

Here's a bullet-point summary of suggested changes to the rental inspection procedures:

MORE
DISCUSSION ?

- **Extend Certificate of Compliance:** Move to a four-year certification cycle unless a tenant files a complaint about conditions.
- **Background Checks:** State law already makes property owners responsible for vetting property managers; redundant police-level checks should be removed.
- **Clarify Landlord Responsibilities:** Landlords should not be held accountable for criminal activity in rental units—focus inspections strictly on health, safety, and fire codes.
- **Ripped Carpeting:** Should not trigger annual inspections unless it creates a direct safety hazard.
- **City Cost Reductions:** The city should not bear the cost of mailing inspection notices to tenants; this responsibility should fall on landlords. *Part of license fee*
- **Liability in Complaint Inspections (Page 3, Section 8):** The city should not send inspectors based on tenant complaints if it implies the city will step in to fix the issue.
- **Photography in Units (Page 5, Section 10):** Inspectors should only take photos with explicit verbal consent from both the tenant and landlord.
- **Criminal Activity Determination (Page 5, Section 11):** Inspectors may not have adequate training to assess criminal activity; liability concerns and potential discrimination issues need to be addressed.
- **No Closet Entry:** Inspectors should not enter or open closets unless there is a clear structural or safety issue.
- **No Roof Access:** Inspectors should not climb onto roofs: to prevent unnecessary wear and tear on roofing materials and to ensure inspector safety—evaluations should be conducted from ground level. *Inspectors do not inspect rooves*
- **Scoring System Consideration:** Implement a standardized grading system rather than a pass/fail approach to create consistency and fairness in inspections.



Possible Eliminations or Simplifications:

1. **Overlapping Interior Evaluations:**
 - **Walls & Ceilings:** The Ramsey checklist includes “free from holes” and “free from water damage.” simply require them to be in good repair. → *Consolidate under “Must be in sound condition and free from damage.”*
 - **Sleeping Room Floor Space:** The Ramsey checklist repeats square footage minimums already covered by building codes. → *Eliminate specific measurements and reference building code standards instead.*
 - **Kitchen Usage Restriction:** Ramsey prohibits using kitchens as sleeping areas, which is already covered by fire and zoning codes. → *Remove as redundant.*
2. **Carpet and Flooring Requirements:**
 - Ramsey flags “**torn carpet**” as a trip hazard that could trigger an inspection. Only “floors must be in good repair.” → *Remove “torn carpet” unless it presents an immediate safety hazard (e.g., large holes, unsecured sections).*
3. **Detailed Smoke/CO Detector Instructions:**
 - Ramsey specifies placement rules in extreme detail (e.g., “within ten feet of bedrooms”). Compliance with state law and manufacturer instructions. →

Simplify by stating: "Smoke and CO detectors must be installed per state law and manufacturer guidelines."

4. Plumbing & Water Heater Redundancy:

- Ramsey's checklist includes extra plumbing specifications (e.g., "no flexible waste lines" and "gap above spill line"). → *Remove these details, as licensed plumbers must comply with state plumbing codes.*

5. Garbage Storage Requirements:

- Ramsey details where garbage must be placed. → *Eliminate location-specific language and just state "Adequate waste disposal required."* *per city code*

6. Fire Protection & Storage:

- Ramsey prohibits storing combustibles near gas appliances; only enforces it if it creates a fire hazard. → *Simplify by requiring compliance with fire safety codes rather than specifying distances (e.g., "Combustible materials must not pose a fire hazard near appliances").*

7. Overly Specific Exterior Evaluations:

do we go on the roof? how is this checked?

- **Chimney Condition:** Ramsey includes tuckpointing and flue liner requirements, which are typically part of structural codes, not rental inspections. → *Remove chimney details unless an immediate safety issue exists.*
- **Pet Waste in Yard:** This is an enforcement issue, not an inspection item. → *Move to a nuisance ordinance rather than a rental checklist item.*

General Recommendation:

- **Shift from Checklist to Code Reference:** Instead of listing every minor detail, refer to the **International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)** and **State Fire and Plumbing Codes**, which already cover most of these issues.
- **Focus on Major Safety Concerns:** Ramsey should emphasize **fire, structural integrity, and sanitation** rather than micromanaging small maintenance issues.

is this really a rental insp checklist?

Something quietly to let landlord know

Pre-Inspection Checklist:

Interior Evaluation

- **Walls & Ceilings:** Must be in good repair, free from major damage (e.g., large holes, structural issues, or water damage).
- **Floors:** Must be structurally sound and free from major trip hazards. (Eliminated specific mention of "torn carpet" unless it's a safety issue.)
- **Sleeping Rooms:** Must meet egress requirements and have proper ventilation and smoke detectors per state law.
- **Doors & Windows:** Must be weather-tight, secure, and operable, with functional locks and screens.
- **Fire Protection:**
 - *○ Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors must be installed per manufacturer instructions and state law. Devices must be **clearly dated** and **no more than 10 years old**.
 - No storage of combustibles near gas appliances that creates a fire hazard.
- **Plumbing:**

policy is an educational tool

- All plumbing fixtures must be in working order with adequate hot and cold water.
- No leaks or improperly installed waste lines.
- **Kitchen & Bathroom:**
 - Must have operable sinks and appliances (if provided).
 - Bathrooms must have ventilation (window or exhaust fan).
 - Flooring must be water-resistant and in good repair.
- **Electrical & Heating:**
 - Outlets, light fixtures, and service panels must be intact and properly functioning.
 - Heating systems must be operational and capable of maintaining at least 68°F.

Exterior Evaluation

- **Foundation, Roof & Walls:** Must be structurally sound, weather-tight, and in good repair.
- **Address Numbers:** Clearly visible from the street.
- **Stairs, Railings & Decks:** Must be secure and meet safety standards.
- **Yard Maintenance:** No excessive junk, debris, or unlicensed/inoperable vehicles.

General Inspection Guidelines

- Inspections will focus on **health, safety, and fire code compliance**—not cosmetic or minor maintenance issues.
- The City will not conduct additional background checks on property managers, as state law already requires owners to vet their managers.
- Any photographs taken during an inspection must be **limited to code violations** and require **verbal tenant consent**.
- Inspections will not include personal belongings, furniture, or storage areas unless they pose a clear safety hazard.
- Complaints from tenants must first be addressed by the property manager before the City intervenes, unless it's an emergency.

Making Rental Inspections More Effective for Everyone

By streamlining the **pre-inspection checklist**, we create a **clear, concise, and focused** approach that benefits **tenants, property owners, and the city** alike.

- **Encourages Compliance:** A simpler checklist reduces resistance from property owners and managers, leading to **better cooperation and faster improvements** in rental conditions.
- **Prioritizes Safety:** Focusing only on **essential health, safety, and fire code concerns** ensures that inspections address the **real risks** without unnecessary overreach.
- **Reduces Government Overreach Perception:** A **straightforward and transparent** process keeps the city's role centered on **tenant well-being** rather than excessive regulation.

- **Improves Efficiency:** Eliminating **redundant or subjective** inspection criteria allows city staff to **focus resources** where they are truly needed.
- **Enhances City-Landlord Relationships:** A fair, easy-to-follow checklist fosters a **more cooperative relationship** between the city and property owners, leading to **proactive property maintenance** rather than reactive enforcement.

Thank you for your **time and consideration** of these improvements. Let's work together to make Ramsey a place where **both owners and tenants can prosper and feel valued.**