

City of Erie, PA

HOME Rehabilitation Standards

City of Erie staff will review and approve work write-ups (i.e., plans and specifications) and written cost estimates to determine costs are reasonable and plans and specs are in compliance with these written rehabilitation standards. These standards apply to all HOME projects involving rehabilitation.

Agencies and/or subrecipients responsible for the delivery of rehabilitation services will perform: (1) an initial inspection to determine deficiencies, and (2) progress and final inspections to ensure work is done in accordance with contract-approved work write-up, and applicable codes.

The City of Erie has adopted the following, written rehabilitation standards to provide a common basis for contractor bids. This ensures that all contractors are bidding work using identical methods and material. The following is a general overview by category. For more specific information on materials and installation see Rehabilitation Standards – Materials and Installation.

Accessibility

Accessibility will be completed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with ADA and Uniform Construction Code as adopted by the City of Erie.

Attic and Crawl Spaces

Access to attics shall be provided by means of conveniently located scuttles or disappearing or permanently installed stairways. For crawl space, the minimum access opening shall be 18 inches by 24 inches. For attics, the minimum access opening shall be not less than 22 inches by 30 inches with a clear height of over 30 inches. However, if either are to contain mechanical equipment, the access opening shall be of sufficient size to permit the removal and replacement of the equipment, and shall have a means of access provided, i.e., ladder of steps.

Basements, Cellars

The floors of all basement or cellar furnace rooms, or basements shall be covered with a concrete slab with a minimum 3.5 inch thickness. Habitable rooms in basements or below grade, intended for occupancy, shall comply with all local codes and zoning regulations.

Basement and Foundation Walls

All foundation walls shall be able to carry the safe design and operating dead and live loads. Basement and foundation walls shall prevent the entrance of water or moisture into a basement or crawl space area. Cracks in the walls shall be effectively sealed and loose or defective mortar joints replaced. Where necessary, interior or exterior face of the wall shall be damp proofed by bituminous coating or cement parging.

Bath Facilities

Complete bathing and sanitary facilities shall be provided within each living unit. They shall consist of a water closet, a tub or shower, and a lavatory and provide an adequate supply of hot water to the tub or shower stall and lavatory and cold water to all fixtures. Arrangement of fixtures shall provide for the comfortable use of each fixture. Each installation in a living unit shall be installed in a manner as to afford privacy to the occupant. A bathroom shall not be used as a passageway to/or a habitable room, or exit to the exterior. Each building and living unit, within the building, shall have domestic hot water in quantities sufficient for needs of the occupants. Existing water heaters shall be in good serviceable condition. The minimum storage capacity shall be 30 gallons or the equipment shall be replaced. No water heater shall be installed in any room used or designed for sleeping purposes. No water heater shall be located in a bathroom, clothes closet, under any stairway, or in a confined space with access only to the above locations. All fuel burning water heaters shall be connected to a vent leading to the exterior. All pumps and disposal systems shall operate as designed or the equipment shall be repaired or replaced. The plumbing system and its appurtenances shall provide satisfactory water supply, drainage, venting, and operation of all fixtures. Plumbing systems, including sewers, shall operate free of fouling and clogging, and not have cross connection which permit contamination of water supply or back siphonage between fixtures.

Ceiling Heights

All habitable rooms, hallways, and corridors shall have a ceiling height of not less than seven feet measured to the lowest projection of the ceiling. Variations to these areas and dimensions may be permitted when existing partitions preclude compliance, and the available area or dimensions do not hinder the normal use of the space.

Chimneys, Vent

Chimneys and vents shall be structurally safe, durable, smoke tight, and capable of withstanding the action of flue gasses. Existing unlined masonry chimneys, having open mortar joints or cracks, shall be made safe by the installation of a flue liner or corrosion resistant pipe within the interior of the chimney.

Disaster Mitigation

The City of Erie does not award funding to projects located within the 100-year Flood-Plain nor to projects involving “critical actions” (e.g. emergency facilities, facilities for mobility-impaired persons, etc.) in the 500-year Flood-Plan zone. Additionally, the City is not located in an area where hurricanes, tornadoes, etc. are prevalent. The Unified Construction Code does require wind and snow loads to be addressed.

Electric Wiring

All habitable rooms and other appropriate spaces requiring electrical service shall be provided with a system of wiring, wiring devices, and equipment to safely supply electrical energy to proper illumination, appliances, and other electrical equipment. Existing wiring and electrical equipment shall not be a potential source of electrical hazard or ignition of combustible materials, and shall be so determined by the proper authority. Wherever these potential hazards are determined to be present, replacement of existing wiring and/or equipment shall be made. Every dwelling unit shall be served by a main service that is not less than 60 amperes/three wire.

