

Minimum Standards & Regulations for Existing Houses

GENERAL

- Any repairs done to the dwelling must meet the NC State Building Code and all other applicable codes.
- The licensed contractor as listed on the permit must be responsible for scheduling inspections and must meet the inspector on the job site.
- The licensed contractors as listed on the permit shall do all the electrical, plumbing and mechanical work.
- All repairs and alterations made to any dwelling or dwelling unit must be installed in the manner in which it is intended to be installed; and, all work must exhibit quality workmanship.
- All dwellings, dwelling units and rooming houses must have present house numbers as assigned by the City of Gastonia Engineering Division and posted on each house according to Section 16-75.
- No utility service is provided to any dwelling that is in violation of the Minimum Housing Standards of the City of Gastonia. Temporary utilities may be acquired for the purpose of construction, repair or alteration if dwelling meets the requirements for such utilities.

PLUMBING

- Connection to potable water supply with pressure reducing valve.
- Connection to an approved sewage disposal (public or private)
 - if private, must have Env. Health Department approval
 - if public, must have engineering approval for sewer tap
- Kitchen sink must be installed
- Bathroom lavatory must be installed
- Watercloset must be installed
- Tub or shower must be installed
- All fixtures must be in good working condition and installed to meet the adopted residential plumbing code
- All fixtures must be accessible to the occupants and located within the dwelling.
- Must have a minimum door size of 24" on bathrooms.
- All plumbing (under house and inside walls) must conform to the NC plumbing code and be maintained in a state of good repair and in working order.
- Must have connection to hot and cold water in kitchen sink, bathtub or shower and bathroom lavatory.
- All piping shall be protected from freezing by being installed in protected spaces
- Structure must be connected to a potable water supply (public or private)
- Water-heating appliances must be installed in accordance with the NC Residential Building Code & National Electric Code – a gas burning water heating appliance

shall not be located in a bathroom, toilet room, bedroom or other occupied room normally kept closed. An approved combination temperature & pressure-relief valve and relief discharge pipe shall be properly installed & maintained on all water heaters

- Licensed contractors must do the installation of a new water-heating appliance and the contractor must obtain a permit from the Inspection Division prior to work commencing.
- Water temperature of not more than 120 degrees and not less than 100 degrees

VENTILATION

- Every habitable room shall have a window or skylight facing directly to the outdoors, (habitable room shall include: bedroom, living-room, dining and kitchen rooms)
- Minimum window area shall be 8% of floor area. Windows within 5 feet of a wall or partition is not considered facing directly outdoors and not counted as required window openings.
- Every habitable room must have at least one window, which can be easily opened.
- Whenever the only window in a room is a skylight is must be 15% of room area.
- The total openable window or skylight area in every habitable room must be equal to at least 45% of the minimum window area size.
- Every bathroom and water closet shall comply with light and ventilation requirements of a habitable room or be equipped with approved mechanical ventilation.
- Year round mechanically ventilating systems may be substituted for windows as required above. (except for sleeping rooms) Window air conditioning units are not included in this exception.
- All attic and crawl spaces must be ventilated according to the NC Residential building code.
- Clothes dryer exhaust systems shall be independent of all other systems & exhausted in accordance with manufacturers recommendations and shall be directly vented to the exterior through approved means.

ELECTRICAL

- Every habitable room must contain at least two floor or wall type convenience receptacles. (If a switch controlled receptacle, it must be in addition to the required number of receptacles.)
- Every bathroom must have a convenience wall type GFCI receptacle installed according to the National Electric Code.
- In every bathroom, water-closet room, laundry room and furnace room at least one supplied ceiling or wall type electric light fixture.
- Every kitchen shall have one convenient receptacle located along a countertop or table and if within 24" of water source or installed to serve the countertop surface it must be GFCI protected.
- Every public hallway or stairway in multiple dwelling must be lighted at all times.
- All fixtures, equipment, receptacles and wiring shall be maintained in a state of good repair, safe and capable of being used and installed in accordance with the NEC.

- The minimum capacity of any service supply and the main disconnect switch shall be capable of supporting the load and in no case shall the service be less than 100 AMPS per dwelling unit.

