

Vacant Building Registration (VBR) Inspection Checklist

This is a list of items the Department of Neighborhood Services inspectors will be using to inspect vacant buildings under the VBR program. This is a general list and may not include every possible item covered by the property maintenance code, building code, fire code, and zoning codes.

Lot Maintenance Standards - Lot maintenance standards include the lot the building stands on and the surrounding public way and shall meet the following:

- All grass and weeds on the premises including abutting sidewalks, gutters and alleys shall be kept below 9 inches in height and all dead or broken trees, tree limbs or shrubbery shall be cut and removed from the premises.
- Any public sidewalk adjoining the lot shall be shoveled clear of snow so as to comply with Chapter 79-13 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.
- Junk, rubbish, waste and any material that creates a health, safety or fire hazard, including but not limited to any mail or flyers that have been delivered to the building, shall not be permitted to accumulate on any portion of the exterior lot of the building.
- No portion of the lot nor any structure, vehicle, receptacle or object on the premises shall be maintained or operated in any manner that causes or produces any health or safety hazard or permits the premises to become a rodent harborage or is conducive to rodent harborage.
- The lot shall be maintained so that water does not accumulate or stand on the ground.
- All fences and gates shall be maintained in sound condition and in good repair.

Exterior Maintenance Standards - The exterior of the building shall be enclosed, secured and maintained to meet the following:

- Foundations, basements, cellars and crawlspaces shall be maintained in sound and watertight condition adequate to support the building and protected against the entry of rodents or other animals.
- Exterior walls shall be free of holes, breaks, loose or rotting boards or timbers, and any other conditions which might admit rain or dampness to the interior portions of the walls or the interior spaces and shall be protected against the entry of rodents or other animals.
- Exterior windows and doors shall be maintained in sound condition and good repair and prevent rain from entering the building, or the opening shall be secured in accordance with Chapter 275-32-7 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances. The windows and doors shall be equipped with hardware for locking and the locking mechanism shall be maintained in properly functioning condition. All points of possible ingress and egress shall be secured to prevent unauthorized entry.
- The roof shall be adequately supported and maintained in weathertight condition; the gutters, downspouts, scuppers and appropriate flashing shall be in good repair and adequate to remove the water from the building.
- Chimneys and flues shall be kept in sound, functional, weathertight condition and in good repair.
- Every outside stair or step shall be maintained in sound condition and in good repair; every porch, stoop, deck, veranda, balcony and walk shall be maintained in sound condition for its purpose.

Interior Maintenance Standards - The interior of any building shall be maintained in accordance with the following:

- It is prohibited to accumulate or permit the accumulation of junk, trash, debris, boxes, lumber, scrap metal or any other materials that may produce any health, fire or safety hazard, or provide harborage for rodents or other animals.
- Every foundation, roof, floor, wall, stair, ceiling or other structural support shall be safe and capable of supporting the loads associated with normal usage and shall be kept in sound condition and repair.
- Any plumbing fixtures shall be maintained with no leaking pipes, and all pipes for water shall either be completely drained or heated to resist being frozen.
- Every exit door shall be secured with an internal deadbolt lock, or with a locking mechanism deemed equivalent or better by the department, and every exit door shall be capable of being opened from the inside easily and without the use of a key or special knowledge.
- Interior stairs shall have treads and risers that have uniform dimensions, are sound, securely fastened and have no rotting, loose or deteriorating supports.
- Every owner shall be responsible for the extermination of insects, rodents and other vermin in or about the premises.

Building Security Standards. The following apply to the securing of vacant buildings:

- All building openings shall be closed and secured, using methods and materials so as to comply with the requirements of Chapter 275-32-7 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.
- If a building has been vacant for 6 months or longer, or upon any renewal of the registration statement, the building owner shall implement and provide proof satisfactory to the department that in addition to complying with the security standards above, it is secured. If the building fails to be secured as determined by the commissioner or the commissioner's designee, then the building shall be boarded in accordance with Chapter 275-32-7 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.