Existing facilities that are dangerously overloaded and inadequate to meet the anticipated demand shall be increased. For new electrical work, the appropriate provisions of the **National Electrical Code** shall be used as a guide for design layout and installation.

Exterior Accessory Structures

All exterior appurtenances or accessory structures, in a deteriorated code violation condition, may be repaired to a safe condition to the extent that funds are available or shall be removed. Such structures include existing porches, entrance platforms, garages, carports, fences, and storage sheds.

Exterior Doors

Exterior doors shall be furnished with operable keys. All exterior doors and hardware shall be maintained in good condition. All locks shall tightly secure the door.

Exterior Walls

Foundations and exterior walls shall provide safe and adequate support for all loads upon them, and prevent the entrance of water or excessive moisture. Serious defects shall be repaired and effectively sealed.

Flashing

To prevent the entrance of water, all critical joints and exterior and roof and wall construction which are exposed, shall be protected by sheet metal or other suitable flashing material.

Flooring

All floor construction shall provide safe and adequate support for all existing or probable loads and shall be reasonably free of vibration. A suitable surface for finished flooring shall exist or be provided. Finished floors shall be appropriate to the use of space, be in good condition, provide reasonable ease of maintenance, and extended service life. Finished floors in habitable rooms shall be wood flooring, a resilient tile, or sheet material or carpeting over suitable underlayment. Floors, in kitchens and bathrooms, shall be of durable waterproof, non-absorbent material over a suitable underlayment.

Gutters

Each dwelling shall have a controlled method of disposal of water from roofs, where necessary, to prevent damage to the property and to avoid unsightly staining of walls, etc.

Health, Safety and Life-Threatening Deficiencies

Property must be free of health, safety and life-threatening deficiencies. If the rehabilitation to correct the health, safety or life-threatening deficiencies is eligible, it must be included in the specifications. Otherwise, the homeowner must correct those deficiencies before the project review and approval process can proceed.

Heating and Ventilating

All heating and ventilating equipment and systems shall be installed so that maintenance and replacement can be performed. Existing mechanical equipment and systems shall be inspected for faulty operation, fire and/or other hazards. Heating facilities shall be provided for each living unit and other spaces that will assure interior comfort, be safe and convenient to operate, be economical in performance and be quiet in operation. Forced air heating systems shall not supply more than one dwelling unit. Each heating system or device shall have a recognized approval for safety and shall be capable of maintaining a performance and be quiet in operation. Each heating system or device shall have a recognized approval for safety and shall be capable of maintaining a temperature of at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit within the living units, corridors, public spaces, and utility spaces where the outside temperature is at zero degrees. No open flame, radiant type space or floor heaters shall be permitted. Appropriate clearances around all heating equipment shall be provided and walls and ceilings protected in an acceptable manner.

Illegal Construction

Any building or part of a building for which there was no permit for construction or which is determined to be not in compliance with the local Building and/or Zoning Codes shall be made to conform to the code to the extent that funds are available, if such non-permit construction is judged to be harmful to the health and safety of the occupants.

Insulation

Insulation shall be installed where possible in any new walls, attics, crawl spaces when other work is performed. Weather stripping and/or weather-proof thresholds shall be installed around all doors. Insulation and weather-stripping shall comply with the Department of Energy and Housing and Urban Development's Initiative of Energy Efficiency on Housing.

Interior Doors

Provide door for each opening to bedroom, bath, or toilet compartment. Bath or toilet compartment doors are to be furnished with privacy-type locks.

Interior Finishing

Where painted surfaces are in good condition or show evidence that maintenance has taken place, painting shall not be required. In all cases, it is urged that the homeowner take upon himself the accomplishment of this normal maintenance item. All interior walls and ceilings shall provide a finished surface without noticeable irregularities or cracking, a waterproof and hard surface and spaces not subject to moisture, a suitable base for painting or other decoration and reasonable durability and economy of maintenance.

Kitchen Space

Each living unit shall have a specific kitchen space which contains sink with counter work space, and have hot and cold running water, adequate space for installing cooking and refrigeration equipment, and for storing cooking utensils.

Lead-Based Paint

Housing built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint. All Federal and State lead-based paint regulations and requirements apply.

Light and Ventilation

All habitable rooms shall be provided with aggregate glazing area of not less than eight percent of the floor area of such rooms. One-half of this required area of glazing shall be **open able**. The glazed area may be omitted in rooms where an approved mechanical ventilation system is provided capable of producing .35 air change per hour. Bathrooms, water closet compartments, and other similar rooms shall be provided with approved glazing, except in the case of artificial light and ventilation as stated above.