HEATING

- The heating apparatus utilized must be checked out and certified operational to maintain a temperature of 68 Degrees F° measured at 3 feet above the floor. A licensed mechanical contractor must inspect unit and results sent in writing regardless of whether a new unit is installed or whether the existing apparatus is re-installed. A copy of this document will be kept in our file.
- Other heating facilities must also meet the above requirements of 68 degrees F.
- Heating appliances and facilities shall be listed by an Underwriters Laboratory or another approved listing agency.
- All appliances must be installed according to the NC Residential building code, NC Mechanical Code and NEC.
- All appliances must be maintained in a safe and good working condition.
- Fireplaces used for ventilation must be maintained to the following standards:
 - Closed with masonry when chimney is used for a flue for stove.
 - Stove must be within 6' of the thimble serving it.
 - No combustible materials within 12" of a stovepipe unless stovepipe is listed and approved for such use by a listing agent and installed according to manufactures recommendations.
 - No stovepipe shall pass through combustible walls unless it meets the criterion for the listing agent and installed according to manufacturer recommendations.
 - Fireplaces may be used for supplemental heat only and not the primary source of heat.
- No portable heating appliance may be used for a primary source of heat.
- No portable kerosene heaters are allowed.
- All heating equipment (i.e., flues, duct work, chimneys, gas vents etc.) must be installed in accordance with the applicable building codes and maintained in a good working condition.
- A minimum of 22" X 36" or the size of equipment (which ever is smaller) crawl space door is required if heating equipment is installed in crawl space.

SPACE, USE AND LOCATION

- Every dwelling unit shall contain at least 150 square feet of habitable floor area for the first occupant
- A minimum of 100 square feet of habitable floor area is required for all other occupants.
- Every sleeping room must have 70 sq. ft of floor area for first occupant and every room shall contain an additional 50 sq. ft for each addition occupant over age 12; an additional 35 sq. ft for each occupant under the age of 12.

- The number of persons occupying a dwelling or dwelling unit shall not create conditions that endanger the life, health, safety or welfare of the occupants.
- Every habitable room must have the minimum floor area as required by the NC Residential Building Code.
- Ceiling height of at least ½ of the floor area must be at least seven (7) feet.
- No cellar may be used for living purposes.
- No basement may be used for living purposes unless it meets the requirements of this code.

SAFE AND SANITARY MAINTENANCE

- Exterior surfaces shall be resistant to deterioration and treated with a protective coating or covering and maintained in good repair to prevent deterioration.
- Every foundation wall, exterior wall and exterior roof shall be substantially weathertight, watertight and rodentproof; capable of affording privacy.
- Peeling, flaking and chipped paint shall be eliminated and surfaces repainted. All siding and masonry joints shall be substantially weather tight, watertight and rodent proof.
- Every dwelling unit shall have a minimum of R-19 insulation in the ceiling.
- A minimum clear opening of 14" X 24" inches of access into the attic area. If any mechanical equipment is located in attic area attic access must be 22" X 36" or the size of the equipment in which it serves.
- Every interior floor, wall and ceiling shall be watertight, weather-tight and rodent-proof; shall be kept in sound condition and good repair, capable of supporting normal load.
- Every tub or shower shall have a wall surface constructed and maintained so as to be substantially impervious to water and shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.
- All windows, exterior doors basements and hatchways must be substantially watertight, weather-tight and rodent-proof and kept in good working condition and in good repair.
- Doors shall be provided leading to all bedrooms, toilet rooms and bathrooms and all rooms adjoining a public space.
- All exterior doors must have an apparatus for opening and closing the door on both sides, a locking mechanism, and shall be kept in sound working condition and in good repair.
- Bathroom floor surface, kitchen floor surface and water closet compartment floor surface shall be constructed and maintained so as to be substantially impervious to water and so as to permit such floor to be easily kept in a clean and sanitary manner
- Every supplied facility, piece of equipment or utility which is required must be installed and constructed that it will function safely and effectively and shall be maintained in sound working condition.
- Every interior and exterior stairway, porch and any appurtenance must be safe to use and capable of supporting the load that normal use may cause.

- Every yard shall be properly graded so as to obtain thorough drainage as to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water and to allow positive drainage around the foundation of the dwelling unit.
- Every dwelling shall have a means of egress as required by the NC Residential Building Code. (Minimum of one required providing path of egress does not exceed the length allowed by the NC Building Code.)
- Every yard and exterior property area shall be kept free of noxious weeds or plant growth. (Grass must be maintained under 12 inches)
- All construction debris must be placed in container and removed prior to final approval of the dwelling unit.

INSECTS, RODENTS AND INFESTATION

- Screens shall be installed on all windows and openable areas, which open to the outdoors. This includes doorways.
- All screens must be framed and installed properly. (Cannot be stapled or permanently affixed to the sash, exterior siding etc.)
- Every basement or cellar window used or intended to be used for ventilation or any other opening to the basement shall be supplied with screens or other approved devices to prevent rodents from entering.
- To prevent rodent infestation the property owner is require to exterminate prior to a new occupant occupying the home. If infestation occurs after this extermination it is the responsibility of the tenant to provide extermination. (Except in cases where two or more dwelling units are attached and it remains the responsibility of the owner)
- Every dwelling unit shall be supplied with adequate rubbish storage facilities.
- Every dwelling unit shall have adequate garbage disposal facilities or storage containers have a capacity of not more than 30 gallons per each container.

