any provision of this chapter that is not a life threatening violation. If any violation concerning which any warning has been issued has not been corrected within the time allowed, then the department of licenses and inspections shall proceed to obtain compliance as provided in this chapter.~~
- (b) ~~Such notice may contain an outline of remedial action which, if taken, will effect compliance with the provisions of this chapter and with rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto.~~
- (c) ~~Whenever repairs, additions, alterations or replacements are required to the building or facilities, such notice shall direct that the person in violation shall make application to the department of licenses and inspections for a building permit to cover such requirements.~~

(Code 1968, § 34-18(h))

Sec. 34-41. - Inspection of structures, buildings, dwellings, etc., generally; right of entry of enforcement officer.

- (a) ~~The enforcement officer is hereby authorized and directed to make inspections to determine the condition of structures, buildings, dwellings, dwelling units, hotel units, rooming units and premises located within this city, in order that he may perform his duty of safeguarding the health and safety of the occupants of dwellings~~structures~~ and the general public. For the purpose of making such inspections the enforcement officer is hereby authorized to enter, examine and survey between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. all structures, buildings, dwellings, dwelling units, hotel units, rooming units and premises. The owner or occupant of every structure, building, dwelling, dwelling unit, hotel unit, and rooming unit, or the person in charge thereof, shall give the enforcement officer free access~~

to such structure, building, dwelling, dwelling unit, hotel unit or rooming unit and its premises during such time for the purpose of such inspection, examination and survey; provided, that such inspection, examination or survey shall not have for its purpose the undue harassment of such owner or occupant and that such inspection, examination or survey shall be made so as to cause the least amount of inconvenience to such owner or occupant consistent with the efficient performance of the duties of the enforcement officer.

- (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the entry of the enforcement officer:
- (1) At any time when an actual emergency which tends to create an immediate danger to public safety exists; or
 - (2) At any time when such an inspection, examination or survey may be requested by such owner or occupant.
- (c) Any person who opposes or impedes an officer or authorized agent or employee of the department of licenses and inspections in the execution of his duty under this chapter shall be deemed guilty of a violation of this chapter. In addition, if an officer or authorized agent or employee of the department of licenses and inspections is denied entrance to a building for purposes of inspection, he may, upon showing of probable cause, obtain a warrant for purposes of entering and inspecting the building, dwelling, land or premises.

(Code 1968, § 34-6; Ord. No. 94-002, § 5, 2-24-94)

Charter reference— Inspections generally, §§ 5-704, 8-412.

Sec. 34-42. —Owner of rental units to designate responsible agent. Deleted.

- (a) ~~In addition to, and not in lieu of any other provision of this Code, the tenants lawfully occupying any single family rental property shall be responsible for the tasks enumerated below and the owner of every residential dwelling that consists of two or more rental dwelling units therein shall be required to designate an agent, who may be one of the residents thereof, who shall be responsible for the following tasks:~~
- (1) ~~The removal of empty refuse and garbage collection receptacles or containers from the public right of way to a secure location on the property following all regular trash and garbage collections.~~
 - (2) ~~The prompt removal of litter and trash from the premises of the property and from the area of the public right of way abutting the property and the sweeping of sidewalks within and along such property.~~
 - (3) ~~The keeping of all sidewalks along the property clear of snow and ice as required in section 42-419.~~
- (b) ~~The owner of each such property shall file annually with the department of licenses and inspections and post in clear public view in the lobby or other common area of all such dwellings the name, address and telephone number of such designated agent or, in the case of a single family rental property, file such information concerning the tenants with the department.~~

(e) The provisions of this section and the responsibility of tenants of single family rental properties and the designation by an owner of an agent pursuant to this section shall not be construed to abrogate the legal responsibilities of the owner to comply with the provisions of this chapter and other provisions of this Code.

(Code 1968, § 34-11.1)

Sec. 34-43. - No inspection of property prior to sale or other transfer to be required.

(a) — No inspection of any dwelling, dwelling unit, hotel, or rooming house in the city shall be required nor shall any inspection be performed by the department of licenses and inspection for enforcement or implementation of the provisions of this chapter and the rules and regulations of the department prior to or in connection with any agreement of sale or conveyance or other transfer of any such property. This provision shall not affect inspections other than those heretofore required in connection with the sale or other transfer of property.

(b) — The provisions of this section shall not be construed as in any way a limitation upon or modification of any of the other inspection, notice, compliance and enforcement provisions of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-17)

Sec. 34-44. - Recordation of certain agreements of sale; responsibility of seller for violations.

(a) — Whenever an agreement of sale is entered into containing provisions for the retention of legal title by the seller and providing for deferred installment payments by the buyer for the sale of any dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming house or hotel in the city, the seller shall record such agreement in the county recorder's office.

(b) — The responsibility for complying with this chapter shall not be affected by such sales agreement. The seller shall remain responsible for code violation compliance imposed upon the owner or person in charge and the buyer shall have the burden of assuming the tenant's responsibilities enumerated in this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-17.1)

Sec. 34-45. - Inspections of rented or leased dwellings or buildings for residential occupancy, to include installment sales; no warranty of condition.

(a) — *Inspection of a rental dwelling or building.* Any person who leases or rents any dwelling or any dwelling unit, regardless of whether that person has a valid rental dwelling business license, shall:

(1) — Cause cause the same to be inspected by the commissioner of licenses and inspections, or his designee every twothree years for each dwelling or building consisting of five or fewer units. An initial rental inspection shall be required for each such dwelling or building consistent with a rental inspection schedule set by the commissioner of licenses and inspections. The twothree-year period referenced in this subsection shall be

calculated based upon the rental inspection schedule set by the commissioner of licenses and inspections. Inspections of dwellings or buildings required under this subsection may consist of a random sampling of units in the dwelling or building as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee. ~~The purpose of all rental inspections shall be enforcement of the provisions of the City Code concerning life safety items which include, but are not limited to: smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, heating sources, hot water sources, electrical systems, sanitary disposal sources, water damage, roofs and means of egress and ingress:~~

(2) Cause the same to be inspected by the commissioner of licenses and inspections, or his designee every five years for each dwelling or building consisting of six or more units. An initial rental inspection shall be required for each such dwelling or building consistent with a rental inspection schedule set by the commissioner of licenses and inspections. The five year period referenced in this subsection shall be calculated based upon the rental inspection schedule set by the commissioner of licenses and inspections. Inspections of dwellings or buildings required under this subsection may consist of a random sampling of units in the dwelling or building as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee. The purpose of all rental inspections shall be enforcement of the provisions of the City Code concerning life safety items which include, but are not limited to: smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, heating sources, hot water sources, electrical systems, sanitary disposal sources, water damage, roofs and means of egress and ingress. The provisions of this section shall apply to the lease or rental of any dwelling or dwelling unit whether it is to be leased to the current tenant or to a new tenant and whether the same is to be done by the current owner or a new owner.

(3) With the exception of the initial rental(1) If an inspection, a waiver of a subsequent rental inspection required under subsections (1) and (2) above may be granted by reveals the building has no violations, the commissioner of licenses and inspections if allmay extend the following conditions are present:

- a. The dwelling or building has no outstanding violations of the building, housing, sanitation, vegetation, animal, zoning or licensing provisions of the City Code at the time the waiver is requested;
- b. The property owner and/or property manager has not been convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to, or assessed a civil penalty for any violations of the building, housing, sanitation, vegetation, animal, zoning or licensing provisions of the City Code within the applicable two or five-year inspection period preceding the waiver request;
- c. The dwelling or building has not been the subject of a notice declaring said dwelling or building to be unfit for human habitation by the department of licenses and inspections within the applicable two or five-year period preceding the waiver request;
- d. The property owner and, if applicable, the property manager, is properly registered and licensed by the department of licenses and inspections; and
- e. The property owner and, if applicable, the property manager, are in good standing with regard to any city financial obligations.

~~A waiver must be requested by the owner of the property, or if applicable, the property manager, each time a rental required under this subsection for a subsequent inspection is required. A request for waiver must be in writing and on a form provided by the department of licenses and inspections from three years to four years.~~

(4) ~~(2)~~ If the dwelling unit is unoccupied at the time of the rental inspection, cause any violations cited during the rental inspection ~~to shall~~ be corrected prior to permitting any tenant or lessee or any other persons to occupy such dwelling or dwelling unit. If the dwelling unit is occupied at the time of the rental inspection, cause any violations cited during the rental inspection ~~to shall~~ be corrected within the time period designated by the commissioner of the department of licenses and Inspections or his designee, and ~~the property owner shall~~ cause the dwelling unit to be re-inspected upon correction of the violation(s).

~~The provisions of this section shall apply to the lease or rental of any dwelling or dwelling unit whether it is to be leased to the current tenant or to a new tenant and whether the same is to be done by the current owner or a new owner. In any instance in which a tenant remains in possession during a change in ownership by sale, exchange or any other transfer, the prerental inspection requirements of this chapter shall be applicable and shall be given full force and effect, and any violations cited shall be corrected within a reasonable period of time as shall be determined at the sole discretion of the commissioner of licenses and inspections.~~

(b) *Installment sales.* Whenever any person sells any dwelling, dwelling unit, building or rooming house in the city wherein there is a retention of title by the seller and a deferred installment payment plan is set forth in the contract or lease agreement, the seller shall comply with the inspection requirements of subsection (a) of this section and the provisions of section 34-43 shall not be applicable to any such seller of property who or which is subject to the provisions of this subsection.

(c) *Disclaimer of warranty of condition.* Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as any manner of warranty or guarantee by the city or by its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, that any particular property at any particular time fully complies with the provisions of this chapter and all rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto or that any violations of this chapter and the rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto cited by the department of licenses and inspections are necessarily the only violations existing in or upon a particular property at any particular time or that corrections of violations of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto which have been cited by the department of licenses and inspections are necessarily full and complete corrections such that no other violations exist in or upon any particular property at any particular time.

(d) *Fee.* If more than one re-inspection is necessary to determine compliance with any violation cited during the initial rental inspection, an additional fee in the amount of \$250.00 will be assessed for each re-inspection, commencing with a second re-inspection. Said re-inspection fee may be waived for good cause shown at the discretion of the code enforcement officer.

(e) *Condition of business license.* Compliance with the requirements of this section is a condition of a rental dwelling unit business license issued pursuant to chapter 5, sec. 5-92.

(Code 1968, § 34-17.3; Ord. No. 99-083(sub 1), § 1, 11-4-99; Ord. No. 06-016(sub 1), § 1, 4-6-06)

Secs. 34-46—34-60. - Reserved.

DIVISION 2. - DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS

Sec. 34-61. - Power and duty of department—Specific functions enumerated.

The department of licenses and inspections shall be the department primarily responsible for the administration and enforcement of this chapter. In that regard, it shall:

- (1) (1)—Maintain code enforcement performance records and prepare management reports;
 - (a) On a quarterly basis, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall provide a report to the City Council committee charged with oversight of the department. Such report shall include information related to the results of rental inspections performed and any other information the commissioner believes should be included;
- (2) — Maintain files for all housing code enforcement inspections;
- (3) — Conduct housing inspections in response to citizen complaints to the extent possible;
- (4) — Conduct systematic housing inspections ~~in designated community development target areas~~;
- (5) — Supervise the conduct of all city-sponsored demolition activities;
- (6) — Conduct ~~pre~~rental inspections;
 - (a) As it relates to rental inspections conducted pursuant to sec. 34-45, a minimum of 1500 units located on separate parcels shall be inspected annually.
- (7) — Conduct sanitation code enforcement inspections;
- (8) — Conduct building inspections for all privately financed construction;
- (9) — Conduct all final inspections of properties involved in rehabilitation loan and grant programs; and
- (10) — Whenever conducting any code enforcement inspection, distribute information regarding the housing assistance programs of the city ~~and rental programs to owner occupants and tenant occupants~~.

(Code 1968, § 34-3.1)

Sec. 34-62. - Same—Generally; inspection not to imply warranty.

- (a) — The department of licenses and inspections is hereby granted the sole and exclusive power and duty to enforce and administer the provisions of this chapter and all rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

- (b) — The commissioner of licenses and inspections shall require that the language of disclaimer be printed beneath a heading in boldface print of "DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY" on all notices of violations, orders and letters of compliance issued by the department of licenses and inspections.
- (c) — Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as in any way a warranty or guarantee by the city or its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, that:
- (1) — Any particular property is at any particular time in full and complete compliance with the provisions of this building maintenance and housing code or with the provisions of any other state or municipal statutes, ordinances, rules or regulations.
 - (2) — A particular property which has been cited for a particular violation of the housing code does not at any particular time have other violations of this housing code or of any other state or municipal statute, ordinance, rule or regulation.
 - (3) — A property where corrections of violations of this building maintenance and housing code have been satisfactorily made does not have at any particular time other violations of this building maintenance and housing code or of any other state or municipal statute, ordinance, rule or regulation which has not been cited.
- (d) — Neither the city nor its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, warrants or guarantees and the city and its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, hereby expressly disclaim any warranty or guarantee of the condition of any particular property at any particular time. The condition of any property and its compliance with the provisions of this chapter and with any other state or municipal statute, ordinance rule or regulation shall at all times be the responsibility of the owner or his legal agent.

(Code 1968, § 34-4)

Sec. 34-63. - Rules and regulations.

The department of licenses and inspections is hereby authorized and empowered to adopt rules and regulations necessary for the proper enforcement of this chapter; provided, that any such rules and regulations are approved by ~~resolution of the council~~City's administrative board. Such rules and regulations adopted by such department and approved by the ~~council~~City's administrative board shall have the same force and effect as the provisions of this chapter, and the penalty for violation thereof shall be the same as the penalty for violation of the provisions of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-5)

Sec. 34-64. - Liability of officers, etc., of department of licenses and inspections.

