



December 2017
 Bloomington HRA

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THE NEXT MEETING IS ON DECEMBER 12!

All rental housing owners, managers, leasing agents, maintenance staff and other interested parties are encouraged to attend this free Bloomington Rental Collaborative Meeting. This next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 10 a.m., in the Haeg Room at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.** If you have any suggestions for future newsletter or meeting topics, please contact Kathy Warren at 952-563-8942; TTY 952-563-8740 or e-mail kwarren@bloomingtonmn.gov

January Meeting Topic: Drugs in our Community-Detective Nick Melser, an officer with the Bloomington Police Department will share an informational update.

FIRE PREVENTION IN YOUR BUILDING — WHAT PROPERTY MANAGERS NEED TO KNOW

Given that the average residential fire can cause thousands—if not tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of damage in mere minutes—fire prevention and safety should be a top priority for any landlord or property manager.

Fire departments in the United States responded to 388,000 home and apartment fires in 2015. In those fires, 2,605 people died and 11,575 were injured. They caused \$7.2 billion in property losses (NFPA.org).

The most common causes of residential fires are:

1. **Cooking.** Most kitchen fires start because of an unattended cook-top or oven. Many others start because items near a cook-top catch fire.
2. **Smoking.** Most smoking-related fires start when a lit cigarette catches upholstery or fabric on fire; smokers falling asleep with a lit cigarette, which then ignites furniture, is a common cause. Smoking is the leading cause of death from fire.
3. **Heating.** This is the second most common cause of house fires and the second most common cause of deaths from house fires. Most heating-related fires occur in December, January, and February, and most are caused by portable space heaters.
4. **Electrical.** Most electrical fires are caused by lights and faulty wiring, electrical appliances, and extension cords.

A fire prevention program can reduce or eliminate the occurrence of fires by educating/training occupants in fire safety, as well as proper maintenance and care of fire protection and life-safety systems, and by controlling potential ignition sources and fuels. A successful fire prevention program is part of the day-to-day operations of every property. Fire prevention is the responsibility of the owner, the manager, and all occupants of a property.

What can you do to avoid a fire on your rental property?

1. Comply with the local fire code. The purpose of every fire code is to prevent fires and ensure that safety measures are in place in the event of a fire. It's there to help both you and your tenants. Consider having a local fire department inspector conduct a site visit.
2. Schedule regular annual fire prevention and safety inspections. Be on the lookout for flammable materials near heaters and faulty wiring. Check clothes dryer vents for lint buildup. Inspect heating and venting systems, and fireplaces. Open flame devices, propane and charcoal grills are not allowed on patios and balconies of multi-family dwellings. See local ordinances for specific information.
3. Place a fire extinguisher in the kitchen of every unit, or in the cases of apartment buildings, in common areas required by the fire code. Insure all in extinguishers are present, in working order and are serviced by a licensed contractor at least annually. Also replace fire extinguishers according to manufacturer's instructions.
4. **Require tenants to report any electrical issues.** As soon as your tenants are aware that there could be a faulty wiring issue, or other potential dangerous situation (such as a gas leak) they should notify you. Investigate all reports, and make repairs as necessary, using a properly licensed and qualified repair service.
5. Consider providing your tenants with materials from organizations like the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The NFPA has several safety-tip pamphlets available online. These materials provide specific tips such as: keeping cooking areas clutter-free, placing Christmas trees away from heat sources and exits, and plugging major appliances directly into wall outlets rather than using extension cords.
6. **Require your tenants to carry renters insurance.** Less than half of all renters have renters insurance. However, more and more landlords are requiring renters to carry insurance, which would replace their personal items in the event of fire or theft. Policies cost about \$250 to \$300 a year. Your tenants might grumble if you require it, but they'll thank you if they ever need it.
7. Additional information can be found at <https://www.allpropertymanagement.com/blog/2013/01/02/fire-prevention-tips-for-landlords/>

The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.



LIFE SAFETY SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Fire protection and life-safety systems include building exit systems, fire alarm systems, and fire suppression systems. Fire prevention codes specify proper maintenance and repair of these systems. Fire protection involves the installation and use of structural and operational systems to minimize the impact of fire on people and property.

1. Smoke Detectors
 - a. Insure smoke detectors are installed and maintained in hallways outside of sleeping areas and in every bedroom. A maintenance inspection program should be in place to verify that every apartment has working smoke detectors.
 - b. Smoke detectors exceeding 10 years from the date of manufacturer shall be replaced with detectors that have the same type of power supply.
2. Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors
 - a. CO detectors are required within 10 feet of every sleeping room if there are gas fueled appliances (stove, furnace, water heater etc.) within the apartment. If the apartment doesn't have gas fueled appliances but the building does (boiler etc.) than CO detectors are required in the area that the appliances are located and monitored as all times.
 - b. CO detectors exceeding 7 years from the date of manufacturer or by the manufacturer's recommended date, whichever is less.
3. Fire Alarm and Suppression Systems
 - a. Insure fire alarm and suppression systems are in working order at all times and are inspected/ tested on an annual basis by a licensed contractor.
 - b. Insure all deficiencies are corrected in a timely manner.
 - c. Don't ignore trouble and supervisory signals.

d. If the fire alarm system activates call 911, don't reset. Only fire department personnel are allowed to reset the fire alarm.

4. Emergency Lighting and Exit Signs
 - a. Emergency lighting and exit signs shall be maintained in working order at all times.
 - b. Have a maintenance inspection program in place to check lighting and signage on a weekly or monthly basis.
5. Fire Doors
 - a. All interior fire and stairwell doors shall be self-closing and latching.
 - b. Have a maintenance inspection program to verify all doors are in working order.
6. Fire Extinguishers
 - a. Insure fire extinguishers are available, in working order and are serviced by a license company annually.
7. Knox Box Keys
 - a. Have a Knox Box installed at a location designated by the fire department. This will allow emergency responders quick access into the building. Some local ordinances require the installation of a key box.
 - b. Notify the Fire Department when main entry and/or equipment room locks are changed.
8. Contact Information
 - a. Insure emergency responders have an updated keyholder list available for an after-hours response.

You can contact the Bloomington Fire Prevention Division at 952-563-8966 and/or fireprevention@bloomingtonmn.gov for more information. Working together we can create the safest possible environment for our residents.

FIND BLOOMINGTON RENTAL COLLABORATIVE ON THE WEB

For more local information about housing, check out our website at www.bloomingtonmn.gov, and search by keywords "Rental Housing Collaborative." Updated Bloomington Rental Collaborative meeting times and topics can always be found here.