ARTICLE II. HOUSING CODE*


Case law annotations: Housing code was not unconstitutional on grounds that it denied due process, that it was retrospective in nature or that it delegated legislative power to the executive branch of government. Apple v. Denver, 154 Col. 166, 390 P. 2d 91 (1964).


Sec. 27-16. Declaration of policy.
The council declares the purpose of this article is to protect, preserve and promote the physical and mental health of the people, investigate and control communicable diseases, regulate privately and publicly owned dwellings for the purpose of sanitation and public health, and protect the safety of the people and promote the general welfare by legislation which shall be applicable to all dwellings now in existence or hereafter constructed which:
(1) Provides for the establishment of minimum standards for basic equipment and facilities for light, ventilation, heating, and insect, rodent, vermin, and pest control, for safety from fire, for the use and location and amount of space for human occupancy, and for safe and sanitary maintenance;
(2) Determines the responsibilities of owners, operators and occupants of dwellings; and
(3) Provides for the administration and enforcement thereof.
(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 1, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-17. Legislative finding.
The council finds that there exist in the city numerous dwellings which are substandard in one (1) or more important features of structure, equipment, sanitation, maintenance or occupancy. Such conditions adversely affect the physical and mental health of the people, the control of communicable diseases, the safety of the people and the general welfare and therefore require the establishment and enforcement of minimum housing standards.
(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95)

Sec. 27-18. Definitions.
The following words and phrases, when used in this article, have the meanings respectively ascribed to them:
(1) Approved means constructed, installed and maintained in accordance with this article and rules and regulations adopted and promulgated in pursuance thereof.
(2) Basement means the portion of a dwelling between floor and ceiling that is partly below and partly above grade, the floor of which is less than four (4) feet below the average grade of the adjoining ground.
(2.5) **Board** means the board of environmental health.

(3) **Cellar** means the portion of a dwelling between floor and ceiling that is below or partly below grade, the floor of which is more than four (4) feet below the average grade of the adjoining ground.

(3.5) **Clean and sanitary** means a condition free of visible dirt, debris, clutter, rubbish, trash, waste and free from other substances, contaminants, materials, or environmental conditions harmful to human health.

(4) **Dwelling** means any building that contains one or more dwelling units or rooming units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let, sublet, or hired out to be occupied, or that is occupied for living purposes, and includes rooming houses but excludes temporary housing.

(5) **Dwelling unit** means a single unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation and includes single rooming units.

(6) **Electrical convenience outlet** means a point on the electrical wiring system equipped with one (1) or more receptacles intended to receive attachment plugs from which electrical current is taken to supply electrical equipment.

(7) **Extermination** means the control and elimination of insects, rodents, vermin or other pests by eliminating their harborage places; by removing or making inaccessible materials that may serve as their food; or by poisoning, spraying, fumigating, trapping or similar means.

(8) **Garbage** means the animal and vegetable waste resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking or consumption of food.

(9) **Habitable room** means a room designed to be used for living, sleeping, eating or cooking, excluding bathrooms, toilet compartments, closets, halls and storage places.

(10) **Hotel** means any dwelling, or that part of any dwelling, containing one (1) or more rooming units in which space is let to three (3) or more persons who are transients or permanent guests occupy a rooming unit.

(11) **Infestation** means the presence, within or around a dwelling, of insects, rodents, vermin or other pests of such kind or in such numbers to cause a hazard to human health.

(11.5) **Manager** means, unless the context otherwise requires, the manager of the department of environmental health or the manager's representative.

(12) **Multiple dwelling** means any dwelling containing more than two (2) dwelling units.

(13) **Occupant** means any natural person living, sleeping, cooking or eating in, or having actual possession of, a dwelling unit or rooming unit.

(14) **Operator** means any person, whether the owner or not, who manages or controls any dwelling, or part thereof, in which a person or persons other than an owner occupy a dwelling unit or rooming unit.