No member, officer or agent of the department of licenses and inspections shall be sued or held to liability for any act done or omitted in good faith and with ordinary discretion on behalf of or under such department or pursuant to the charter of the city or any statutes, ordinances or rules and regulations under which such department has authority to act.

(Code 1968, § 34-7)

State Law reference— Tort immunity of local officials, 10 Del. C. § 4011.

Sec. 34-65. -Emergency—Emergencies and emergency orders.

(a) Whenever the commissioner of licenses and inspections finds that an emergency exists with respect to a building, structure or other property condition which requires immediate action to protect the public health or safety, he may, without notice or hearing, issue an order reciting the existence of such an emergency and requiring that such action be taken as he deems necessary to meet address the emergency. Notwithstanding the other provisions of this chapter, such order shall be effective immediately. Any person to whom such order is directed shall comply therewith immediately.

(b) When, in the opinion of the building official, there is an actual and immediate danger of collapse or failure of a building or structure or any part thereof that would endanger life or public health or safety, the code official shall cause the necessary work to be done, whether it be by demolition, shoring or other method as determined by the building official, in order to render such building or structure, or part thereof, temporarily or permanently safe, whether or not the legal procedure herein prescribed has been instituted.

(c) Following the performance of any work by the city or its designee to address an emergency that exists with respect to a building, structure or other property condition, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall provide a notice to the owner or owners of the applicable building, structure or real property that describes the work that was performed.

(d) Any amounts incurred by the City or its designee to address an emergency that exists with respect to a building, structure or other property condition, along with legal interest accrued thereon from the date of expenditure, shall be reimbursed to the city, on demand, by the person or persons who were the owner or owners of the applicable building, structure or real property at the time such work was commenced. The city may maintain an action of law in debt or assumpsit against the owner or owners to recover the sums of money so expended, plus lawful interest and costs.

(e) Any amounts incurred by the City or its designee to address an emergency that exists with respect to a building, structure or other property condition, along with legal interest accrued thereon from the date of expenditure, shall be a lien on the lands and premises on which such work was performed.

(Code 1968, § 34-24)

Sec. 34-66. - Right of commissioner to bring legal proceedings, etc.

No provision or requirement contained in this chapter for a hearing shall in any way whatsoever affect or impair the right of the commissioner of licenses and inspections or city solicitor, or their respective designees, to bring at any time such legal proceedings, actions or prosecutions as are otherwise permitted by law or ordinance. The invalidity of any provision of any section of this code as applied to existing buildings, dwellings, or dwelling units shall not be

held to affect the validity of such provision in its application to buildings, dwellings, or dwelling units erected after August 28, 1986.

(Code 1968, § 34-23)

Secs. 34-67—34-85. - Reserved.

DIVISION 3. - LIMITATION OF OCCUPANCY NOTIFICATION

AND RENTAL REGISTRATION

Sec. 34-86. - Limitation of occupancy notification and rental registration—Required.

- (a) — Upon approval and issuance of the business license required by section 5-34 for the renting or letting of dwelling units, the department of licenses and inspections shall inspect each dwelling unit for the purpose of determining the maximum permitted occupancy thereof in accordance with the applicable provisions of this chapter. The commissioner of licenses and inspections or his authorized representative shall issue to the owner or operator of the dwelling unit or units a limitation of occupancy notification stating the maximum occupancy permitted in each dwelling unit. The owner or operator shall not rent or let a dwelling unit until a limitation of occupancy notification is issued by the department of licenses and inspections for that unit.
- (b) — Such limitation of occupancy notification shall not be construed or interpreted as implying in any way that the particular dwelling or dwelling unit is in compliance or conformity with the provisions of this chapter or any rule or regulation for the enforcement or implementation of this chapter adopted by the department of licenses and inspections or any ordinance or other law or regulation of the city or the state.
- (c) — Any owner or operator who fails to obtain a business license required by section 5-34 or register a dwelling unit or who rents or lets to another a dwelling unit prior to the issuance of a limitation of occupancy notification shall be deemed guiltysubject to and liable for a civil fine of a misdemeanor as \$500.00 per rental unit. This provision supersedes the penalty provided in section 34-37.1-5.

(Code 1968, § 34-11; Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(a), 7-2-92; Ord. No. 96-014, § 1, 4-16-96; Ord. No. 03-074, § 4, 11-20-03)

Sec. 34-87. - Reserved.

Editor's note— Ord. No. 03-074, § 5, adopted Nov. 20, 2003, repealed section 34-87 in its entirety. Former section 34-87 pertained to application and fee for rental unit registration, and derived from the Code of 1968, § 34-14; Ord. No. 96-014, § 1, adopted April 16, 1996.

Sec. 34-88. - Same—Copy to be given to tenant.

The owner or operator of any dwelling or dwelling unit to whom a limitation of occupancy notification has been issued under the provisions of this division shall give the person to whom

the dwelling or dwelling unit is let or rented a copy of the notification at the time of letting or renting.

(Code 1968, § 34-16; Ord. No. 96-014, § 1, 4-16-96; Ord. No. 03-074, § 6, 11-20-03)

Secs. 34-89—34-110. - Reserved.

Editor's note— Ord. No. 03-074, § 7, adopted Nov. 20, 2003, repealed section 34-89 in its entirety. Former section 34-89 pertained to certificates submitted with application for registration, and derived from the Code of 1968, § 34-15.

DIVISION 4. - CONDEMNATION AND PLACARDING OF UNFIT DWELLINGS, ETC.

Sec. 34-111. - Compliance.

The designation of buildings, structures, dwellings or dwelling units as unfit for human habitation and the procedure for the condemnation and placarding of such buildings, structures, unfit dwellings or dwelling units shall be carried out in compliance with the requirements set forth in this division.

(Code 1968, § 34-25)

Sec. 34-112. —Grounds for Right of condemnation.

(a) — Any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall find to have any of the following defects shallmay be condemned as unfit for human habitation:

(1) — One which is so damaged, decayed, dilapidated, unsanitary, difficult to heat, unsafe or vermin-infested that it creates a hazard to the health or welfare of the occupants or of the public;

(2) — One which lacks illumination, ventilation or sanitary facilities adequate to protect the health or welfare of the occupants or of the public; or

(3) — One which, because of its general condition or location, is unsanitary or otherwise dangerous to the health or welfare of the occupants or of the public.

(4) One which lacks adequate exit facilities; or

(5) One which constitutes a fire hazard.

(b) — Any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit may be condemned as unfit for human habitation by the commissioner of licenses and inspections if the owner or occupant failsfails to comply with any order based on the provisions of this chapter or any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto; provided, that such building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit is, in the opinion of the commissioner of licenses and inspections unfit for human habitation by reason of such failure to comply.

(Code 1968, § 34-26)

Sec. 34-113. - Notice of condemnation and intent to placard.

Whenever the commissioner of licenses and inspections has condemned a building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit as unfit for human habitation, he shall give notice ~~to the owner~~ of such condemnation and ~~of his intent to~~ placard the dwelling or dwelling unit as unfit for human habitation ~~to the owner~~. Such notice shall:

- (1) — Be put in writing;
- (2) — Include a description of the real estate sufficient for identification;
- (3) — Include a statement of the reason why it is being issued;
- (4) — Include a description of the repairs and improvements required to bring the condemned building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit into compliance with the provisions of this chapter and any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto;
- (5) — Include an explanation of the owner's right to appeal the notice in accordance with the provisions of section 34-38; and
- (6) — Be served upon the owner; provided, that such notice shall be deemed to be properly served upon such owner if a copy thereof is delivered to him personally or if not found by leaving a copy thereof at his usual place of abode, in the presence of someone of the family of suitable age and discretion who shall be informed of the contents thereof, or by sending a copy thereof by registered mail with return receipt requested to his last known address, or, if the registered letter with the copy is returned with a receipt showing it has not been delivered to him by posting a copy thereof in a conspicuous place in or about the dwelling affected by the notice.

(Code 1968, § 34-27)

Sec. 34-114. - HearingAppeal.

Any~~The~~ owner affected by any notice relating to the condemnation of a building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit ~~as that has been condemned as being~~ unfit for human habitation may request and shall be granted a hearing on the matter before the board of licenses and inspections ~~review~~ appeal such determination as provided in section 34-38(c).

(Code 1968, § 34-28; Ord. No. 94-002, § 5, 2-24-94)

Sec. 34-115. - Placarding generally.

After the ~~condemnation notice which is required under the provisions of section 34-38 a~~ ~~building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit has resulted in an order been condemned as being~~ unfit for human habitation, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall ~~cause a~~ placard ~~the affected to be posted to such building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit as unfit for human~~ habitation. The commissioner of licenses and inspections shall post, in one or more conspicuous places upon the affected dwelling or dwelling unit, one or more placards, bearing the following words: "Condemned as Unfit for Human Habitation."

(Code 1968, § 34-29; Ord. No. 94-002, § 5, 2-24-94)

Sec. 34-116. - Vacation of structure, dwellings, etc., condemned and placarded.

- (a) — Any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as being unfit for human habitation by the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall be vacated within a reasonable time as required by such commissioner, but in any event not later than ten days after the property has been condemned and placarded. No owner or operator shall ~~let to permit~~ any person for human habitation and no person shall ~~to occupy~~ any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded by the commissioner of licenses and inspections after the date on which such commissioner has required the affected building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit to be vacated.
- (b) — Any owner or operator or tenant or any other person who occupies any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation by the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall do so entirely at that person's own risk. It shall be the duty of the owner or operator or the agent of the owner or operator to ensure that any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation is vacated and not occupied. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as in any manner imposing upon the city or its agent, the department of licenses and inspections, any liability whatsoever for the health or safety of any person who occupies or continues to occupy any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation.
- (c) — Any person who refuses to comply with an order of the commissioner of the department of licenses and inspections to vacate and continues to occupy any building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation, or any person who occupies any such building, structure, dwelling or dwelling unit after placarding, may be forcibly removed from the premises by the police department and the premises shall thereafter be closed. The premises shall not again be occupied ~~as-a dwelling place~~ until the defect(s) which caused the building, structure, or dwelling to be declared to be unfit is/are remedied and written approval of the commissioner is obtained.
- (d) Any violation of this Section 34-116 is subject to penalty pursuant to section 34-37 and any applicable remediation costs.

(Code 1968, § 34-30; Ord. No. 99-110, § 1, 10-21-99; Ord. No. 00-072, § 1, 10-19-00)

Sec. 34-117. - Use of condemned and placarded dwellings, etc.; removal of placard.

No structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned and placarded as unfit for human habitation shall again be used for human habitation until written approval is secured from, and such placard is removed by, the commissioner of licenses and inspections. The commissioner of licenses and inspections shall remove such placard whenever the defects upon which the condemnation and placarding action were based have been eliminated.

(Code 1968, § 34-31)

Sec. 34-118. - Unauthorized defacing or removal of placard.

No person shall deface or remove the placard from any structure, dwelling or dwelling unit which has been condemned as unfit for human habitation and placarded as such, except as provided in section 34-117.

(Code 1968, § 34-32)

Sec. 34-119. - Condemned dwellings declared nuisances, etc.

All structures and dwellings condemned as unfit for human habitation within the provisions of this chapter are hereby declared to be public nuisances and shall be repaired or vacated as provided by this chapter and shall be subject to such other actions as are available at law.

(Code 1968, § 34-33)

Secs. 34-120—34-150185. - Reserved.

DIVISION 5.—RENT WITHHOLDING

Sec. 34-151. — When tenant authorized to withhold rent.

~~A tenant shall be authorized to withhold the payment of rent when a notice has been issued by the commissioner of licenses and inspections to the owner or operator of a dwelling unit notifying such owner or operator:~~

- (1) ~~That the dwelling unit or part thereof is in violation of this chapter, and directing the correction of the violation if, in the opinion of the commissioner, the violation is such as to constructively evict the tenant from a portion of the premises occupied by him; or~~
- (2) ~~That the dwelling unit or part thereof is in violation of this chapter, and that such owner or operator has previously been subject to a notice from the department of licenses and inspections directing that such violation be corrected within a stated reasonable time, but that upon reinspection by such department after such reasonable time has elapsed, some or all of the violations have been found to be not corrected and in the opinion of the commissioner of licenses and inspections, such owner or operator has not made a reasonable effort to comply with such notice.~~

(Code 1968, § 34-34)

Sec. 34-152. — Tenant's affidavit.

(a) ~~A tenant or occupant of a dwelling unit which he believes to be in violation of this chapter and qualified under section 34-151 shall present to the department of licenses and inspections an affidavit containing the following information:~~

- (1) ~~A description of the alleged violation and a reference to the~~

- applicable section of this chapter:
- (2) The name and address of the owner or operator of the premises and the name and the address of the person to whom rent is paid if other than the owner or operator; and
- (3) The date on which rent is due to be paid by the tenant, the amount of rent, and the rent period, i.e., weekly, monthly, etc.
- (b) In every case wherein this procedure is adopted the tenant shall be instructed by the commissioner of licenses and inspections as to his rights, remedies and responsibilities under this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-35)

Sec. 34-153. Inspection of premises; order to correct or notice of existence, etc., of violations.

