



**CONTACT:**

Ben Pothoff  
Rental Licensing & Inspections Supervisor  
Housing & Community Development Dept.  
563-690-6075  
[bpothoff@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:bpothoff@cityofdubuque.org)

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Dubuque's New Property Maintenance Code in Effect

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The 2015 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), along with local amendments adopted by the Dubuque City Council in March, went into effect on Friday, July 1, 2016. This code, along with local amendments, will be referred to as the International Property Maintenance Code of the City of Dubuque. It replaces the housing regulations previously located in Title 6, Chapter 6 of the City Code.

The new property maintenance code applies to all property types and is primarily being used by the Housing & Community Development Department for routinely scheduled rental licensing inspections and housing complaint inspections. The Building Services Department will utilize the code for vacant and abandoned property inspections. The code provides a standard for property maintenance and establishes minimum requirements for light, ventilation, and occupancy limitations; plumbing facilities and fixture requirements; mechanical and electrical requirements; and fire safety requirements in existing structures and properties.

The IPMC and local amendments were adopted following an extensive review with input from stakeholders including the Dubuque Area Landlord Association, several neighborhood associations, the Housing Commission, Community Development Advisory Commission, and Housing Code Board of Appeals.

Local amendments to the IPMC included changes to provisions on the following: sidewalks/driveways for consistency with current engineering standards; weeds and rubbish to allow for a property owner to assign responsibility for lawn mowing and rubbish removal in certain instances as approved in state code; motor vehicle storage to remain consistent with the currently adopted Uniform Development Code; protective treatment and interior surfaces to add lead-based paint requirements; and address

identification to allow for existing non-conforming address identifiers when approved by the fire official.

The differences expected to be most significant between the old housing code and the new property maintenance code include:

- repairs must be executed in a workmanlike manner;
- equipment and appliances must be properly installed and maintained in a safe working condition and in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations; and the
- required addition of smoke alarms inside each sleeping room.

Use of the new property maintenance code is expected to improve efficiency and consistency of inspections by providing increased resources for staff and public training and available guidance on code interpretations. The IPMC is also expected to increase the quality of rental housing stock in the community as a result of higher standards on safety and maintenance required by the code, and is expected to have a positive impact for those who already operate quality rentals.

The IPMC is currently adopted and/or used in 37 states and the District of Columbia. More than 30 Iowa communities use all or a substantial portion of the IPMC. The code is updated every three years by the International Code Council, which is comprised of professionals from all over the country who collaborate on establishing code for all aspects of construction, fire safety, and property maintenance.

Licensed rental property owners/managers were notified of the code change when license renewal notices were sent out following the City Council's adoption of the code in March.

Links to the Dubuque Property Maintenance Code are available on the City of Dubuque website at [www.cityofdubuque.org/pmc](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/pmc). For more information, please contact Rental Licensing and Inspections Supervisor Ben Pothoff at 563-690-6075 or [bpothoff@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:bpothoff@cityofdubuque.org).

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