

## FOUR EASY STEPS FOR LANDLORDS

- 1) **Continue** - to contact ISD to schedule CoH inspections when existing tenants vacate and prior to re-occupying.
- 2) **Sit tight** - Unless your current tenants vacate your rental units (see above), you do not have to do anything else until you receive a Notification Letter from ISD, informing you of the program and requesting that you contact ISD to schedule your inspection.
- 3) **Schedule** - Once notified, you must contact ISD (either by phone, email, or in person) within 30 days to schedule your inspections.
- 4) **Notify** - Your tenants and arrange for full access to the units and building.

### For Additional Information on Certificate of Habitability Inspection Requirements

please visit:

[www.chelseama.gov/isd/coh](http://www.chelseama.gov/isd/coh)

#### Rental Inspection Program

**617.466.4132**

#### Housing Code Complaints

**617.466.4132**

Hours of Operation:

Monday 8am - 4pm

Tuesday 8am - 7pm

Wednesday 8am-4pm

Thursday 8am - 4pm

Friday 8am - 12 noon

## Certificate of Habitability

### Inspection Fees

#### Inspection Fees

*Initial Inspection* \$50.00

*First Re-Inspection (if necessary)* Free

*Additional Re-Inspection  
(if necessary)* \$50.00

### Penalties

#### Penalties for Non-Compliance

*First Offense* \$50.00

*Second Offense* \$150.00

*Third Offense* \$300.00

*Subsequent Offenses* \$300.00/day

*Chronic Offender* Court Action

### Exemptions

*Any dwelling unit that is occupied by its owner is exempt from obtaining a Certificate of Habitability.\**

*\* Unit must be owners' primary residence and deed in owners' name. Units owned by a Trust or LLC must be inspected regardless of occupancy status*

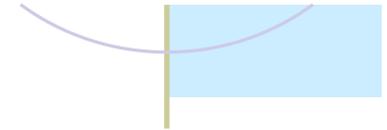
**Email: [coh@chelseama.gov](mailto:coh@chelseama.gov)**



*This program is funded by the City of Chelsea and U.S. Dept. of HUD, with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds administered by MA DHCD.*



## City of Chelsea Inspectional Services Department



### 5-YEAR CERTIFICATE OF HABITABILITY RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION INITIATIVE



City of Chelsea  
Inspectional Services Department  
City Hall, 500 Broadway, Room 201  
Chelsea, MA 02150

**617.466.4132**

**CITY of CHELSEA  
5-YEAR  
CERTIFICATE OF HABITABILITY  
RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION INITIATIVE**

**Program Overview**

The City of Chelsea has recently amended an existing ordinance which calls for landlords of each rental unit in the City to 1) have their units inspected and 2) secure a Certificate of Habitability (CoH), prior to re-occupying the unit with new tenants. **The amended ordinance retains the original requirement for inspection and CoH on tenant turnover, but adds that units must be inspected at least every five years regardless of occupancy status**, meaning that regardless of whether the unit is occupied or not, the owner must contact the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) to have the unit inspected. Once inspected, if the unit passes, ISD will issue the CoH and the unit will not have to be re-inspected until the lesser of a) next turnover of tenants or b) 5 years.

The purpose of the ordinance generally is to ensure that rental units in the City comply with the minimum standards called for in Chapter II of the State Sanitary Code. This code intends to protect the health, safety, and well being of the occupants of housing by ensuring that it is in **habitable condition**. Basically, the units must be suitable for occupants to live, sleep, cook or eat, there.

In Chelsea, ISD and the Board of Health must enforce these basic requirements of Massachusetts General Laws.



**Program Benefits**

- Educate owners and Tenants on state and local Housing codes.
- Provide owners with inspection report summarizing conditions of their properties.
- Ensures rental units meet minimum housing code requirements.
- Improves the quality of residential units in Chelsea.
- Decreases the number of overcrowded units and illegal apartments.
- Increases neighborhood stability and improves the quality of life for all neighborhood residents.

*“Far too often we’re responding to emergencies or complaints and finding people living in uninhabitable space. Its dangerous for everyone, including our police and fire officers... We’re aiming to do something about that...” - Chelsea City Manager, Jay Ash*

The amendment was necessary because not all units were being inspected despite high turnover rates. As a result of the City’s Targeted Enforcement activities, it was found that many properties, in the poorest condition and with the most serious health and safety issues, had not been inspected and did not have current CoHs.

**Initial Target Area**

The City’s initial target area for this initiative will be the Shurtleff-Bellingham neighborhood. Please see map at bottom left for area boundaries. The City selected this area based on the age, type, and general condition of its largely rental housing stock.

The City intends to start slowly working a few streets at a time. Rental units will then be set up on a five year cycle (or until next tenant turnover). The City expects to expand program city-wide by 2017.

**Shurtleff Bellingham Neighborhood**



**Initial Target Area**

**5-YEAR  
CERTIFICATE OF HABITABILITY  
RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTION INITIATIVE**

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