Major Systems

The remaining useful life of the structure's major systems must be estimated. Major systems include: (1) structural support; (2) roofing; (3) cladding and weatherproofing; and (4) plumbing, electrical and HVAC.

The minimal useful life of a building's major systems is five (5) years for Homebuyer and Homeowner Rehabilitation projects, and the affordability period for rental projects. If the useful life for rental projects is less than the affordability period, adequate replacement reserves must be established.

Non-Living Space Ventilation

Natural ventilation of spaces such as attics and enclosed crawl spaces shall be provided by opening of sufficient size to overcome dampness and minimize the effect of conditions conducive to decay and deterioration of the structure, and to prevent excessive heat in attics. Exterior ventilation openings shall be effectively screened where needed.

Painting and/Or Exterior Finishing

Exterior surfaces of structures shall be painted and/or waterproofed as required by type and location of existing surface. Repairs or replacements shall be made to defective exterior wall finished materials. Exterior walls should be free of holes, cracks, and broken or rotted finished materials. A protective and decorative finished coating or surfacing shall be required to provide adequate resistance to weathering, protection of finished surfaces from moisture or corrosion, and attractive appearance and reasonable durability.

Partitions, Columns, and Posts

Partitions, columns and posts, and other vertical supports which are to be continued in use shall be free of excessive leaning, buckling, or other defects. All structural members shall be maintained free from deterioration and shall be capable of safely supporting the imposed dead and live loads.

Privacy and Arrangement

A degree of privacy shall be provided commensurate with suitable living conditions by means of the proper location of exterior openings and by the interior arrangement of rooms. Access to all parts of a living unit shall be possible without passing through a public hall.

Roofing

Roof covering shall be capable of resisting fire appropriate to the type of construction and location, and new installation shall be in accordance with nationally accepted standards. All roofs shall have a suitable water-tight and reasonably durable covering free of holes, cracks, excessively torn surfaces or other defects. The placing of new covering over an existing covering shall not take place if two or more layers exist. Replacement roof materials shall be consistent with current technology. Wood shakes, shingles, and clay tile roofs shall not be replaced.

Screen

Screens shall be provided for all operable windows. Existing screens, which are to be continued in use, shall be in suitable condition to serve their intended purpose. Combination storm and screen windows and doors shall be furnished where economically feasible.

Stairs, Exterior

All exterior stairways must conform to the design requirements of the National Property Maintenance Code as amended as to width, handrails, tread and riser dimensions, etc.

Stairs, Interior

All stairways shall provide safety of ascent, and stairs and landing shall be arranged to permit adequate headroom and space for the passage of furniture and equipment. All living units shall have access to an approved exit. All exit stairways shall be protected at the sides by acceptable railings as per one and three-family dwelling code.

Structural Soundness

All structural components of the building shall be rehabilitated to a sound and serviceable condition for the expected useful life of the building. Sagging or out-of-level floors, partitions, stairs, wall, etc., are to be supported and/or braced or rebuilt so as to prevent a recurrence of these conditions. Individual structural members, in a seriously deteriorated condition, shall be replaced.

Vermin Infestation

A careful inspection shall be made of each building and/or accessory structure to be rehabilitated for evidence of actual or potential infestation. Defects, permitting the entrance of vermin, will be addressed with preventive measures. Corrective actions of a professional exterminator may be a qualified rehabilitation expense.

Walkways

Appropriate paved walks and exterior steps shall be provided. Walkways shall be of a safe level surface. Serious defects shall be repaired or replaced.

Water Diversion

The open space of each property shall provide, or shall have provided for the immediate diversion of water away from the buildings and the prevention of soil saturation detrimental to structures and use of the property.

Window-Doors/Replacement

Existing windows and doors, including their hardware, shall operate satisfactorily and give evidence of continuing acceptable service. Defective glass blocking or lifting hardware shall be replaced or corrected. At a minimum, the bottom half of all double hung windows shall operate satisfactorily.

The following guide shall be used to determine the need for repair or replacing window sash, doors, and/or frames:

1. Repair if work can be done in place.
2. Replace if entire component needs to be removed in order to restore.
3. Refinish if only the surface needs work in order to restore same to new condition.

Housing Rehabilitation Standards

All dwelling units rehabilitated with HOME funds for housing rehabilitation in the City shall be upon completion, in substantial compliance with one of the following:

- Local housing code; or
 - The articles on property or sanitary standards in one of three model codes (Uniform Building Code (ICBO), the National Building Code (BOCA); or
 - The Council of American Building Officials (CAB) one or two family code; or
 - The minimum Property Standards (MPS) in 24 CFR 200.925 or 200.926;
- and*
- Units must be free of deficiencies selected by HUD from the list of Uniform Physical Condition Standards.