(15) **Owner**, as used in this article, means any person who alone or with others:

(a) Has record legal or equitable title to any dwelling or dwelling unit, with or without accompanying actual possession thereof;

(b) Acts as the agent or manager for the person who holds the record legal or equitable title to any dwelling, dwelling unit in a multiple dwelling structure, or common area or utilities servicing a single unit dwelling or dwelling unit in multiple dwelling structure, or acts as an agent or manager for any group of such owners;

(c) Is the personal representative, trustee, or fiduciary of an estate, trust, other entity which holds record legal or equitable title to any single unit dwelling or dwelling unit in a multiple unit.
structure, or common area or utilities servicing a single unit dwelling or dwelling unit in multiple
dwelling structure; or
(d) Controls access to any service, facility, equipment, or utility that is required under this
article and which is servicing any single unit dwelling or dwelling unit in multiple dwelling
structure.
(16) Person means a natural person for purposes of the occupancy standards hereof, and for all
other purposes it has the meaning set forth in subsection 1-2(12) of the Code.
(17) Rooming house means any dwelling, or that part of any dwelling, containing one (1) or
more rooming units in which three (3) or more persons who are permanent guests occupy a
rooming unit.
(18) Rooming unit means any room or group of rooms forming a single habitable unit used or
intended to be used for living and sleeping, but no part of which is exclusively or occasionally
appropriated to cookery.
(19) Rubbish means combustible and noncombustible waste materials, household and yard
debris and ashes.
(20) Supplied means paid for, furnished, provided by, or under the control of the owner or
operator.
(21) Temporary housing means any tent, trailer coach, or other structure used for human
shelter that is designed to be transportable and that is not attached to the ground, to another
structure, or to any utilities system.
(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 1110-96, § 1, 12-16-96; Ord. No. 500, § 2, 9-17-07)
Cross references: Definitions and rules of construction generally, § 1-2.

Sec. 27-19. Minimum standards for basic equipment and facilities.
It is unlawful for any person to occupy and for any owner or operator of a dwelling or dwelling
unit to allow any person to occupy any dwelling unit that does not comply with the minimum
standards for basic equipment and facilities, which includes kitchens, bathrooms, rubbish and
garbage storage and disposal, and water heating facilities. The board shall adopt and the manager
shall promulgate rules and regulations that establish minimum standards for basic equipment and
facilities applicable to all dwellings and dwelling units as necessary to protect public health and
the safety of the people and promote the general welfare.
(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 3, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-20. Minimum standards for light, ventilation, heating, and insect and rodent control.
It is unlawful for any person to occupy and for any owner or operator of a dwelling or dwelling
unit to allow any person to occupy any dwelling or dwelling unit that does not comply with the
minimum standards set by the manager for light; ventilation; heating; and insect, rodent, vermin,
and pest control. The board shall adopt and the manager shall promulgate rules and regulations
that establish minimum standards for light; ventilation; heating; and insect, rodent, vermin, and
pest control applicable to all dwellings and dwelling units as necessary to protect public health
and the safety of the people and promote the general welfare.
(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 4, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-20.5. Supplied facilities.
Every piece of equipment, utility, and amenity connected or attached to or supplying a dwelling or dwelling unit shall be constructed, installed, and maintained so that they function safely and properly.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 5, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-21. Requirements for maintenance of safe and sanitary dwellings and dwelling units. It is unlawful for any person to occupy and for any owner or operator of a dwelling or dwelling unit to allow any person to occupy any dwelling or dwelling unit that is not maintained in a safe and sanitary manner. The board shall adopt and the manager promulgate rules and regulations that establish safety and sanitary standards applicable to all dwellings and dwelling units as necessary to protect public health and the safety of the people and promote the general welfare.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 6, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-21.5. Disconnecting required utility services prohibited. It is unlawful for an owner, operator, manager, or other person in charge or control of any service, facility, equipment, or utility that is required by this article to take any action or fail to take any action that results in such service, facility, equipment, or utility being removed from, shut off, or disconnected from any occupied dwelling or dwelling unit.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 7, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-22. Minimum space, use and location requirements.

(1) It is unlawful for any person to occupy and for any owner or operator of a dwelling or dwelling unit to allow any person to occupy any dwelling or dwelling unit that does not comply with the minimum requirements for space, use, and location. The board shall adopt and the manager shall promulgate rules and regulations that establish minimum standards for space, use, and location applicable to all dwellings and dwelling units as necessary to protect public health and the safety of the people and promote the general welfare.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 8, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-23. Responsibilities of owners and occupants.

(1) Every owner and every operator of a dwelling containing two (2) or more dwelling units shall maintain the shared or public areas of the dwelling and premises thereof in a clean and sanitary condition. If, however, the manager determines that the unclean or unsanitary condition was caused in whole or part by an act or omission of an occupant, the manager may issue a notice of violation to the owner, operator, occupant, or all of them.