Within three working days of the receipt of an affidavit as provided for by section 34-152 and pursuant to section 34-151(1), the department of licenses and inspections shall inspect the dwelling unit described therein. Within three additional working days, six working days from the date of the receipt of the affidavit by such department, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall issue an order directing the correction of violations which are found to exist on the premises and notifying the owner or operator that violations exist which are judged by the commissioner of licenses and inspections to constitute a constructive eviction of the tenant and that due to such constructive eviction such tenant has been authorized to withhold the payment of rent pursuant to section 34-151(1) and that such withheld rent shall be paid into an escrow fund to be disposed of as provided by section 34-158.

(Code 1968, § 34-36)

Sec. 34-154. Reinspection of premises.

If upon reinspection of a dwelling unit after proper notice to the owner or operator and a reasonable compliance period, some or all of the violations cited in such notice have been found not corrected, and, if in the opinion of the commissioner of licenses and inspections, such owner or operator has not made a reasonable effort to comply with such notice, and, if a tenant or occupant has presented to the department of licenses and inspections an affidavit as provided for by section 34-152 and pursuant to section 34-151(2), the commissioner of licenses and inspections within three working days of the receipt of such affidavit shall issue an order to such owner or operator citing such uncorrected violations and such judgment of a lack of reasonable effort to comply, and further notifying the owner or operator that such tenant or occupant has been authorized to withhold the payment of rent pursuant to section 34-151(2) and that such withheld rent shall be paid into an escrow fund to be disposed of as provided by section 34-159.

(Code 1968, § 34-36.1)

Sec. 34-155. Date withholding proceedings to begin.

The date of the notice or order issued by the commissioner of licenses and inspections following an inspection of the premises described in section 34-153 shall be the date upon which rent withholding proceedings shall begin as provided in the following sections of this division.

(Code 1968, § 34-37)

Sec. 34-156. Payment of withheld rent to city.

The tenant or occupant shall withhold the rent due the owner or operator of the dwelling unit as authorized and provided by this division and shall pay the same when due to the city. Such tenant shall continue to make such rental payments to the city when due until such time as he is directed to discontinue such payments by the commissioner of licenses and inspections. Rent paid to the city shall be deposited in an escrow account and shall not be commingled with other funds of the city. There shall be no release of funds maintained in this account except upon order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections or a court of competent jurisdiction.

(Code 1968, § 34-38; Ord. No. 91-050, § 1(34-38), 8-1-91)

Sec. 34-157. Failure to pay rent to city.

No landlord, owner, operator, firm, corporation or any agent, officer or employee thereof shall bring any proceeding to dispossess the tenant during the pendency of rent withholding proceeding under this division. However, if the tenant or occupant, after initiating a rent withholding proceeding, fails to pay the rent when due to the city, the owner or operator of such dwelling unit shall have such rights or remedies at law or in equity in the same manner as if this division did not exist. The commissioner or the tenant may initiate a prosecution in the municipal court of the city against any landlord, owner, operator, firm, corporation or any agent, officer or employee thereof who violates this section and the violator shall be subject to the penalties in accordance with section 34-37.

(Code 1968, § 34-38.1; Ord. No. 91-050, § 1, 8-1-91)

Sec. 34-158. Using withheld rent to correct violations.

Whenever a dwelling unit has been subjected to rent withholding proceedings as authorized by section 34-151(1) due to a constructive eviction, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall require the owner or operator of such dwelling unit to provide, within five working days of the notice of violations having become an order, reasonable assurances in writing and signed by such owner or operator that the violations cited in such notice will be corrected within the time allowed. In addition:

- (1) If the commissioner receives such reasonable assurances in writing and signed by the owner or operator, he shall allow such owner or operator to proceed with the necessary work; except, however, if the commissioner at any time during the period of time allowed has reasonable grounds to believe that such work is not proceeding in a timely manner, he may initiate the procedure for contracting out the necessary work as provided in this section. The department of licenses and inspections shall reinspect such

~~dwelling unit within three days after the day by which such violations were ordered to be corrected. If and when such violations have been corrected and the dwelling unit is no longer in violation of this chapter and the rent deposited in escrow has not been forfeited under subsection (3) of this section, the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall order the release and payment of such rents deposited in escrow to the owner or operator without interest, except for such sums as may be due as fines and/or costs under this chapter. The tenant or occupant shall thereupon resume rent payments directly to the owner, operator or his agent. If upon reinspection the owner or operator is found to have failed to comply with the order issued by the commissioner of licenses and inspections, the commissioner may declare the premises unfit for human habitation as provided in this chapter or initiate prosecution in the municipal court, either or both. In any such case, the rent deposited with the city shall not be returned to the owner or operator until such time as the commissioner of licenses and inspections certifies to the city that the dwelling unit complies with the provisions of this chapter or has been demolished and that such withheld rent is not subject to the forfeiture under subsection (3) of this section nor to any fines and/or costs under this chapter.~~

- (2) If the commissioner does not receive such reasonable assurances in writing, signed by the owner or operator or, if having received such assurances, he determines at any time during the time allowed that there exist reasonable grounds to believe that such necessary work is not proceeding in a timely manner, he may, in his sole discretion and without the necessity of seeking the consent of the landlord, direct that the rent so collected by the city be used for the correction of any other violations. The commissioner of licenses and inspections shall make a request of the procurement division to receive bids from qualified city licensed contractors. The procurement division of the department of finance shall award the contract to the successful bidder. Notwithstanding the provision of this chapter that the tenant or occupant shall have the withheld rent in the escrow fund forfeited to him if he vacates the dwelling unit due to the constructive eviction, failure to so vacate before the signing of a contract between the city and such successful bidder shall waive the right of such tenant or occupant to such forfeiture. Any cost of the work contracted which exceeds the moneys collected shall be paid by the city which then shall recover such payments by continuing to collect rent from the tenant until all such costs shall have been recovered. If for any reason the costs cannot be thus recovered, the city shall have a right of action in debt or assumpsit against the owner or operator personally.
- (3) Any violations not noted by the commissioner or his authorized representative at the time of the original inspection and which in the opinion of the commissioner or his authorized representative have resulted from tenant abuse or misuse shall not be the responsibility of the landlord.
- (4) Any work approved by the commissioner of licenses and inspections to be done according to the above procedures shall not be interrupted or interfered with by the owner or operator in any way whatsoever. If, however, the owner or operator completes the specified work prior to commencement of work by the contractor and such work is completed to the satisfaction of the commissioner, he shall be responsible only for a \$25.00 charge to reinstate his occupancy permit; except, that he shall also be liable for any violations of this chapter.

(5) After the completion of the corrections, the landlord shall permit the tenant to remain on the premises at the original rental amount for at least six months; provided, however, that the tenant abides by his obligations and responsibilities as to the rent and reasonable care of the premises.

(Code 1968, § 34-39; Ord. No. 91-050, § 1, 8-1-91)

See 34-159. Contract for repairs.

- (a) Whenever a dwelling unit has been subjected to rent withholding proceedings—as authorized by section 34-151(2) due to lack of reasonable effort by the owner or operator to comply with a violation notice, the commissioner of licenses and inspections in his sole discretion and without the necessity of seeking consent of the landlord may immediately direct the rent so collected by the city toward the correction of any of the violations. The commissioner of licenses and inspections shall make a request of the procurement division to receive bids from qualified city licensed contractors. The procurement division of the department of finance shall award the contract to the successful bidder. Any cost of the work contracted for which exceeds the money's collected shall be paid by the city which shall recover for such payments by continuing to collect rent from the tenant until all such costs have been recovered. If for any reason the costs cannot thus be recovered, the department of finance shall have a right of action in debt or assumpsit against the owner or operator personally.
- (b) Any violations not noted by the commissioner or his authorized representative at the time of the original inspection and which in the opinion of the commissioner or his authorized representative have resulted from tenant abuse or misuse shall not be the responsibility of the landlord.
- (e) Any work approved by the commissioner of licenses and inspections to be done according to the above procedures shall not be interrupted or interfered with by the owner or operator in any way whatsoever. If, however, the owner or operator completes the specified work prior to commencement of work by the contractor and such work is completed to the satisfaction of the commissioner, he shall be responsible only for a \$25.00 charge to reinstate his occupancy permit; except, that he shall also be liable for any violations of this chapter. After completion of the corrections, the landlord shall permit the tenant to remain on the premises at the original rental for at least six months; provided, however, the tenants abide by all the tenant's obligations and responsibilities as to rent and reasonable care of the premises.

(Code 1968, § 34-39.1; Ord. No. 91-050, § 1, 8-1-91)

See 34-160. Forfeiture of withheld rent.

Whenever a dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming house or hotel has been subjected to rental withholding proceedings as authorized by this chapter and the owner or operator has failed to correct violations of this chapter and the owner or operator responsible for compliance with the provisions of this chapter enters into a contract for the sale of the real estate or permits the lease to expire or voluntarily demolishes the structure or the commissioner of licenses and inspections

orders the structure to be demolished because of its unsafe condition; or the tenant or occupant vacates the structure due to a constructive eviction found by the commissioner of licenses and inspections under section 34-151(2); the withheld rents in the possession of the city shall be paid to the tenant or occupant of the premises upon the order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections or of a court of competent jurisdiction. The person receiving such forfeiture payment shall present a receipt or other written proof demonstrating that such person is entitled to receive the withheld rents.

(Code 1968, § 34-39.2; Ord. No. 91-050, § 1, 8-1-91)

Sec. 34-161. Termination of agreement; funds in escrow.

Whenever the commissioner of licenses and inspections shall determine that the rent withholding provisions of this division are no longer applicable to effect the work to be done, either by the owner, agent or operator, or that the repairs shall not or will not be made by the city, pursuant to section 34-158, the rent withholding agreement shall be terminated. Funds, if any, held in escrow at the time of termination shall be disbursed to the owner, agent, or operator, or to the tenant, or to both, as directed by the commissioner of licenses and inspections. Any future rental payments shall be the responsibility of the tenant.

(Code 1968, § 34-39.3; Ord. No. 91-050, § 1(34-39.3), 8-1-91)

Sec. 34-162. Eviction proceedings prohibited during proceedings.

Except as otherwise provided by section 34-157, during the pendency of any proceedings under this division for rent withholding, no owner or operator shall bring any proceedings to dispossess the tenant for nonpayment of rent or any action for rent or rental value.

(Code 1968, § 34-40)

Secs. 34-163 - 34-185. Reserved.

DIVISION 6 - OCCUPANCY OF CERTAIN RENTAL UNITS, VIOLATING CHAPTER, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS

Sec. 34-186. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this division, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Commissioner of licenses and inspections means the commissioner or his duly authorized delegate.

Landlord means the owner of a dwelling unit or a building containing multiple dwelling units for residential purposes.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.1)

Cross reference— Definitions and rules of construction generally, § 1-2.

Sec. 34-187. - Landlord's permit.

Whenever the owner of property shall by affidavit swear or affirm to the commissioner of licenses and inspections that because of vandalism, malicious mischief or any other valid security reason, he has been unable to meet all of the requirements of the city building maintenance and housing code as they relate to those requirements other than those basic to human safety and health, the commissioner, upon the applicant's payment of a \$25.00 fee, may grant a temporary certificate allowing such premises to be rented under the following conditions:

- (1) — That the landlord have a bona fide tenant who is willing to rent the premises in their present condition and resides therein.
- (2) — That the landlord shall have already engaged the services of a licensed contractor and obtained the necessary permits if required. Wherein the landlord states that he intends to correct the violation himself, he will be required to sign an affidavit to this effect. All work must be completed within a 90-day period.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(a))

Secs. See. 34-188. Payment of rent to city.

Until all violations of this chapter existing at the time occupancy is permitted and the new violations which occur not as a result of tenant abuse are corrected, the entire rent will be paid to the department of finance of the city. As soon as compliance is achieved, the tenant shall make future payments directly to the landlord and a regular certificate of occupancy shall issue.

(Code 1968, § 34-199. – Reserved.)

DIVISION 6. IMPROVEMENTS TO EXTERIORS OF VACANT BUILDINGS.

34-200. – Authorizations of improvements to exteriors of vacant buildings or structures; procedures; liens for the costs incurred.

(a) Authorization. The Department of Licenses and Inspections is authorized to initiate the making of improvements to the exteriors of vacant buildings or structures in accordance with this section and pursuant to the provisions of 25 Del. C. ch. 29 (§ 2901 et seq.) and 25 Del. C. ch. 46 (§ 4601 et seq.).

(1) Eligible buildings or structures. If the owner has failed to rehabilitate or demolish:

- i. A building that is vacant or abandoned and deemed to be unsafe, or
- ii. Any other building or structure that is vacant and amendable to rehabilitation if made secure, the commissioner of licenses and inspections may recommend that exterior improvements be made or caused to be made to such building or structure so as to render the

building or structure safe and secure and to prevent further structural damage from rain and other natural causes. and that a lien be duly recorded in order that the city may recover the costs incurred by public expenditure for the same.

- (2) Types of improvements. Exterior improvements, authorized herein, may include, but are not limited to: Repairs to or replacement of any of the structural components of such buildings or structures, sidewalks in the right-of-way or on the lot on which the building or structure is located, steps, porches, railings, columns, windows, doors, exterior painting, brick pointing and roofing, and any other repairs or replacements deemed appropriate to protect and secure the structural integrity of the building or structure and to prevent further damage that would render the building or structure unsafe. The costs incurred by the city for any such improvements shall be referred to as "exterior improvement costs." Such exterior improvement costs incurred by the city shall be recorded by lien in accordance with the provisions of 25 Del. C. ch. 46 (§ 4601 et seq.).

(3) 40.2(b))

Sec. 34-189. Use of rent to correct violations.

