

**Bristol Fire Marshal's  
Office**



**Apartment Building  
Inspection  
Program**

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Fire Marshal**

**860.584.7964  
Office Hours M-F  
8:00 - 4:30**

Revised June 2017

## Objective

Apartment buildings are regulated by the Fire Safety Code. Apartment buildings are defined as buildings containing three (3) or more dwelling units with independent cooking and bathrooms facilities, whether designated as apartment houses, tenements, or by any other name. Bristol has more than one thousand (1,000) apartment buildings that need to be inspected on an annual basis. By conducting these inspections we are complying with the law and making Bristol a safer place to live by protecting the tenants who occupy these buildings and the landlords who own the buildings. Compliance can be achieved through mutual respect and cooperation from all parties involved.

## Procedure

Inspections of Apartment Buildings can be initiated by any of the following actions:

1. A fire or other emergency in the apartment building that the Bristol Fire Department has responded to.
2. A request from the owner of the building.
3. A complaint from the owner or occupant of the building.
4. Additions made to, or use as an apartment occupancy.
5. Alterations, modernizations, or renovations of existing apartment buildings.
6. Change from another occupancy to an apartment building.
7. An annual inspection in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes.

In most of the cases listed above, the owner will be contacted by a written request letter or by telephone that an inspection needs to be conducted on said property. A mutually agreed upon date and time is then established. Normal inspection hours are Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Once the inspection has been completed, a letter will be sent to the owner detailing the findings of the inspection. If needed, an informational meeting can be setup between the owner and the inspector clarifying the inspection report.

## Most Commonly Asked Questions

### **Q: I received a letter requesting an inspection, why am I being singled out?**

**A:** You are not. Routine inspections required by State Statute are being conducted systematically throughout the City.

### **Q: My building is old, is it grandfathered?**

**A:** No. All buildings consisting of three (3) living units or more, whether they are new or existing, are subject to the State Fire Safety Code. The only exemptions are single (1) and two (2) family homes.

### **Q: I live in a condominium, is this considered an apartment building?**

**A:** Yes, if the building contains three or more living units. "Condominium" is a form of ownership, not occupancy. For example, there are condominium warehouses, condominium apartments, and condominium offices.

### **Q: What if I don't want my building inspected?**

**A:** It is a state law that apartment buildings must be inspected. Entry can be gained by the Fire Marshal through an Administrative Search Warrant if necessary but there is no need to deny us entry, we are here for your safety and the safety of others. Mutual cooperation is essential for the process to work effectively.

### **Q: I have received an abatement order/letter for corrections to be made, but I don't feel some items are necessary for Life Safety. What can I do?**

**A:** An abatement order is issued when conditions on the property do not meet the minimum standards for the occupancy, as referenced in the CSFPC (CT State Fire Prevention Code) or CSFSC (CT State Fire Safety Code). There is a modification process available for existing residential occupancies, which enables a property owner to employ alternative compliance methods to alleviate a hardship, after approval by the State Fire Marshal. The Local Fire Marshal's Office can offer guidance for this procedure.

If you disagree with the assessment, you may appeal the abatement at the State level through the Codes and Standards Committee. The Connecticut State Fire Marshal's website has information on how to apply for an appeal.

<http://www.ct.gov/dcs/cwp/view.asp?a=4489&q=530894>

### **Q: What happens if I don't fix what's wrong with my Apartment Building?**

**A:** It is expected that the repairs will be made. Serious Life Safety issues must be corrected immediately. Other issues will be given a generous period of time to complete repairs, but failure to comply with the State Fire Safety Code can result in criminal proceedings. With mutual respect and cooperation this can be avoided.

### **Q: I need more time to complete repairs, what can I do?**

**A:** An extension of time can be granted by the Local Fire Marshal. A form must be filled out explaining the reasons for the request.

### **Q: Smoke Detectors in the apartment, who's responsible for their maintenance?**

**A:** The owner of the building, unless, a legal document (lease) states otherwise. It is a good idea for landlords to have a document signed by the tenant that Smoke Detectors were installed and working.

### **Q: What is the State Fire Safety Code (SFSC)?**

**A:** The SFSC is the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101 Life Safety Code 2012 ed. with Connecticut Supplement.

### **Q: Are Building Permits required for repairs?**

**A:** Most of the time building permits are required, but check with the Building Department to determine if a permit is required. Contact the Building Department at 860-584-6215. Business hours are Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

*This pamphlet was prepared by the Bristol Fire Marshal's Office. It may or may not reflect the opinions and/or views of the State Fire Marshal's Office. The information in this pamphlet can change without notice.*