



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

Andy Beshear, Governor

Kerry B. Harvey, Secretary

### **Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction Frequently Asked Questions on Building Inspections**

#### **What is The Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction (DHBC)?**

The Public Protection Cabinet's Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction (DHBC) is the agency that oversees the construction industry in the Commonwealth. Within DHBC are the Division of Building Code Enforcement and the Division of Fire Prevention, which includes the State Fire Marshal.

#### **What does the Division of Building Code Enforcement do?**

DHBC's Division of Building Code Enforcement reviews plans and inspects *new* building construction, as well as additions, alterations, renovations, and buildings involved in a change of occupancy or use. This ensures that buildings follow adopted codes and referenced standards. The division also conducts elevator inspections on a regular basis.

#### **What does the Division of Fire Prevention do?**

DHBC's Division of Fire Prevention conducts inspections of *existing* public buildings for compliance with state fire and life safety codes. These inspections ensure that safety features such as means of egress, fire protection systems, and other necessary equipment are maintained in satisfactory condition. Inspectors meet with property owners and occupants to achieve any necessary corrections.

An easy way to remember which division within DHBC does what is to note that building code enforcement inspectors work during the pre-construction and construction phases of building projects while fire prevention inspectors ensure compliance is maintained in existing buildings.

#### **Does the state mandate that every building be inspected annually?**

No. There is no requirement for buildings to be inspected every year. The law authorizes the Division of Fire Prevention perform 'periodic' inspections of existing buildings.

### **What sorts of buildings does the Division of Fire Prevention inspect periodically?**

The Division of Fire Prevention has “priority” buildings in which periodic inspections are completed. These include:

- Places of assembly
- Residential buildings including apartments, dormitories, hotels, and motels
- Hospitals, nursing homes, and day care centers
- K-12 educational facilities

### **Can Kentuckians report safety issues, or request building inspections?**

Yes. DHBC accepts complaints for investigation against both facilities and inspectors. To file a complaint, visit the web page here: [https://ksfm.ky.gov/newstatic\\_info.aspx?static\\_id=285](https://ksfm.ky.gov/newstatic_info.aspx?static_id=285). DHBC responds to complaints of unsafe conditions made by the public as soon as possible.

### **Do local governments have building inspectors and fire prevention offices?**

Yes, many cities in the state have fire prevention inspection programs. In these cities, the fire departments conduct these inspections in all buildings except for state-owned and state-licensed facilities. In fact, there are more than 50 fire departments across Kentucky that perform inspections of buildings in their districts.

### **How do inspectors handle reports of dangerous or structurally unsound buildings?**

As previously stated, inspectors respond to complaints as soon as possible. Because state government does not employ structural engineers, the building owners are responsible for contracting with an engineer and making any necessary repairs at the request of state inspectors.

### **What actions does DHBC take to ensure dangerous or structurally unsound buildings are repaired or brought up to code?**

DHBC has the authority to issue and enforce an Order to Remedy unsafe conditions or Emergency Order to Vacate until repairs are made.

### **How many inspections does DHBC complete per year?**

Typically, the General Inspection Section of the Division of Fire Prevention conducts between 15,000 and 16,000 inspections per year.