The commissioner of licenses and inspections in his sole discretion and without the necessity of seeking further permission from the landlord may direct the rent collected by the department of finance toward the correction of any of the violations according to a progress chart which shall be agreed upon by the commissioner and landlord at the time the temporary occupancy permit is issued.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(c))

Sec. 34-190. Procurement and records division to receive bids.

The commissioner of licenses and inspections shall make a request of the procurement and records division to receive bids from qualified city licensed contractors. The procurement and records division of the department of finance will award the work to the successful bidder. The cost of the work contracted shall at no time exceed the monies collected for the subject unit.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(d); Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 1(e), 7-2-92)

Sec. 34-191. Violations not noted in original inspection.

Any violations not noted by the commissioner or his delegate at the time of the original inspection and which in the opinion of the commissioner or his delegate have resulted from tenant abuse or misuse shall not be the responsibility of the landlord.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(e))

Sec. 34-192. Landlord not to interrupt work.

Any work not begun by the landlord in the specified time and subsequently approved by the commissioner of licenses and inspections to be done according to the procedures in this chapter shall not be interrupted or interfered with by the landlord in any way whatsoever. The commissioner may in his discretion, however, extend the time allotted in the progress chart for good cause shown. If the landlord, however, completes the specified work prior to the commencement of work by the contractor, and such work is completed to the satisfaction of the commissioner, he shall be responsible only for a \$50.00 late charge in order to reinstate his occupancy permit.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(f))

Sec. 34-193. Disposition of funds.

All funds collected by the department of finance shall be expended to correct deficiencies, it being the express purpose of this division to improve housing units and not otherwise. If the tenant vacates the unit, voluntarily or otherwise, the funds so held shall be held without further application for a period of 90 days or when a new tenant is found, whichever first occurs, and a new progress chart shall be instituted between the landlord and commissioner. If after 90 days a new tenant is not found, the fund shall be returned to the landlord without interest.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(g))

Sec. 34-194. Tenant's rights, remedies and responsibilities.

In every case wherein this procedure is adopted, the tenant shall be instructed by the commissioner as to his rights, remedies and responsibilities under this division.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(h))

Sec. 34-195. Landlord to sign agreement.

Every landlord applying for a temporary permit under this division shall sign an agreement to the effect that he understands its provisions and agrees to abide by them. Any landlord who in his opinion is aggrieved by the action of the commissioner may appeal such decision to the board of license and inspection review.

(Code 1968, § 34-40.2(i))

Sec. 34-196. Rights of tenants and landlord not affected.

This division shall in no way affect the right of any tenant or landlord under any existing state law regarding landlords and tenants in effect at the time of its passage.

Approval and certification of improvements to be made. The commissioner of licenses and inspections, his duly authorized designee, the director of real estate and housing and the director of planning, or the duly authorized designee of each of the same, shall by majority approval of a written authorization certify that specific exterior improvements shall be made to a building or structure, identified by street address and tax parcel number, in accordance with this subsection. Such written authorization shall be forwarded to the procurement and records division and to the finance director with specifications prepared for the particular improvements authorized to be made and for no other improvements. In an emergency affecting the public safety as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee, the rendering of exterior improvements to secure the structure may be expedited in lieu of the requirements of this certification subsection.

- (4) Notice to owner. When exterior improvements have been authorized as aforesaid and specifications for the same have been prepared, the department of licenses and inspections shall provide notice to the record owner or owners of the subject building or structure and to any record lien holders that such exterior improvements will be undertaken and the date of commencement of the same. For purposes of this subsection, the mailing of a certified letter, return receipt requested, at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the exterior improvements, to the last known address of the record owner, owners or lien holders and notifying same of the address of the property to be improved, the tax parcel number, the condition of the property and the legal right of the city to obtain a judgment against the owner and a lien against the property after completion of the exterior improvements, shall be deemed to be sufficient notice.

- (b) Costs incurred as debt owing to city. Whatever expenses are incurred in relation to authorized exterior improvements pursuant to this subsection shall be paid by the city treasurer out of monies in the treasury and the owner or owners shall be jointly and severally liable to the city for the full amount so expended. Whenever exterior improvement costs have been incurred as aforesaid, the expenditure of public funds for exterior improvements to any vacant or abandoned building deemed to be unsafe or any other vacant building or structure, following notice to the owners, being the costs so incurred, with legal interest thereon from the date of expenditure, shall be reimbursed to the city, on demand, by the person or persons who were the owner or owners of such building or structure at the time such work of exterior improvement commenced. The city may maintain an action of law in debt or assumpsit against the owner or owners to recover the sums of money so expended, plus lawful interest and cost. When any person is found guilty, whether by trial or admission, of violating any provision of this chapter or chapter 4, in any instance in which such person, at the time of sentencing for such violation, also has not reimbursed the city for the costs incurred by the city in making or causing

to be made any exterior improvements, pursuant to this subsection, to any building or structure regarding which such person or persons have been found guilty, as provided, the court shall order such person or persons to make full restitution to the city for such exterior improvement costs in addition to and not in lieu of any fines which the court may impose.

- (c) Entering of lien. When the city expends public funds for the purpose of exterior improvements to any vacant or abandoned building or structure deemed to be unsafe or any other vacant building or structure within the city, after such notice as aforesaid, the city may enter a lien for the amount so expended, with interest accrued thereon, on the lands and premises on which such work of exterior improvements was performed by means of the department of finance and the city solicitor forwarding directions to the prothonotary for New Castle County for the entering of such exterior improvement liens in a docket for the same.
- (d) Satisfaction. When the department of finance and the city solicitor have determined the exterior improvement costs and interest, the entering of the lien shall be done by forwarding to the prothonotary the information as aforesaid. Whenever any such lien is satisfied by payment, the department of finance and the city solicitor may so advise the prothonotary in order that there shall be entered in the prothonotary's records the date of final payment and the words 'satisfied in full' pursuant to 25 Del. C. § 4603(d).
- (e) Rules and regulations. The department of licenses and inspections may adopt rules and regulations as deemed necessary and proper for the administration of this subsection, subject to approval by the administrative board.

Secs. 34-201 – 34-209. – Reserved.

DIVISION 7 – REGISTRATION OF VACANT BUILDINGS AND REGISTRATION FEES.

Sec. 34-210. – Annual registration of vacant buildings and registration fees.

- (a) Purpose. The purpose of this section requiring the registration of all vacant buildings and the payment of registration fees is to assist the city government, particularly the department of licenses and inspections (DLI) in protecting the public health, safety and welfare, to monitor the number of vacant buildings in the city to assess the effects of the condition of those buildings on nearby businesses and the neighborhoods in which they are located, particularly in light of fire safety hazards and unlawful, temporary occupancy by transients, including illicit drug users and traffickers, and to require of the owners of such vacant buildings their registration and the payment of related fees, and to promote substantial efforts to rehabilitate such vacant buildings. The provisions of this section are applicable to the owners of such vacant buildings as set forth herein and are in addition to and not in lieu of any and all other applicable

provisions of this chapter, the health and sanitation code, and any other applicable provisions of the Wilmington City Code.

(b) Definitions and applicability; registration statement and fees.

(1) Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them as follows:

- (A) Boarded: A building or structure subject to the provisions of this section shall be deemed to be "boarded" if in place of one or more exterior doors, other than a storm door, or of one or more windows, there is a sheet or sheets of plywood or similar material covering the space for such door or window.
- (B) Exterior maintenance and major systems: The phrase "exterior maintenance and major systems" shall mean the safe and lawful maintenance of the facade, windows, doors, roof, and other parts of the exterior of the building and the maintenance of its major systems consisting of the roof, the electrical and plumbing systems, the water supply system, the sewer system, and the sidewalk, drive-way, if any, area of the lot, as applicable and as enforced by the department of licenses and inspections.
- (C) Occupied: Any building or structure shall be deemed to be occupied if one or more persons actually conducts a lawful business or resides in all or any part of the building as the licensed business-occupant, or as the legal or equitable owner/occupant(s) or tenant(s) on a permanent, nontransient basis, or any combination of the same. For purposes of this section, evidence offered to prove that a building is so occupied may include, but shall not be limited to, the regular receipt of delivery of regular mail through the U.S. Postal Service; proof of continual telephone, electric, gas, heating, water and sewer services; a valid city business license, or the most recent, federal, state, or city income tax statements indicating that the subject property is the official business or residence address of the person or business claiming occupancy; or proof of pre-rental inspection.
- (D) Occupancy ready: Any building that is vacant, but has been recently rehabilitated and a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion has been issued by the department of licenses and inspections allowing the building to be lawfully occupied, or if the property has not been recently rehabilitated, the property meets all minimum code requirements and may be immediately occupied. Whether a building is "occupancy ready" shall be determined by department of licenses and inspections through an inspection of the building. The classification "occupancy ready" shall only apply to the vacant registration requirements of this section, and does not apply to any other section of the code.
- (E) Open: A building or structure subject to the provisions of this section shall be deemed to be "open" if any one or more exterior doors other

than a storm door is broken, open and, or closed but, without a properly functioning lock to secure it, or if one or more windows is broken or not capable of being locked and secured from intrusion, or any combination of the same.

- (F) Owner: An owner of the freehold of the premises or any lesser estate therein, a mortgagee, a vendee-in-possession, assignee of rents, receiver, executor, trustee, lessee, agent or any other person, firm or corporation that is directly or indirectly in control of a building subject to the provisions of this section, and as set forth below.
- (G) Vacant: A building or structure shall be deemed to be vacant if no person or persons actually, currently conducts a lawfully licensed business, or lawfully resides or lives in any part of the building as the legal or equitable owner(s) or tenant-occupant(s), or owner-occupants, or tenant(s) on a permanent, nontransient basis.

- (2) Applicability: The requirements of this section shall be applicable to each owner of any building that is not a dwelling that shall have been vacant for more than 6 consecutive months and to each owner of residential property consisting of one or more vacant dwellings that shall have been vacant at least 6 consecutive months. Each such owner shall cause to be filed a notarized registration statement, which shall include the street address and parcel number of each such vacant building, the names and addresses of all owners, as hereinafter described, and any other information deemed necessary by the department of licenses and inspections. The registration fee(s) as required by subsection (b)(3) of this section shall be billed by the department of licenses and inspections and shall be paid by the first business day of January of each year. For purposes of this section, the following shall also be applicable:

- (A) If the owner is a corporation, the registration statement shall provide the names and residence addresses of all officers and directors of the corporation and shall be accompanied by a copy of the most recent annual franchise tax report filed with the secretary of state;
- (B) If an estate, the name and business address of the executor of the estate;
- (C) If a trust, the name and address of all trustees, grantors, and beneficiaries;
- (D) If a partnership, the names and residence addresses of all partners with an interest of ten percent or greater;
- (E) If any other form of unincorporated association, the names and residence addresses of all principals with an interest of ten percent or greater;
- (F) If an individual person, the name and residence address of that individual person.

- (3) Registration statement and fees: local agent. If none of the persons listed, as above, is shown at an address within the state, the registration statement also shall provide the name and address of a person who resides within the state and who is authorized to accept service of process on behalf of the owners and who

shall be designated as a responsible, local party or agent, both for purposes of notification in the event of an emergency affecting the public health, safety or welfare and for purposes of service of any and all notices or registration statements as herein authorized and in connection herewith. Registration shall be required for all vacant buildings, whether vacant and secure, vacant and open, vacant and boarded, or occupancy ready and shall be required within 30 days of whenever any building has remained vacant for at least six consecutive months and within 30 days of a change in ownership of a building that has been vacant at least six consecutive months. In no instance shall the registration of a vacant building and the payment of registration fees be construed to exonerate the owner, agent or responsible party from responsibility for compliance with any other building code or housing code requirement. One registration statement may be filed to include all vacant buildings of the owner so registering. The owner of the vacant property as of November 1 of each calendar year shall be responsible for the payment of the non-refundable registration fee, except buildings deemed "occupancy ready" by the department of licenses and inspections and actively for sale or lease shall be exempt from imposition of the annual registration fee. However, buildings deemed "occupancy ready" by the department of licenses and inspections shall only be exempt from imposition of the annual registration fee for no more than 2 consecutive billing cycles. Except as provided in subsection (b)(3)(ix)(A) below, said fee shall be billed by the department of licenses and inspections and based on the duration of the vacancy as determined by the following scale:

- (i.) No fee for properties that are vacant for less than one year;
 - (ii.) \$500.00 for properties that are vacant for at least one year but less than two years;
 - (iii.) \$1,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least two years but less than three years;
 - (iv.) \$5,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least three years but less than four years;
 - (v.) \$10,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least four years but less than five years;
 - (vi.) \$12,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least five years, but less than six years;
 - (vii.) \$14,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least six years, but less than seven years;
 - (viii.) \$16,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least seven years, but less than eight years; and
 - (ix.) \$18,000.00 for properties that are vacant for at least eight years, and an additional \$2,000.00 for each year in excess of eight years.
- (A) The vacant registration fee billed to a housing provider meeting the criteria for non-profit organizations as defined by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and who receives a vacant building directly from the city or who receives public funds from the city for the

acquisition, rehabilitation or redevelopment of a vacant building shall not be based on the duration of the vacancy prior to the non-profit housing provider receiving the vacant building from the city or receiving the funds from the city, but rather from the time it received the vacant building or funds from the city. This provision shall be retroactive to May 1, 2003.

- (B) The vacant registration fee billed to the purchaser of a property from the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank Corporation shall not be based on the duration of the vacancy prior to purchase, but rather from the time the purchaser received the vacant building from the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank Corporation.