STRUCTURAL

- Adequate facilities for egress in case of fire or panic shall be provided as per guidelines of NC Building Code.
- Wall partitions or supporting members, sills, joist, rafters or other structural members shall not lean, list or buckle, and shall not be rotted, deteriorated or damaged and shall not have holes or cracks which might admit rodents.
- Floors or roofs shall have adequate supporting members and strength to be reasonable safe for the purpose used.
- Roof coverings shall be maintained in good sound condition.
- No more than two (2) roof coverings, if more than two at current time of inspection the roof covering will not have to be removed unless it is deteriorated, then it must be stripped down to sheathing.
- Foundations, foundation walls (load bearing or non-load bearing), piers or other foundation supports shall not be deteriorated or damaged.

- All foundation walls shall be maintained plumed and free from deterioration and shall be capable of supporting the load and remain free from open cracks & breaks and shall be kept in such condition to prevent the entry of rodents & other pests.
- Foundation and crawl space must be free of trash and debris.
- The roof, flashing, exterior walls, basement walls, floors and all doors and windows exposed to the weather shall be constructed and maintained so as to be weather-tight, watertight and rodent proof.
- There shall be no chimneys or parts thereof which are defective, deteriorated or in danger of falling, or in such condition or location as to constitute a fire hazard.
- There shall be no use of ground for floors or wood floors on ground.
- All fuel storage tanks if used for heating purposes must be maintained in a safe condition and shall not be rusted, deteriorated or in danger of falling over. If the tank is not used for heating purposes it must be removed from the premises.
- Steps, stairs, landings, porches, or other parts and appurtenances shall be maintained in a condition that will not fail or collapse, or pose a danger to the occupants or the public. These appurtenances must be constructed of treated lumber with galvanized fasteners.
- Handrails and guardrails must be installed per the guidelines of the NC Residential Building Code. Handrails 30 to 34 inch. Guardrail must be 36 inches.
- Adequate facilities for egress in case of fire or panic shall be provided as per guidelines of NC volume VII.
- Interior floors, walls and ceilings must be kept in sound condition and good repair, shall be safe to support the load that is required and shall be finished with suitable material which by use of reasonable household methods promote cleanliness and sanitation and shall be maintained in such a manner to enable the occupants to maintain privacy between various spaces.

FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- All means of egress shall be readily open able from the side for which egress is to be made without the need for keys, special knowledge or effort.
- The required fire resistance rating of fire-resistance rated walls, fire stops, shaft enclosures, partitions and floors shall be maintained.
- No windows shall have bars, boards or other obstructions, which prevent egress.
- Smoke alarms must be installed as follows:
 1. On the ceiling or wall outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms;
 2. In each room used for sleeping purposes;
 3. On each level within a dwelling, including basements & cellars, but not crawl spaces & uninhabitable spaces;
- Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated in buildings where no construction is taking place. Buildings undergoing construction which constitutes the removal of interior walls or ceiling materials exposing the structure must install smoke detectors as required by the North Carolina Building & Electrical code.

EMERGENCY VIOLATIONS (RESPONSIBILITY OF OWNERS/OCCUPANTS)

- Within 48 hours repair any broken, burst, frozen or inoperable plumbing.
- Within 48 hours repair any exposed or unsafe wiring
- Within 48 hours repair unsafe or dangerous cooking equipment
- Within 48 hours repair, replace or remove fuel storage tanks that are leaking or improperly supported or dangerous.
- Within 48 hours repair, replace or install a heating appliance
- Within 48 hours remove any oil or gas fired portable heating equipment or nonvented cook stove or heater.
- Within 48 hours repair or remove and heating or cooking equipment which constitutes a serious fire hazards.
- Within 48 hours occupant or owner must have all utilities (water, sewer, gas, electric) connected to the dwelling unit.

CLEANLINESS

- Every owner of a multiple dwelling unit or complex shall be responsible for maintaining in a clean and sanitary condition the shared or public area of the premises.
- Every occupant of a dwelling unit shall be responsible for cleanliness of the occupied areas and facilities in which they occupy. (Includes: floors, walls, ceilings, windows, plumbing fixtures, cookstove, refrigerator, cabinets and other furnishing)
- No occupant shall obstruct in any manner any means of egress/ingress to or from any portion of the premises.
- No materials shall be placed in any fixture, which may result in the obstruction of such fixture or any lines connected thereto.