



Rental Safety Verification Program

FAQs

Rental Safety Verification Program: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Rental Safety Verification Program and Certificate of Rental Safety?

The Rental Safety Verification Program promotes the health and safety of rental homes in the City by requiring rental properties meet minimum quality standards of environmental and building maintenance. Upon the successful completion of inspection, Neighborhood Health & Housing will issue a Certificate of Rental Safety. A rental with a Certificate of Rental Safety is in compliance with minimum housing standards.

What properties will be eligible?

Residential rental properties, within the City of South Bend, need a Certificate of Rental Safety or exemption waiver. Properties can apply for an inspection waiver if they were built within the last 10 years, are maintained/subsidized by a government agency, or fall under occupancy arrangements such as group homes, temporary homestays, contract sales, or certain owner-occupied situations.

However, a rental property with an exemption may be inspected if the City has reason to believe, or received a complaint, that the rental unit does not comply with applicable Code requirements.

What would happen during a RSVP inspection?

A Neighborhood Health & Housing inspector will look at the conditions of the property inside and outside the unit. The inspector will have a checklist of items to look for such as: chipping/peeling paint, visible leaks, working plumbing and electrical systems, proper sanitation, adequate heat. The inspector will **not** go through personal items or require documentation from renters.

Once the unit passes inspection, the inspector will issue a Certificate of Rental Safety. If the property does not pass inspection, the property owner/agent will be notified of violations, provided time to make repairs, and be required to schedule a reinspection. The inspector will prepare an inspection report for the property that will be sent to the property owner and available to the renter.

How much will it cost?

Property owners and managers will be provided two inspections at no cost to them. If identified problems are not fixed after two scheduled visits, Neighborhood Health & Housing will charge a service fee for additional inspections. Fees may occur in instances of noncompliance for occupancy or appointment scheduling.

How often would properties be inspected?

The Certificate of Rental Safety is issued for a period of one year to five years. Properties that initiate contact with Neighborhood Health & Housing to schedule an inspection and pass on the

first inspection will be granted a five-year term. Properties that require multiple visits to pass inspection will be granted a shorter period of time on the Certificate of Rental Safety.

Can I hire someone else to inspect my property?

Indiana law allows owners to engage certain private inspectors at their own cost to conduct property inspections. Owners who choose this option can apply for an inspection exemption once they supply proof of an inspection that meets these legal criteria instead of receiving the City inspection. The Department can accept private inspections conducted by third-parties for real estate sales if within the last three years and meet the same standards as RSVP inspections.

However, a rental property with an exemption may be inspected if the City has reason to believe, or received a complaint, that the rental unit does not comply with applicable Code requirements.

Who needs to be present during the inspection?

The property owner, or designated agent of the owner, must be present during the inspection. Renters are welcome to attend the inspection or can choose to arrange entry to the property with the owner.

In cases where the tenant initiates the inspection, the property owner or designated agent of the owner, is not required to be present during the inspection.

When will my property be inspected?

Following the owner, designated agent of the owner, or tenant contacting Neighborhood Health & Housing, an inspection will be scheduled at the earliest mutually agreeable time. This is often between 2-5 business days. Depending on inspector availability, inspections may be able to occur within 24 hours.

Can I get my property inspected before I am contacted by the City to schedule an inspection?

Absolutely! Property owners and managers are encouraged to contact Neighborhood Health & Housing before receiving a notice to schedule an inspection. Properties scheduled before receiving notice, that pass on first inspection, will be granted an extra year on the Certificate of Rental Safety.

How will I be able to schedule an RVSP inspection?

Property owners and managers can contact 3-1-1 and ask for the RSVP Program Coordinator or call 574-235-9586. Renters who suspect they may be living in substandard conditions may file a complaint with Neighborhood Health & Housing at any time by calling 3-1-1 or 574-235-9586.

How will I prepare for an inspection?

A sample inspection checklist is available so you know what the inspector will be looking for and where they will need access. Property owners and managers are encouraged to make repairs prior to inspection to save time and avoid penalties. Renters are encouraged to notify their landlords of any repair needed on the property. Renters are asked to put away any personal items they do not want seen.

How will I know if a property has a current Certificate of Rental Safety?

Properties that have received a Certificate of Rental Safety are available to search, residents can contact 3-1-1 to ask about the status of property or visit the RSVP online database at <https://data-southbend.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/rsvp/explore>.