- (4) Appeal rights. The owner shall have the right to appeal the imposition of the registration fees to the Licenses and Inspection Review Board, upon filing an application in writing with the applicable \$50.00 non-refundable filing fee to the Department of Licenses and Inspections no later than 30 calendar days after the date of the billing statement. On appeal, the owner shall bear the burden of providing satisfactory objective proof of occupancy, as defined in Section 34-500(b)(1)(C).

- (5) One time waiver of registration fee. A one-time waiver of the registration fee, or an extension of a waiver for up to 12 months from the date of the billing statement immediately following the waiver, may be granted by the Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections upon application of the owner and upon review and advice of the law department, within 30 calendar days from the date of the bill for the registration fee, if the owner

- (i.) Demonstrate with satisfactory proof that he/she is in the process of demolition, rehabilitation, or other substantial repair of the vacant building; and
- (ii.) Objectively demonstrates the anticipated length of time for the demolition, rehabilitation, or other substantial repair of the vacant building; or
- (iii.) Provides satisfactory proof that he/she was actively attempting to sell or lease the property during the vacancy period.

- (6) Four-year waiver. Upon application by the owner and satisfaction of subsection (b)(5) above, the commissioner may, upon advice and review of the law department, grant a one-time four year waiver of the registration fee, or an extension of a waiver for up to 12 months from the date of the billing statement immediately following the waiver, if the owner meets the criteria for non-profit organizations as defined by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. With regard to an extension of a waiver only, the time period of the extension shall commence from the date of the billing statement (November 1 of the applicable calendar year) and, in no event, shall the extension exceed 12 months. An extension of a waiver shall only be granted once.

- (7) Delinquent registration fees as a lien. After the owner is given notice of the amount of the registration fee due, except for those owners that have properly perfected an appeal pursuant to subsection (b) (4) above, and the owner fails to pay the amount due, said amount shall constitute a debt due and owing to the city, and the city may commence a civil action to collect such the unpaid debt.
- (c) Duty to amend registration statement. If the status of the registration information changes during the course of any calendar year, it is the responsibility of the owner, responsible party or agent for the same to contact the department of licenses and inspections within 30 days of the occurrence of such change and advise the department in writing of those changes.
- (d) Exceptions. This section shall not apply to any building owned by the United States, the state, the city, nor to any of their respective agencies or political subdivisions and the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank Corporation.
- (e) Violations; penalties.
- (1) The failure or refusal for any reason of any owner, or agent of an owner acting on behalf of the owner, to pay any fees required to be paid pursuant to the provisions of this section, within 30 days after they become due, shall be subject to and liable for a fine pursuant to sec. 34-37.
- (2) The failure or refusal for any reason of any owner, or agent of an owner acting on behalf of the owner, to register a vacant building as required by subsection (b)(3) above, shall be subject to and liable for a civil fine of \$500.00.
- (f) Abatement of delinquent vacant registration fees. Upon application of the owner, the city, in its discretion, may enter into an agreement with the owner of a vacant property whereby the city agrees to void all delinquent vacant registration fees owed by the owner if the owner obtains a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion for the property within six (6) months of the date of the agreement such that the building may be lawfully occupied.
- (1) Eligibility. At the time of application, the owner must provide the following documentation to the Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections:
- (i) Proof that he or she owns the property; and
- (ii) A detailed scope of the work required to obtain a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion for the property; and
- (iii) Objective, satisfactory proof that he or she has adequate funds and/or financing to complete all work necessary to obtain a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion within six (6) months of the date of the agreement; and
- (iv) If applicable, satisfactory proof that a licensed contractor has been engaged to perform the required work; and
- (v) Satisfactory proof that the intended use of the property conforms

with all zoning requirements; and

(vi) The owner must be current on all other city obligations, including but not limited to charges related to taxes, water, sewer, stormwater, permits, registration fees, business licenses, parking tickets, civil penalties, and red light tickets.

(2)¹⁹⁷ If the owner satisfies subsection (f)(1), and the city enters into an agreement with the owner as contemplated by subsection (f), the city shall not file a monition action against the subject property for the length of the agreement. However, the delinquent vacant registration fees shall remain a lien against the property.

(3) Delinquent vacant registration fees subject to the agreement contemplated by subsection (f) shall only be voided under this subsection if the owner obtains a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion for the property within six (6) months of the date of the agreement such that the building may be lawfully occupied. If the owner fails to obtain a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion within the six (6) month time period, the delinquent vacant registration fees remain liens on the property, and the property is subject to monition by the city.

(4) A decision by the city not to enter into an agreement under this subsection shall not be subject to appeal.

Secs. 34-211 – 34-230. — Reserved.

ARTICLE III. - MINIMUM STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS^[2]

Footnotes:

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Cross reference— Lead paint, § 13-131 et seq.

DIVISION 1. - GENERALLY

Sec. 34-231. - Basic equipment and facilities.

No person shall occupy as owner-occupant or let to another for occupancy any dwelling or dwelling unit, for the purpose of living, sleeping, cooking or eating therein, which does not comply with the following requirements:

(1)— Kitchen sink. Every dwelling unit shall contain a kitchen sink in good working condition and properly connected to the city water and sewer system.

- (2) — *Toilet room, toilet and lavatory.* Every dwelling unit shall contain a room which affords privacy to a person with such room and which is equipped with a flush water closet and a lavatory basin in good working condition and properly connected to the city water and sewer system.
- (3) — *Bathroom, bathtub or shower.* Every dwelling unit shall contain, within a room which affords privacy to a person within such room, a bathtub or shower in good working condition and properly connected to the city water and sewer system, and these facilities may be situate in the same room as those required by subsection (2) of this section.
- (4) — *Hot and cold water.* Every kitchen sink, lavatory basin and bathtub or shower required under the provisions of subsections (1), (2) and (3) of this section shall be properly connected with both hot and cold water lines.
- (5) — *Garbage disposal and garbage and rubbish storage facilities.* Every dwelling unit shall have adequate garbage disposal facilities or garbage storage containers and adequate rubbish storage facilities, the type and location of which are approved by the enforcement officer. Garbage shall be kept in storage containers separate from rubbish storage containers. Every dwelling unit shall have a sufficient number of metal or plastic containers covered with a watertight metal or plastic lid and of a capacity of not less than 15 gallons nor more than 100 gallons.
- (6) — *Water-heating facilities.* Every dwelling unit shall have supplied water-heating facilities which are properly installed, are maintained in a safe and good working condition, are properly connected with hot water lines required under the provisions of subsection (4) of this section, and are capable of heating water to such a temperature as to permit an adequate amount of water to be drawn at every required kitchen sink, lavatory basin, bathtub or shower at a temperature of not less than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Such supplied water-heating facilities shall be capable of meeting the requirements of this subsection when the dwelling or dwelling unit heating facilities required under the provisions of section 34-234(5) are not in operation.
- (7) — *Means of egress.* Every dwelling unit shall have safe, unobstructed means of egress leading to safe and open space at ground level which complies with applicable city and state regulations.
- (8) — *Maintenance of plumbing and plumbing fixtures.* All plumbing, water closets and other plumbing fixtures in a dwelling unit shall be maintained in good order and repair and in accordance with the requirements of the city building code and plumbing code.
- (9) *Penalty.* Any violation of this section is subject to a penalty pursuant to section 34-37. In accordance with section 34-37, any owner-occupant who violates this section shall not be subject to a civil fine as provided for in section 34-37(d), but rather shall only be subject to sections 34-37(a)-(c).

(Code 1968, § 34-41; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 3, 10-19-06)

Sec. 34-232. - Smoke-detection devices; requirements.

(a) *Installation required.*

- (1) — *Dwellings*. All structures and dwellings shall be equipped with smoke detectors and fire protection equipment as required by the provisions of chapter 4 and the city's building code.
- (2) — *Unlawful acts*: In addition to and not in lieu of any other provisions of this section and of this Code, it shall be unlawful for any person responsible for the installation of a smoke detector to fail to so install it. It shall be unlawful for any person to tamper with, damage or render inoperative, such as, but not exclusively, by disconnecting electrical wiring or by removing the batteries from any smoke detector.
- (b) — *Type of detection devices*. Detection devices shall be of the photo-electric or ionization type and shall be electric, 110 volts, alternating current, or battery-powered smoke detectors, Underwriters' Laboratory or Factory Mutual Approved.
- (1) — Electric units shall be direct-wired on a separate circuit on the line side of service equipment, immediately fused with proper size fuse. Detector wiring shall be minimum 14 gauge wire. All wiring shall comply with the National Electric Code and shall be performed by registered, licensed electricians.
- (2) — Battery-powered units shall be permitted only in structures built prior to 1983 or not substantially renovated since 1983. Where battery-powered units are permitted, the battery shall be of the type approved for the detector and shall provide a minimum of 12 months' service. Battery-powered units shall be equipped with an audible sounding device to alert occupants of the need for battery replacements. In rental dwelling units where battery-powered devices are permitted, after installation of the detection device at the landlord's expense, in accordance with subsection (a) of this section, it shall be the tenant's responsibility, unless otherwise provided in the tenant's lease agreement, to:
- a. — Make periodic inspections of the unit to determine that it is in proper working order;
- b. — Notify the landlord of any malfunction of such detection device which the landlord shall then repair or replace at his own expense; and
- c. — Replace the batteries when necessary during the entire term of the rental agreement.
- (c) — *Audible signal*. Detection devices shall be equipped with an audible sounding device that provides a steady signal with a minimum decibel rating of 85 decibels.
- (d) — *Number of devices required*. A minimum of one device shall be required in one-story and two-story single-family dwelling units. Dwelling units consisting of three or more stories shall be equipped with a minimum of two devices. Buildings containing two or more dwelling units shall be equipped with a minimum of one device for each individual dwelling unit. The minimum requirement of this section is that one detector shall be installed on the first floor level at or near the stairs leading to the second floor level, or one detector shall be placed at the second floor level at or near the top of the stairs. In dwellings having basements or cellars, an additional smoke detector shall be installed at or near the top of the stairs leading from the basement or cellar to the first floor level. This section shall not limit the number of detectors required in residential buildings, where the design, arrangement or configuration of the interior would require additional detectors in additional areas of the

protected premises, when in the judgment of the authority having jurisdiction, placement of additional detectors is necessary for the protection of the occupants.

- (e) — *Authority having jurisdiction.* The commissioner of licenses and inspections and the fire marshal shall have concurrent jurisdiction for purposes of enforcing compliance with this section. The authority vested in the commissioner of licenses and inspections for enforcement of the provisions of the housing and building codes for purposes of conformity with the provisions of this section may be delegated to the office of the fire marshal.
- (f) — *Supervision of enforcement.* All general contractors, subcontractors and their agents who install electric, 110-volt alternating-current powered smoke-detection devices shall be registered with the office of the city fire marshal in order to sell, distribute, furnish or install smoke-detection equipment within the city. It shall be the responsibility of the contractor, installer, or seller of electrical 110-volt, alternating current-powered smoke detectors to certify in writing to the commissioner of licenses and inspections that such device is in compliance with this section. This subsection shall not apply to persons who perform the actual installation of smoke detectors in dwelling units they own; however, such installations shall still require any applicable inspections required by the building code.
- (g) — *Penalties.* Any violation of the provisions of this section shall render the owner or operator or agent of the owner or operator of the building, or the tenant of rental property, if the rental agreement so provides in accordance with subsection (b)(2)b of this section, and/or the general contractor, subcontractors or their agents, liable for a fine of not less than \$300.00 per violation.

(Code 1968, § 34-41.1; Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(b), 7-2-92)

State Law reference— Basic equipment and facilities, 31 Del. C. § 4116 et seq.; residential smoke detectors, 16 Del. C. § 1622 et seq.

Sec. 34-232.1. - Carbon monoxide alarm devices; requirements.

Every building of residential or mixed occupancy, in which there are one or more residential units, shall be equipped with approved carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with this chapter.

- (1) — *Location.* Not less than one approved carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed in each residential unit. The alarm shall be installed within 40 feet of each room used for sleeping purposes. The carbon monoxide alarm should be placed so it will be easily audible in all sleeping rooms. The carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

In every hotel and motel, one approved carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed for every 10,000 square feet of floor area, or fraction thereof, (1) on every floor on which a fossil fuel-burning boiler or furnace is located, and (2) on every floor on which sleeping rooms are heated by any type of warm air heating plant that burns fossil fuel. The floor area shall be computed separately for each floor. The carbon monoxide alarm should be placed so it will be easily audible to all sleeping rooms. The carbon monoxide detector shall be installed according to the manufacturer's specifications.

(2) — *Exemptions*. The following residential units and hotels/motels shall not be required to have carbon monoxide alarms:

- a. A residential unit in a building or hotel/motel that does not rely on combustion of fossil fuel for heat, ventilation or hot water, and is not sufficiently close to any ventilation source of carbon monoxide, as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his or her designee, to receive carbon monoxide from that source.
- b. A residential unit or hotel/motel that:
 1. Is heated by steam, hot water or electric heat;
 2. Is not connected by ductwork or ventilation shafts to any room containing a fossil fuel-burning boiler or heater; and
 3. Is not sufficiently close to any ventilated source of carbon monoxide, as determined by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his designee, to receive carbon monoxide from that source.

(3) — *Dwelling units heated by space heaters*. Each dwelling unit or hotel/motel employing space heating equipment that is located within the dwelling unit or hotel/motel room and that burns fossil fuel shall be equipped with at least one carbon monoxide alarm. The carbon monoxide alarm should be installed according to the manufacturer's specifications.