(2) Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall keep in a clean and sanitary condition that part of the dwelling, dwelling unit and premises thereof which he occupies and controls. If, however, the, manager determines that the unclean or unsanitary condition was caused in whole or part by the act or omission of an owner or operator, the manager may issue a notice of violation to the owner, operator, occupant, or all of them.

(3) Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall dispose of all his rubbish in a clean and sanitary manner by placing it in the rubbish containers required by the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated pursuant to this chapter and consistent with rules and regulations of the manager of the department of public works.

(4) Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall dispose of all garbage and other organic waste that might provide food for insects and rodents, in a clean and sanitary manner, by placing
it in the garbage disposal facilities or garbage storage containers required by the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated pursuant to this chapter and consistent with solid waste rules and regulations.

(5) Every occupant of a dwelling unit shall keep all plumbing therein in a clean and sanitary condition and is responsible for the exercise of reasonable care in the proper use and operation thereof.

(6) Extermination.
(a) Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall maintain the dwelling unit free from all insects, rodents, vermin, and other pests; provided, however, that every owner and every operator shall maintain any screen, fence, or other structural element necessary to keep insects, rodents, vermin, and other pests from entering the dwelling. Every occupant of such a dwelling unit is responsible for the extermination of any insects, rodents, vermin, and other pests therein or on the premises; and every occupant of a dwelling unit in a dwelling containing more than one (1) dwelling unit is responsible for such extermination whenever the dwelling unit is the unit primarily infested.

(b) Every owner and every operator of a dwelling containing two (2) or more dwelling units shall maintain it and the premises free from all rodents, insects, vermin, and other pests. Further, whenever infestation exists in two (2) or more of the dwelling units in any dwelling, or in the shared or public parts of any such dwelling, extermination thereof is the responsibility of every owner and every operator.

(c) Notwithstanding subparagraphs 6(a) and 6(b), the manager may issue a notice of violation to the owner and to the operator of any dwelling or dwelling unit, occupant of any dwelling unit, or each of them, ordering extermination of any insects, rodents, vermin, and other pests as necessary to protect public health and safety.

(d) Every owner and every operator of a rooming house shall maintain it and the premises free from all rodents, insects, vermin, and other pests and is responsible for exterminating them.

(7) No person shall occupy or allow or let to another for occupancy any dwelling unit that is not authorized or permitted under the zoning laws of the city as set forth in chapter 59.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 9, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-24. Rooming houses.
It is unlawful for any person to operate a rooming house, and for the owner or operator of a rooming house to allow any person to occupy any rooming unit, except in compliance with all the applicable provisions of this article and the minimum standards for rooming houses. The board of shall adopt and the manager shall promulgate rules and regulations that establish minimum standards for rooming houses applicable to all rooming houses, including standards for sinks, bathrooms, water supply, water and sewer connections, privacy, rubbish storage, garbage disposal, heating, and ingress and egress, as necessary to protect public health and safety of the people and promote general welfare.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 10, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-25. Rules and regulations.
The board shall adopt and the manager shall promulgate rules and regulations to establish minimum standards as indicated in the article and the board and manager are hereby authorized to adopt and promulgate other rules and regulations as determined necessary for the proper and effective enforcement of the provisions of this article.
Sec. 27-26. Inspections.

(1) For the purpose of determining compliance with the provisions of this article, the manager or an authorized representative is hereby authorized and directed to make inspections to determine the condition, use, and occupancy of dwellings, dwelling units, rooming units, and the premises upon which the same are located. For the purpose of making such inspections the manager or an authorized representative is hereby authorized to request entry to examine, inspect and survey all dwellings, dwelling units, rooming units and premises upon which the same are located, at all reasonable times.

(2) If the owner, occupant or operator in charge of a dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming unit and premises upon which the same are located subject to the provisions of this article and the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated in connection herewith, refuses or restricts entry and free access to every part of the structure or premises wherein inspection is sought, the manager or an authorized representative may seek from the county court a warrant for inspection and order that such owner, occupant or operator be required to permit an inspection at a reasonable time without interference, restriction or obstruction. The county court shall have jurisdiction and authority to issue warrants for inspection and order the owner, occupant or operator to allow entry and free access into all buildings, dwellings, dwelling units, rooming units and the premises upon which the same are located. The court shall have full power, jurisdiction and authority to enforce all orders issued under the provisions of this article.

(3) It is unlawful for any person to violate the provisions of any warrant for inspection and order issued under the provisions of this article.