(4) — *Standards*. Every approved carbon monoxide alarm shall comply with all applicable federal and state regulations, and shall bear the label of a nationally recognized standard testing laboratory, and shall meet the standard of UL 2034 or its equivalent. The commissioner of licenses and inspections may issue rules and regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter, for the implementation and administration of the provisions of this chapter relating to carbon monoxide alarms.

(5) — *Battery removal violations—Penalty*. It shall be unlawful for any person to remove batteries from a carbon monoxide alarm required under this chapter, or in any way to make inoperable a carbon monoxide alarm required under this chapter, except that this provision shall not apply to any building owner or manager or his agent in the normal procedure of replacing batteries. ~~Any person who violates this section shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$300.00 per violation.~~

(6) — *Owner's and tenant's responsibilities*. The owner of a structure shall install the carbon monoxide alarm(s) and supply required carbon monoxide testing and maintenance information to at least one adult tenant in each dwelling unit. The tenant shall test, provide general maintenance, and replace required batteries for carbon monoxide alarms located in the tenant's dwelling unit.

(7) — *Building heated by central fossil fuel powered heating unit*. The owner or owner's agent of every residential building with more than one unit within the building that is heated by one main central fossil fuel powered heating unit, and that is not exempted under this section, shall install one approved carbon monoxide alarm on the floor containing the central heating unit. The owner shall test, provide general maintenance,

and replace required batteries for carbon monoxide alarms located in this area. The carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

- (8) — *Fossil fuel defined.* Whenever used in this chapter, the term "fossil fuel" shall include coal, natural gas, kerosene, oil, propane and wood.
- (9) — ~~Any person who violates any provision of this section, for which a separate penalty is not provided, shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$100.00 and not more than \$1,000.00 per violation. Every day that a violation is allowed to continue shall constitute a separate and distinct offense.~~

(Ord. No. 01-003(sub 1), § 1, 3-15-01)

Sec. 34-233. - Mobile home fire safety requirements.

Any mobile home shall be equipped with smoke detection devices as described in section 34-232 of both the electric type and the battery-powered type as backup detection devices, both of which detection devices shall be located outside of bedrooms, between the bedrooms, and the living room. Each mobile home shall be equipped with at least one handheld fire extinguisher to be located in the kitchen area. No propane bottled gas shall be permitted in any mobile home unless an alternative fuel supply is not available. No portable kerosene stove or other fuel burning portable appliances for heating or cooking shall be permitted; portable means any stove except one designed for and connected to a flue outlet. Each mobile home shall be equipped with an automatic sprinkler system of a type approved by the commissioner of licenses and inspections and the fire department. Violations of this section shall be punishable as provided in section 34-232 for violations of that section.

(Code 1968, § 34-41.2)

State Law reference— Fire safety requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4118.

Sec. 34-234. - Light, ventilation and heating; pest control.

No person shall occupy as owner-occupant or let to another for occupancy any dwelling or dwelling unit, for the purpose of living therein, which does not comply with the following requirements:

- (1) — *Window or skylight for light in habitable rooms.* Every habitable room shall have at least one window or skylight facing directly to the outdoors. The minimum total window area, measured between stops, for every habitable room shall be ten percent of the floor area of such room. Whenever walls or other portions of structures face a window of any such room and such light-obstruction structures are located less than three feet from the window and extend to a level above that of the ceiling of the room, such a window shall not be deemed to face directly to the outdoors and shall not be included as contributing to the required minimum total window area. Whenever the only window in a room is a skylight-type window in the top of such room, the total window area of such skylight shall equal at least ten percent of the total floor area of such room.

- (2) — *Ventilation of habitable rooms.* Every habitable room shall have at least one window or skylight which can easily be opened, or such other device as will adequately ventilate the room. The total of openable window area in every habitable room shall be equal to at least 50 percent of the minimum window area size or minimum skylight-type window size, as required in subsection (1) of this section, except where there is supplied some other device affording adequate ventilation and approved by the enforcement officer.
- (3) — *Light and ventilation for bathrooms, etc.* Every bathroom and water closet compartment shall comply with the light and ventilation requirements for habitable rooms contained in subsections (1) and (2) of this section.
- (4) — *Electrical outlets and fixtures.* Every habitable room of any dwelling shall contain at least one electric convenience outlet. Every such outlet and fixture shall be properly installed, shall be maintained in good and safe working condition, and shall be connected to the source of electric power in a safe manner.
- (5) — *Heating facilities generally.* Every dwelling shall have supplied heating facilities which are properly installed, are maintained in safe and good working condition, and are capable of safely and adequately heating all habitable rooms, bathrooms and water closet compartments in every dwelling unit located therein to a temperature of at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit, at a distance of three feet above flood level when the outdoor temperature is at or above zero degrees Fahrenheit.
- (6) — *Space heater requirements.* Every supplied space heater shall comply with all of the following requirements:
- a. — No space heater burning solid, liquid or gaseous fuels shall be of the portable type.
 - b. — Every space heater burning solid, liquid or gaseous fuel shall be properly vented to a chimney or duct leading to outdoor space.
 - c. Every space heater shall have a fire-resistant panel beneath it.
 - d. Every space heater shall comply with all the requirements of the building code and fire code of the city and the equipment shall be approved by the electrical department of the Middle Department Association of Fire Underwriters.
- (7) — *Minimum temperatures.* Every owner or operator of any dwelling who rents, leases or lets for human habitation any dwelling unit contained within such dwelling on terms, either expressed or implied, to supply or furnish heat to the occupants thereof, shall maintain therein a minimum temperature of 7068 degrees Fahrenheit between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. of each day and 60 degrees Fahrenheit between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. of each day, whenever the outdoor temperature shall fall below 50 degrees Fahrenheit during such hours. Whenever a dwelling is heated by means of a furnace, boiler or other heating apparatus under the control of the owner or operator of the dwelling, such owner or operator, in the absence of a written contract or agreement to the contrary, shall be deemed to have contracted, undertaken or bound himself to furnish heat in accordance with the provisions of this subsection to every dwelling unit which contains radiator, furnace heat duct outlets or other heating apparatus outlets.

(8) — *Lighting of public halls and stairways.* Every common area, public hall and stairway in every multiple dwelling containing three or more dwelling units shall be adequately lighted at all times. Every common area, public hall and stairway in structures devoted solely to dwelling occupancy and containing not more than two dwelling units may be supplied with conveniently located light switches, controlling an adequate lighting system which may be turned on when needed, instead of fulltime lighting. The owner or operator shall have the following responsibilities:

- a.—_The owner or operator of any multiple dwelling shall have the duty of providing and the responsibility for proper maintenance of the structure's lighting system.
- b.—_The owner or operator shall be responsible for having the wiring in the lighting system so arranged that the owner or operator is the party directly responsible for payment of all utility charges for that part of the lighting system by which the lighting required in this section of all common areas, public halls and stairways is provided.

(9) — *Screens, etc.—For insect control.* During that portion of each year when the enforcement officer deems it necessary for protection against mosquitoes, flies and other insects, every ~~door opening directly from a dwelling unit to outdoor space shall have supplied screens and a self-closing device; and every window or other device with openings to outdoor space, used or intended to be used for ventilation, shall likewise be supplied with screens covering at least 33 percent of the window area;~~ provided, that such screens shall not be required during such periods in rooms deemed by the enforcement officer to be located high enough in the upper stories of buildings as to be free from such insects, and in rooms located in areas of this city which are deemed by the enforcement officer to have so few such insects as to render screens unnecessary. This subsection shall not apply to those buildings which have central air conditioning approved by the building official.

(10) — *Same—For rodent control.* Every basement or cellar window used or intended to be used for ventilation, and every other opening to a basement which might provide an entry for rodents, shall be supplied with a screen or such other device as will effectively prevent their entrance.

(11) *Penalty.* Any violation of this section is subject to a penalty pursuant to section 34-37. In accordance with section 34-37, any owner-occupant who violates this section shall not be subject to a civil fine as provided for in section 34-37(d), but rather shall only be subject to sections 34-37(a)-(c).

(Code 1968, § 34-42)

State Law reference— Light, ventilation and space requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4115; extermination, 31 Del. C. § 4121.

Sec. 34-235. - Space, use and location requirements.

No person shall occupy or let to another for occupancy any dwelling or dwelling unit, for the purpose of living therein, which does not comply with the following requirements:

- (1) — *Floor space of dwelling units.* Every dwelling unit shall contain at least 150 square feet of floor space for the first occupant thereof and at least 100 additional square feet of floor space for every additional occupant thereof, regardless of age, the floor space to be calculated on the basis of total habitable room area, exclusive of stairways.
- (2) — *Floor space of sleeping rooms.* In every dwelling unit of two or more rooms, every room occupied for sleeping purposes by one occupant shall contain at least 70 square feet of floor space, and every room occupied for sleeping purposes by more than one occupant shall contain at least 50 square feet of floor space for each occupant thereof.
- (3) — *Use of cellar space.* No cellar space shall be used as a habitable room or dwelling unit unless it fully complies with the building code as adopted and amended in chapter 4 of this Code and the floor and walls are impervious to leakage of underground and surface runoff water and are insulated against dampness.
- (4) — *Use of basement space.* No basement space shall be used as a habitable room or dwelling unit unless it shall have been shown to the satisfaction of the building official to comply with the building code as adopted and amended in chapter 4 of this

Code and the floors and walls are impervious to leakage of underground and surface runoff of water and are insulated against dampness.

(Code 1968, § 34-43)

State Law reference— Space requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4115.

Sec. 34-236. - Responsibilities of owners.

- (a) — *No person shall own a building or structure* within the city which does not comply with the following requirements, particularly with respect to any evidence of decay of any of the items enumerated:
- (1) — *Foundations, exterior walls and roofs.* Every foundation, exterior wall and roof shall be weathertight, watertight, rodentproof and insectproof. Any evidence of decay of a foundation, exterior wall or roof shall be a violation of this section.
- (2) — *Interior partitions, walls, floors and ceilings.* Every interior partition, wall, floor and ceiling shall be capable of affording privacy and shall be kept in a good state of repair and in a clean and sanitary condition. Any evidence of decay shall be a violation of this section.
- (3) — *Drainage and removal of rain water from roofs.* All rain water shall be so drained and conveyed from every roof so as to not cause dampness in the walls, ceilings or floors of any habitable room or of any bathroom, toilet room or floors of any habitable room or of any bathroom, toilet room, basement or cellar. Any evidence of decay of a roof shall be a violation of this section.

- (4) — *Windows, exterior doors and basement hatchways.* Every window, exterior door and basement hatchway shall be weathertight and rodentproof. Any evidence of decay of a window, exterior door or basement hatchway shall be a violation of this section.
- (5) — *Exterior wood and metal surfaces.* All exterior wood and metal surfaces shall be protected from the elements and against decay by paint or other approved protective coating applied in a workmanlike fashion. Any evidence of decay such as cracking, scaling, peeling or loose paint or decay of any other protective coating, regardless of the type of surface painted or upon which any other protective coating has been placed, shall be a violation of this section. With regard to surfaces other than wood or metal, once the decaying paint or protective covering is removed, a property owner shall repaint or re-apply any other protective coating if a protective coating is necessary to protect the surface from decay or otherwise make it weather tight.
- (6) — *Stairways, porches, etc.* Every inside and outside stairway, every porch, and every appurtenance thereto shall be so constructed as to be safe to use and capable of supporting the load that normal use may cause to be placed thereon. Any evidence of decay of a stairway, porch, etc., shall be a violation of this section.
- (7) — *Plumbing fixtures; water and waste pipes.* Every supplied plumbing fixture and water and waste pipe shall be properly installed and maintained in good sanitary working condition. Any evidence of decay of such plumbing fixture, water pipe or waste pipe shall be a violation of this section.
- (8) — *Chimneys and smoke pipes.* Every chimney and every supplied smoke pipe shall be adequately supported.
- (9) — *Toilet room and bathroom floors.* Every toilet room, floor surface and bathroom floor surface shall be maintained so as to be impervious to water and shall be kept in a clean and sanitary condition.
- (10) — *Facilities, equipment and utilities generally.* Every supplied facility, piece of equipment or utility which is required under this chapter shall be so constructed or installed that it will function properly and shall be maintained in good working condition.
- (11) — *Removing, discontinuing, etc., services, facilities, equipment or utilities.* No owner or operator shall cause any service, facility equipment or utility which is required to be supplied under the provisions of this chapter to be removed from, shutoff from or discontinued for any occupied dwelling or dwelling unit let or occupied by himbuilding, except for such temporary interruption as may be necessary while actual repairs, replacements or alterations are in the process of being made.
- (12) — *Pest control.* Every owner of a dwelling containing two or more dwelling unitsbuilding shall be responsible for the extermination of insects, rodents or other pests on the premises. Whenever infestation exists in ~~two~~any building or ~~more~~any part of the dwelling units in ~~any~~ dwelling or in the shared or public parts of ~~any~~ dwelling containing two or more dwelling unitsany building, extermination thereof shall be the responsibility of the owner. and extermination must be performed by a licensed exterminator.

- (13) —*Cleanliness, etc., of communal, shared or public areas.* Every owner of a dwelling containing two or more dwelling units~~building~~ shall be responsible for maintaining in a clean and sanitary condition all communal, shared or public areas of the dwelling~~building~~ and the premises thereof which are used or shared by the occupants of two or more dwelling units.
- (14) —*Cleanliness, etc., of occupied dwelling units*~~buildings~~ generally. No owner shall occupy or rent to any other person for occupancy or allow any other person to occupy any vacant dwelling unit~~building or any part thereof~~, unless it is clean, sanitary and complies in compliance with all provisions of this chapter and all rules and regulations adopted promulgated pursuant thereto.
- (15) —*Open ditches or excavations.* All open ditches or excavations ~~which~~~~that~~ present a safety or health hazard shall be filled or protected to eliminate such hazard.
- (16) —*Drainage generally.* All parts of dwellings, dwelling units or rooming units~~all buildings~~ and premises shall be so drained as to prevent unsanitary accumulation of water in cellars or basements or any nuisance to or excessive drainage upon sidewalks and adjoining properties.
- (17) —*Fences.* All fences located on an individual's property shall be maintained in good condition. Evidence of disrepair such as large holes, collapsed sections, missing sections, missing or broken railings and/or posts, shall be a violation of this section.
- (b) —Any person violating any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based on the provisions of this section or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement or implementation of this section, or violating any provision of this section, or any provision of any such rule or regulation, shall be deemed guilty of subject to a misdemeanor penalty pursuant to section 34-37 and upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$100.00, together with any applicable remediation costs and disbursements of prosecution, or be imprisoned for a period not exceeding six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment.
- (c) —After conviction and punishment for violation of such order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this section, or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement or implementation of this section, if such person shall continue in violation of such order, then such person shall be liable for further prosecution, conviction and punishment upon such same order, without any necessity of the commissioner of licenses and inspections issuing a new order, until such order has been complied with.
- (d) —Each day's week's failure to comply with any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections, based upon the provisions of this section, or the provisions of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections before the enforcement and implementation of any provision of this section or any such rule or regulation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense and be punishable as such.
- (d) When, in the opinion of the commissioner of licenses and inspections, the structural integrity of any structure is potentially compromised, the commissioner of licenses and inspections may order that a structural analysis be performed by a licensed structural engineer to determine the integrity of the structure. The structural engineer shall submit a detailed

report on how to repair or address any hazardous situation presented by such structure. The cost of the structural engineer's report shall be classified as an enforcement cost and shall be recoverable from the owner of the property.

(Code 1968, § 34-44; Ord. No. 97-092, § 1, 12-4-97; Ord. No. 14-033(sub-1), § 1, 2-18-16)

State Law reference— Responsibilities of owners and occupants, 31 Del. C. § 4120.

Sec. 34-237. - Responsibilities of occupants; penalties for violations.

(a) — The occupants of every dwelling or dwelling unit shall comply with the following requirements:

(1) — *Cleanliness and sanitation generally.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit shall keep in a clean and sanitary condition that part of the dwelling, dwelling unit and premises thereof which he occupies and controls.

(2) — *Disposal of rubbish.* Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall dispose of all his rubbish in a clean and sanitary manner by placing it in the rubbish containers required by sections 34-231 and 13-7.

(3) — *Disposal of garbage.* Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall dispose of all his garbage and any other organic waste which might provide food for rodents in a clean and sanitary manner by placing it in the garbage disposal facilities or garbage storage containers required by sections 34-231 and 13-7.

(4) — *Screens, storm doors and windows.* Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall be responsible for handling all screens and double or storm doors and windows whenever the same are required under the provisions of this chapter or of any rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto, except where the owner has agreed to supply such service.

(5) — *Pest control.* Every occupant of a dwelling containing a single dwelling unit shall be responsible for the extermination of any insects, rodents or other pests therein or on the premises; and every occupant of a dwelling unit in a dwelling containing more than one dwelling unit shall be responsible for such extermination whenever his dwelling unit is the only one infested. The owner's responsibilities are as follows:

(a.) — Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this subsection, whenever infestation is caused by failure of the owner to maintain a dwelling in a ratproof or reasonably insect-proof condition, extermination shall be the responsibility of the owner.

(b.) — Whenever infestation exists in two or more of the dwelling units in any dwelling, or in the shared or public parts of any dwelling containing two or more dwelling units, extermination thereof shall be the responsibility of the owner.

(6) — *Plumbing fixtures.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit shall keep all plumbing fixtures therein in a clean and sanitary condition and shall be responsible for the exercise of reasonable care in the proper use and operation thereof.

(7) — *Heating facilities.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit shall be responsible for the exercise of reasonable care, proper use and proper operation of supplied heating facilities.

(8) — *Care and use generally.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit which is let or rented from another shall be responsible for the exercise of reasonable care and the proper use of the dwelling unit and its component parts and supplied facilities and equipment such as screens, screen doors, garbage and rubbish containers. No occupant of a dwelling unit which is let or rented from another shall neglect the maintenance of the dwelling unit such that it has an injurious effect on the health, safety or welfare of the occupants themselves or of immediate neighbors.

(9) — *High grass and weeds.* Every occupant of a dwelling unit which is let or rented shall be responsible for weeds or grasses growing or accumulating on land of which he or she is the occupant, which includes, but is not limited to any public right of way or alley facing, adjoining or abutting the occupant's property so as to create a nuisance to health or safety thereon or to adjoining property. Weeds or grasses growing in the public right-of-way, including but not limited to growth occurring in cracks, fractures, expansion joints in the curbs and sidewalk, more than four inches in height and/or six inches in width, and weeds or grasses more than eight inches in height growing in any other location referenced in this section shall be removed and/or cut.

(b) — Any person violating any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based on the provisions of this section or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement or implementation of this section, or violating any provision of this section, or any provision of any such rule or regulation, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof after trial before the justice of the peace court, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$250.00 for each period of one to seven days of each offense up to a maximum fine of \$1,000.00 for each such offense, together with the subject to a penalty pursuant to section 34-37 and any applicable remediation costs and disbursements of prosecution, or by imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment, for the first conviction. For any conviction of a violation that is the second conviction for the same violation as a previous violation which has not been corrected, the minimum fine shall be not less than \$500.00 and not more than \$5,000.00; for the third conviction not less than \$1,000.00 nor more than \$5,000.00, which shall not be suspended; for the fourth conviction \$1,500.00, which shall not be suspended; and for the fifth and each subsequent conviction of the same violation that still has not been corrected, the minimum fine for each conviction shall be not less than \$5,000.00, which shall not be suspended. Upon conviction of a violation of this section, the court may order the defendant to correct the violation by a date certain. If the defendant fails to correct the violation by the court ordered date, the court may impose a fine of \$50.00 per day to be calculated from the date of conviction to the date by which the court had ordered the violation to be corrected.

(c) — After conviction and punishment for violation of such order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this section or any provision of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement or implementation of this section, if such person shall continue in violation of such order, then such person shall be liable for further prosecution, conviction and punishment upon

~~such same order, without any necessity of the commissioner of licenses and inspections issuing a new order, until such order has been complied with.~~

- (d) Each day's week's failure to comply with any order of the commissioner of licenses and inspections based upon the provisions of this section or the provisions of any rule or regulation adopted by the department of licenses and inspections for the enforcement and implementation of any provision of this section or any such rule or regulation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense and be punishable as such.

(Code 1968, § 34-45; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 3, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Responsibilities of owners and occupants, 31 Del. C. § 4120.

Secs. 34-238—34-265. - Reserved.

DIVISION 2. - PREREQUISITES TO COMPLIANCE^[3]

Footnotes:

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Editor's note— Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), §§ 4, 5, adopted Oct. 19, 2006, repealed sections 34-267, 34-268, in their entirety and renumbered former sections 34-269—34-278 as new sections 34-267—34-276. Former sections 34-267, 34-268 pertained to garbage and rubbish storage and disposal, and derived from the Code of 1968, §§ 34-47, 34-48.

Sec. 34-266. - Plumbing and plumbing fixtures.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to plumbing and plumbing fixtures unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) — *Contamination of water supply generally.* All plumbing is so designed and installed as to prevent contamination of the water supply through backflow, backsiphonages and any other method of contamination.
- (2) — *Direct connection to nonpotable water supply.* All plumbing is so designed and installed that no potable water supply line or plumbing fixture is directly connected to a nonpotable water supply.
- (3) — *Cross-connections.* Every water supply line is so constructed that there is no possibility of a cross-connection between a potable and a nonpotable water supply line in accordance with the building code.
- (4) — *Condition of water supply lines, valves.* Every water supply line is in good working condition and every valve therein is in good working condition.
- (5) — *Water supply inlets.* Every water supply inlet is located above the flood level of any installed sink, lavatory, bathtub or automatic washing and similar water-using fixture, or above some unobstructible overflow thereof; and there are no submerged

inlets, except submerged inlets installed with a vacuum breaker of a type approved by the enforcement officer.

- (6) — *Traps in waste lines.* The waste line of every water-using fixture is trapped.
- (7) — *Draining and condition of waste line drains.* Every waste line drains freely without obstruction or leaks.
- (8) — *Maintenance and cleanliness generally.* All plumbing and plumbing fixtures are maintained in good working condition, and all plumbing fixtures are kept clean.
- (9) — *Water pressure.* Water pressure is adequate when it permits a flow of two gallons per minute of water from any open water faucet at all times.
- (10) — *Construction, etc., of flush toilets.* Every flush water closet or toilet shall be constructed with a bowl and trap made in one piece, which is of such shape and form and which holds a sufficient quantity of water so that no fecal matter will collect on the surface of the bowl and which is equipped with flushing rims which permit the bowl to be properly flushed and scoured when water is discharged through the flushing rims.

(Code 1968, § 34-46; Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(f), 7-2-92)

State Law reference— Plumbing requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4116.

Sec. 34-267. - Gas facilities.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to gas facilities unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) — *Venting.* All gas-burning hot water heaters and space heaters are properly vented to a chimney or duct leading to outdoor space.
- (2) — *Condition of pipes generally.* Every gas pipe is sound and tightly put together, with no leaks.
- (3) — *Corrosion or obstruction of pipes.* No gas pipe is corroded or obstructed so as to reduce gas pressure or volume.
- (4) — *Pipe material.* Every gas appliance is connected to a gas line with metal piping.
- (5) — *Gas pressure.* Gas pressure is adequate to permit a proper flow of gas from all open gas valves at all times.

(Code 1968, § 34-49; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

Sec. 34-268. - Electric wiring and facilities generally.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to electric wiring and facilities unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) — *Insulation of wire.* Every exposed electric wire has insulation which is in good condition.

- (2) — *Installation of switch and outlet plates.* Every switch plate and outlet plate is properly fastened in position.
- (3) — *Short circuits, etc.* No short circuit or break exists in any electric line.
- (4) — *Functioning, etc., of fixtures and outlets.* Every fixture and outlet functions properly and is properly fastened in place.
- (5) — *Shock hazards.* No obvious shock hazard exists. In order to eliminate the potential for shock hazards, particularly in bathrooms and kitchens, the installation and maintenance in good order of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), as defined in the National Electrical Code 1996 Edition, shall be required in all dwelling units.
- (6) — *Temporary wiring.* No temporary wiring is used, except extension cords which run directly from portable electric fixtures to convenience outlets, and which do not lie underneath floor-covering materials or extend through doorways, transoms or other similar apertures through structural elements.

(Code 1968, § 34-50; Ord. No. 98-037, § 1, 4-2-98; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Electrical facilities, 31 Del. C. § 4118.

Sec. 34-269. - Heating and heating facilities generally.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to heating and heating facilities unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) — *Central systems generally.* When the dwelling or dwelling unit is heated by a central heating system:
 - a. — The central heating unit is in good operating condition.
 - b. — Every heat duct, steam pipe and hot water pipe is free of leaks and functions so that adequate heat is delivered where intended.
 - c. — Every seal between the sections of a hot air furnace is in good repair.
- (2) — *Portable heaters.* There are no portable heaters burning solid, liquid or gaseous fuels.
- (3) — *Smoke pipes and chimneys.* Every smoke pipe and every chimney is adequately supported and maintained in such condition that there will be no leakage or backing up of noxious gases.

(Code 1968, § 34-51; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Heating facilities, 31 Del. C. § 4117.

Sec. 34-270. - Lighting.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to lighting unless every public hall, stairway and foyer has sufficient lighting through windows or from electric lights to provide illumination of at least one foot-candle on

every part of such areas at all times of the day and night, except as otherwise provided by section 34-234(8).

(Code 1968, § 34-52; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Lighting requirements, 31 Del. C. § 4115.

Sec. 34-271. - Insect and rodent control.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to exclusion of insects and rodents unless it complies with sections 34-234(9) and 34-234(10) and with the requirement that every basement or cellar window shall be supplied with a heavy wire screen of not larger than one-fourth-inch mesh.

(Code 1968, § 34-53; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Extermination, 31 Del. C. § 4121.

Sec. 34-272. - Roofs.

The roof of every dwelling shall be tight and have no defects that admit rain.

(Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(g)(34-54), 7-2-92; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Roofs, 31 Del. C. § 4113(f).

Sec. 34-273. - Stairs and porches.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to stairs and porches unless the following requirements are met:

- | (1) — *Holes, grooves and cracks.* Every flight of stairs and porch is free of holes, grooves and cracks which are large enough to constitute possible accident hazards.
- | (2) — *Rails generally.* Every stairwell, and every flight of stairs which is more than three risers high, has rails not less than two feet, six inches, measured vertically from the nose of the treads to the top of the rail, and every porch which is more than three risers high has rails not less than three feet, six inches above the platform.
- | (3) — *Fastening and maintenance of rails, etc.* Every rail and balustrade is firmly fastened and is maintained in good condition.
- | (4) — *Settling, etc.* No flight of stairs has settled more than one inch out of its intended position or has pulled away from supporting or adjacent structures.
- | (5) — *Supports.* No flight of stairs has rotting or deteriorating supports.
- | (6) — *Treads, height.* The treads of every flight of stairs are uniform in height and comply with the building code as adopted and amended in chapter 4 of this Code.