(4) It is unlawful for any person, owner, operator or occupant to refuse to allow or permit the manager or an authorized representative free access to any building, dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming unit and premises upon which the same are located when the manager or an authorized representative is acting in compliance with a warrant for inspection and order issued by the county court and where the manager or an authorized representative is conducting an inspection, examination and survey in accordance with the provisions of this article or any rule and regulation adopted and promulgated in accordance with the provisions of this article.

Sec. 27-27. Enforcement.

(1) Notice of violations. Except in those instances to which section 27-28 is applicable, whenever the manager determines that there has been a violation of any provision of this article or any rule or regulation adopted and promulgated pursuant thereto, the manager shall give notice of the alleged violation to the person or persons the manager determines to be responsible for the alleged violation and may order such person or persons to take corrective action for the alleged violation. The notice must:

(a) Be in writing;
(b) Particularize the violations alleged to exist or to have been committed;
(c) Provide a reasonable time, based on the nature of the violation and threat to the human health, to correct the violations;
(d) Be issued and addressed to and, subject to subsection 27-27(2), served upon the owner or operator or both of the dwelling or dwelling unit or if the notice is directed to an occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit, served upon that occupant.

(2) Service of notice. Notices must be served upon the person to whom the notice is issued, and unless it is recorded under section 27-29, it may be served by any of the means listed in subsection 27-27(2)(a)--(c).
   (a) Personal delivery.
   (b) U.S. mail, postage prepaid.
   (c) Nationally recognized overnight courier with all fees prepaid.

(2.5) Service of notice to be recorded. Notices may not be recorded under section 27-29 unless the notice was first served by one of the following means:
   (a) Personal delivery acknowledged in a writing signed by the person to whom the notice was issued, or if issued to the owner, by a person representing to be the operator or an authorized agent of the owner.
   (b) In accordance with the rules of civil procedure for the court of record.
   (c) Registered or certified mail, return receipt requested and postage prepaid.
   (d) If, however, a notice to be recorded cannot be served in accordance with subsection 27-27(2.5)(a)--(c) because one (1) or more persons to whom the notice is addressed cannot be found or served after diligent effort to effect service, service may be made upon such person by posting a notice in a conspicuous place in or about the dwelling affected by the notice, in which event the manager shall include in the record a statement as to why such posting was necessary.

(3) Appeal. Appeals from a notice or order issued under this section shall be taken in accordance with article 1 of chapter 24 D.M.R.C.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 1110-96, § 1, 12-16-96; Ord. No. 500, § 13, 9-17-07)

Case law annotations: Failure to address a notice as provided in subsection (1)(d) does not allow proper indexing of the notice under section 27-29(1). Absent a proper addressing—indexing there is no constructive notice of the violation. Aropahoe Land Title, Inc. v. Contract Financing, Ltd., 28 Colo. App. 393, 472 P. 2d 754 (Colo. App., Div. 1, 1970).
A hearing resulting in an adverse order authorizes filing of a complaint on the ordinance violation in the county court. The county court trial is an original trial on the merits of the existence of violations and sentencing therefore with trial de novo to the superior court and right of appeal thereafter. Douglas v. Municipal Court, 157 Colo. 358, 377 P. 2d 738 (1963).

Sec. 27-28. Designation of unfit dwellings.

(1) Designation. Whenever the manager finds any dwelling, or dwelling unit, or rooming unit, regardless of whether it is occupied, that does not conform to the standards established by this article, or does not conform with the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated under it, and that by reason of the nonconformity presents an imminent hazard to public health, or to the physical or mental health of current or future occupants, the manager may, without prior notice or hearing, designate this dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming house, or rooming unit as unfit for human habitation.

(2) Placarding; order to vacate. Any dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit designated as unfit for human habitation by the manager will be appropriately placarded as such and must be vacated by the occupants within the time specified in the placard. The placard constitutes an order directing vacating, and may serve as an order prohibiting access for any period of time as determined appropriate by the manager based on the nature of the hazard presented.
(3) **Correction of defects**. No dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit which has been designated as unfit for human habitation and placarded as such shall again be used for human habitation until written approval is secured from and the placarding removed by the manager. The manager shall remove the placard whenever the defects upon which the designation and placarding action were based have been eliminated and the dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit conforms to the standards established by this article and the provisions of the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated hereunder.

(4) **Unlawful to deface placard**. It is unlawful for any person to deface, move, remove or obscure any placard affixed under the provisions of this article.

(5) **Appeals**. Any person aggrieved by the designation of any dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit as unfit for human habitation who believes the designation to be factually or legally contrary to the ordinances of the city, or the policies and regulations of the department of environmental health, may appeal the same to the board in accordance with article 1, chapter 24, D.R.M.C. The placarding of any dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit under the provisions hereof commences operation of the period of time in which an appeal must be perfected.

(6) **Modifications under special circumstances**. Whenever there are practical difficulties involved in carrying out the provisions of this article, the manager may grant modifications for individual cases, provided he shall first notify the owner of the building, structure or utility and then find that a special individual reason makes the strict letter of the article impractical, that the modification is in conformity with the intent and purpose of this article and that such modification does not lessen any health or safety, fire protection requirements, or any degree of structural integrity. The details of any action granting modifications will be sent to the owner and entered in the files of the department of environmental health.

Sec. 27-28.5. Compliance with order. It is unlawful to fail or refuse to comply with an order issued by the manager under this article.

Sec. 27-29. Recording of notice with clerk.

(1) When the manager determines that there is a violation of this article that is consistent with department policies and procedures warrants recording based on the nature of or circumstances concerning the violation, the manager may record the notice of violation in the real property records of the clerk and recorder.

(2) When the condition upon which the notice was based has been corrected, the manager shall record a release of the notice of violation.

Sec. 27-30. Emergency proceedings in court of record.

(1) If any owner or operator does not comply with an order of the manager, or if an emergency to public health exists, the manager may take whatever action as necessary to alleviate or eliminate the imminent hazard to public health, including without limitation, causing the demolition of any dwelling or part thereof concerned. Or, if any owner or operator does not comply with an order of the manager and causes or permits any such dwelling or part thereof concerned to remain vacant for a period of one (1) year, and the zoning administrator finds that such dwelling or part thereof cannot reasonably be utilized for any use by right lawful in the
district in which the same is located, the zoning administration may join with the manager in
causing the demolition of the dwelling or part thereof concerned. Or, if any owner or operator
does not comply with an order of the manager and causes or permits any dwelling or part thereof
concerned to remain vacant, and the chief of the fire department finds that such dwelling or part
thereof constitutes a fire hazard, the chief of the fire department may join with the manager in
causing the demolition of the dwelling or part thereof concerned and join in any other action
determined necessary to alleviate or eliminate the imminent hazard to public health that requires
assistance of the fire department.

(2) The manager, zoning administrator, or chief of the fire department must file an appropriate
proceeding against the owner of the dwelling in district court in and for the city under these
provisions before actual demolition commences. The city is entitled to recover costs arising out
of the proceedings, including attorney's fees, and costs of demolition.

(3) The costs enumerated above, if not otherwise paid by the defendants or collected upon
execution in the manner provided by law, constitute a lien against the property. In this event, the
manager shall certify a statement thereof to the manager of revenue, who shall record a notice of
such lien with the clerk and recorder. The manager of revenue shall assess and charge the same
against the property involved, and collect the same due, plus interest thereon, in the manner as
are delinquent real property taxes. If the lien remains unsatisfied, the manager of revenue shall
sell the property involved in the manner prescribed for sales of property for delinquent property
taxes. The lien created hereby is superior and prior to all other liens, regardless of their dates of
recording, except liens for general taxes and special assessments. In addition to the remedies
set forth herein, an action or other process provided by law may be maintained by the city to
recover or collect any amounts, including interest, owing under this provision.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 1110-96, § 1, 12-16-96; Ord. No. 464-98, § 2, 7-6-98;
Ord. No. 500, § 17, 9-17-07)

Sec. 27-31. Notice of vacating buildings.

(1) The owner of a building containing four (4) or more units or any hotel, motel or other
structure containing four (4) or more rooms rented separately for residential occupancy, who
intends to vacate the building for the purpose of remodeling, demolition, changing the use of the
building or for any other purpose shall, at least thirty (30) days prior to the intended date for the
vacation, give written notice of the intent to vacate the building to all tenants; post the notice on
each entrance to the affected building; and file a copy of this notice with the city clerk.

(2) Subsection (1) of this section does not apply where the building is ordered vacated by a
federal, state or city agency.

(3) The provisions of this section do not replace the requirements of subsection 59-26(h)
requiring a 90-day notice of the conversion of a building to condominium ownership.

(Ord. No. 997-95, § 1, 12-4-95; Ord. No. 500, § 18, 9-17-07)

Cross references: Hotels and rooming houses, § 33-16 et seq.
Secs. 27-32--27-44. Reserved.