- (7) — *Condition, etc., generally.* Every stair tread is sound and is securely fastened in position.
- (8) — *Strength.* Every stair tread is strong enough to bear a concentrated load of at least 400 pounds without danger of breaking through.
- (9) — *Porches, floors.* Every porch has a sound floor.
- (10) — *Porch supports.* No porch has rotting or deteriorating supports.

(Code 1968, § 34-56; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

Sec. 34-274. - Bathroom and water closet compartment floors.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to water closet compartment and bathroom floors unless every water closet compartment floor and bathroom floor is made of terrazzo, tile, smooth concrete, dense hardwood with tightly fitting joints, rubber, asphalt tile, linoleum or other similar material providing a surface which is reasonably impervious to water and is easily cleanable; or such floor is made of one of the denser soft woods, with tightly fitting joints, and is covered with varnish, lacquer or other similar coating providing a surface which is reasonably impervious to water and is easily cleanable.

(Code 1968, § 34-57; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

State Law reference— Plumbing facilities, 31 Del. C. § 4116.

Sec. 34-275. - General sanitation.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to general sanitation unless the following requirements are met:

- (1) — *Floors and floor coverings.* Every floor and floor covering is kept reasonably clean and is not littered or covered with dirt, dust, garbage, human or animal fecal matter, or any other unsanitary thing.
- (2) — *Walls and ceilings.* Every wall and ceiling is reasonably clean and is not littered or covered with dust, dirt, cobwebs or greasy film.
- (3) — *Stagnant water.* No stagnant water is allowed to accumulate or stand anywhere about the premises.

(Code 1968, § 34-58; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06)

Sec. 34-276. - All windows to be operable.

No dwelling or dwelling unit shall be deemed to comply with the requirements of this chapter relating to windows unless every window is operable and readily opened and closed. The requirements of this section shall mean that both parts of a double-hung window shall be moveable up and down and that any window that opens outward or that opens inward shall be

maintained so as to do so. This provision shall apply to type R-3 one- and two-family dwellings only.

(Ord. No. 98-077, § 1, 7-30-98; Ord. No. 98-135, § 1, 11-20-98; Ord. No. 06-054(sub 1), § 5, 10-19-06; Ord. No. 14-023, § 1, 6-5-14)

Secs. 34-277—34-300. - Reserved.

ARTICLE IV. - HOTELS AND ROOMING HOUSES^[4]

Footnotes:

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Cross reference— Rooming house license, § 5-91.

DIVISION 1. - GENERALLY

Sec. 34-301. - Compliance required.

No person shall operate a hotel or a rooming house, or shall occupy or let to another for occupancy any hotel unit in any hotel or any rooming unit in any rooming house, except in compliance with the provisions of every section of this chapter except the provisions of section 34-231 and section 34-237.

(Code 1968, § 34-59)

Sec. 34-302. - Operation and occupancy of rooming houses, generally.

(a) — Every rooming unit located within a rooming house shall comply with the requirements for dwelling units as established in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, and rooming houses shall, in addition, be subject to the following special requirements:

(1) — Each rooming house owner or operator within the city shall file, on or before January 1 of each year, a notarized registration statement listing the street address and parcel number of each such rooming house and the number of rooming units therein, together with an annual registration of rooming house fee of \$100.00 per rooming house. Such registration fee is in addition to and not in lieu of the license fee requirements of chapter 5 of this Code and is in addition to and not in lieu of the permit fee requirements of this article. Such registration statement and fees shall be filed with the revenue division of the department of finance.

(2) — The department of licenses and inspections and the fire department shall inspect such registered rooming houses at least once per year.

(b) *Standards of operation.*

(1) — The floor space requirements for rooming houses shall be a minimum of 70 square feet per rooming unit, except in instances of occupancy by more than one person

in which case the minimum floor space requirements shall be 70 square feet per person occupying such room unit.

- (2) — Each floor of a rooming house shall be equipped with a smoke detector of the hard wired variety, an emergency lighting system, and at least one fire extinguisher; in addition, at least one smoke detector shall be installed in the basement of the rooming house building.
- (3) — Each floor of a rooming house shall have a common hallway, and each individual rooming unit shall contain at least one window; in addition, fire escapes shall be provided to service the third floor of a building where rooming units exist, with unobstructed access to such fire escapes. In no case shall access to any fire escape be located solely within a rooming unit or within or through any other private or normally closed room.
- (4) — Partitions used in rooming house construction shall consist of two-by-four wood or steel studs and shall be covered on both sides with one hour fire-rated drywall.
- (5) — The use of paneling in buildings dedicated to rooming house use is prohibited unless such paneling or any finish wall covering carries a minimum class C fire rating; in no case shall paneling be permitted in common hallway or stairway areas and the commissioner of licenses and inspection shall be empowered to order the removal of paneling from such common areas.
- (6) — Common doorways between adjoining rooming house buildings shall be permitted only with the specific approval of the commissioner of licenses and inspections; any such doorway between rooming house buildings shall be equipped with a fire-rated class B door and permission shall be granted by the commissioner only upon a showing of exceptional need for the same by the owner or operator thereof.
- (7) — A common or central kitchen facility in a rooming house may be maintained on an optional basis, but only after securing specific permission to do so from the city's department of licenses and inspections; in no case shall the use of hot plates or similar portable cooking devices be permitted in a rooming unit, or in any other area of a rooming house.
- (8) — In addition to and not in lieu of the requirements of section 34-338, the department of licenses and inspections and the fire marshal's office shall inspect or cause to be inspected the electrical system in rooming houses and shall order the upgrading of such electrical system if such upgrading is necessary to meet the demands to be placed upon the electrical system and to assure the safety of rooming house occupants and nearby residents.

(Code 1968, § 34-59.1; Ord. No. 92-053(sub 1), § 21(h), 7-2-92)

Sec. 34-303. - Guest register.

The operator of a hotel or a rooming house shall keep a list of all occupants up to date at all times in a permanently bound volume and such volume shall be available for inspection by the commissioner of licenses and inspections or his authorized representative.

(Code 1968, § 34-60)

Sec. 34-304. - Toilet, etc., facilities.

At least one flush water closet, lavatory basin and bathtub or shower, properly connected to a water and sewer system, approved by the enforcement officer and in good working condition, shall be supplied for each six persons or fraction thereof residing within a hotel and for each four persons or fraction thereof residing within a rooming house, excluding members of the operator's family who shall have their own facilities; provided, that in a hotel or rooming house where rooms are let only to males, flush urinals may be substituted for not more than one-half the required number of water closets. All such facilities shall be so located within the dwelling as to be reasonably accessible from a common hall or passageway to all persons sharing such facilities. Every lavatory basin and bathtub or shower shall be supplied with hot water at all times. No such facilities shall be located in a basement except by written approval of the enforcement officer. All such facilities shall be located within a room which affords privacy and when not provided within a hotel unit or rooming unit, they shall not be more than one story removed from the hotel unit or rooming unit intended to be served by such facilities.

(Code 1968, § 34-61)

Sec. 34-305. - Bedding and towels.

The operator of every hotel or rooming house shall change supplied bed linen and towels therein at least once each week, and prior to the letting of any room to any occupant. The operator shall be responsible for the maintenance of all supplied bedding in a clean and sanitary manner.

(Code 1968, § 34-62)

Sec. 34-306. - Floor space requirements for hotels.

Every room in a hotel occupied for sleeping purposes by one person shall contain at least 70 square feet of floor space, and every such room occupied for sleeping purposes by more than one person shall contain at least 50 square feet of floor space for each occupant thereof.

(Code 1968, § 34-63)

Sec. 34-307. - Means of egress generally.

Every hotel unit and every rooming unit shall have safe, unobstructed means of egress leading to safe and open space at ground level as required by the enforcement officer or the fire marshal.

(Code 1968, § 34-64)

Sec. 34-308. - Separate access required.

There shall be for each dwelling unit and for each rooming unit in a rooming house and for each hotel unit in a hotel a separate access either to a hallway, landing, stairway or street.

(Code 1968, § 34-65)

Sec. 34-309. - Maintenance generally.

The operator of every hotel or rooming house shall be responsible for the sanitary maintenance of all walls, floors and ceilings, and for maintenance of a sanitary condition in every other part of the hotel or rooming house. He shall be further responsible for the sanitary maintenance of the entire premises when the entire structure or building is leased or occupied by the operator.

(Code 1968, § 34-66)

Sec. 34-310. - Dwelling units to comply with established requirements.

Every dwelling unit located within a hotel or a rooming house shall comply with all of the requirements for dwelling units as established in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(Code 1968, § 34-67)

Sec. 34-311. - Preparing or cooking food in hotels—Generally.

No occupant of a hotel shall prepare or cook food in a hotel unless such food is prepared or cooked in a dwelling unit contained therein.

(Code 1968, § 34-68)

Sec. 34-312. - Same—Communal kitchens prohibited.

No communal kitchen shall be contained in any hotel.

(Code 1968, § 34-69)

Sec. 34-313. - Preparing or cooking food in sleeping rooms of rooming houses.

Food shall not be prepared or cooked in any room in a rooming house used for sleeping purposes.

(Code 1968, § 34-70)

Secs. 34-314—34-335. - Reserved.

DIVISION 2. - OPERATION PERMIT

Sec. 34-336. - Required.

- | (a) — No person shall operate a hotel or a rooming house unless he holds a valid hotel permit or rooming house permit, issued by the commissioner of licenses and inspections in the name of such operator and for the specific dwelling or dwelling unit. The operator shall apply to the commissioner of licenses and inspections for such permit, which shall be issued by such commissioner upon compliance by the operator with the applicable provisions of this chapter and of any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto. Such permit shall be displayed in a conspicuous place within the hotel or rooming house at all times. No such permit shall be transferable.
- | (b) — Every person holding such a permit shall give notice in writing to the commissioner of licenses and inspections within 24 hours after having sold, transferred, given away or otherwise disposed of ownership of, interest in, or control of any hotel or rooming house. Such notice shall include the name and address of the person succeeding to the ownership or control of such hotel or rooming house. The new owner or operator of a hotel or a rooming house shall also notify the commissioner of licenses and inspections within ten days of any transfer of such hotel or rooming house to the new owner. Every hotel permit and every rooming house permit shall expire at the end of one year following its date of issuance, unless sooner suspended or revoked as provided by this article.

(Code 1968, § 34-71)

Sec. 34-337. - Application generally.

The application for a hotel permit or a rooming house permit as required by this article shall be made on forms furnished by the department of licenses and inspections. Such application shall include:

- | (1) — The name and address of the operator and the name and address of the owner if the operator is not the owner.
- | (2) — The location of the hotel or rooming house including the street and number of each entrance.
- | (3) — The number of hotel units or rooming units occupied or available for occupancy and the number of persons who may be accommodated in accordance with the occupancy provisions of this chapter and with the provisions of other applicable municipal ordinances and regulations.
- | (4) — Such other information as the commissioner of licenses and inspections may require.

(Code 1968, § 34-72)

Sec. 34-338. - Fire marshal's certificate to accompany application.

Every applicant for a hotel permit or a rooming house permit as required by this article shall procure from the fire marshal a certificate to the effect that the buildings and premises for which the permit is desired are free from fire hazards and comply with all provisions of chapter 12 and other fire laws, ordinances and rules and regulations applicable thereto and designed for fire

protection and control. Such certificate shall be filed with the commissioner of licenses and inspections at the time the application for a permit is made.

(Code 1968, § 34-73)

Sec. 34-339. - Application fees.

Accompanying the application for a rooming house permit or a hotel permit, as required by this article, there shall be an initial application fee in the amount of \$10.00 for the initial application plus \$5.00 for each rooming unit within a rooming house and \$5.00 for each hotel unit within a hotel. There shall be no annual renewal fees.

(Code 1968, § 34-74)

Sec. 34-340. - Hearing upon denial of application.

Any person whose application for a permit to operate a hotel or a rooming house has been denied may request and shall be granted a hearing on the matter before the board of licenses and inspections review under the procedure provided by section 34-34.

(Code 1968, § 34-75)

Sec. 34-341. - Issuance generally.

A hotel permit or a rooming house permit shall be issued by the commissioner of licenses and inspections to the operator or owner upon reasonable proof:

- (1) —____ That the hotel or rooming house complies with the applicable provisions of this chapter and with the rules and regulations issued thereunder and with other applicable municipal ordinances and regulations; and
- (2) —____ That a certificate of occupancy and a certificate of zoning have been issued by the department of licenses and inspections pursuant to the provisions of chapter 48 of this Code.

(Code 1968, § 34-76)

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Sec. 34-342. - Effect of issuance.

The issuance of a hotel permit or a rooming house permit under this article shall not in any way signify or imply that the hotel or rooming house conforms with the zoning ordinance of the city, the building code of the city or other municipal or state regulations.

(Code 1968, § 34-77)

Sec. 34-343. - Procedure for suspension.

Whenever upon inspection of any hotel or rooming house the enforcement officer finds that conditions or practices exist which are in violation of any provision of this chapter or of any rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto, the enforcement officer shall give notice in writing to the operator of such hotel or rooming house that unless such conditions or practices are corrected within a reasonable period, to be determined by the enforcement officer, the operator's hotel permit or rooming house permit will be suspended. At the end of such period the enforcement officer shall reinspect such hotel or rooming house, and if he finds that such conditions or practices have not been corrected, he shall give notice in writing to the operator that the latter's permit has been suspended. Upon receipt of notice of suspension, such operator shall immediately cease operation of such hotel or rooming house, and no person shall occupy for sleeping or living purposes any hotel unit or rooming unit therein.

(Code 1968, § 34-78)