



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Charles D. Baker, Governor ♦ Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor ♦ Chrystal Kornegay, Undersecretary

Public Housing Notice 2016-18

To: All Local Housing Authority Executive Directors,
 Maintenance Staff and Directors of Maintenance

From: Sarah Glassman, Associate Director, Division of Public Housing & Rental Assistance

Subject: Preventive Maintenance Monthly Reminders

Date: June 16, 2016

As a reminder the Facilities Management Specialist Unit (FMS) has developed a uniform set of tasks in order to help assist local housing authorities (LHAs) in their responsibility to effectively preserve and extend the useful life of materials, equipment, fixtures and other elements of their property.

This program is designed to assist LHAs of all sizes and varying degrees of capacity. The program is a set of reminders, not to be interpreted as a complete and comprehensive Preventive Maintenance (PM) Program. Each LHA is responsible to develop a comprehensive Preventive Maintenance Program that is based on the buildings, systems and equipment at their location. Attached you will find all monthly reminders for a calendar year.

All executive directors and maintenance directors are asked to forward and share this reminder with your maintenance staff and to ensure that the tasks contained in this PHN generate monthly work orders for completion.

If you have any questions pertaining to the reminders, please contact your Facilities Management Specialist for guidance or assistance.

Southeastern MA	Mayungbe Adeniyi, Facilities Management Specialist	617-571-7581
Western MA	Bruce Budrick, Facilities Management Specialist	617-780-5332
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January Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Monitor and issue on-going snow removal work orders.
2. Hot air furnace / Boiler winter PM.
3. Oil circulator pumps.
4. Clean dryer vents.
5. Vehicle Inspection:
 - Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor and thermostat.
 - Check windshield washer fluid.
 - Check belts and hoses.
 - Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - Clean out air cleaner.
 - Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - Check heater and defroster.
 - Check wiper blades for wear.
 - Check underbody for corrosion and hose off.
 - Change engine oil in all vehicles. (1st quarter)
6. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
7. Clean/disinfect compactor and trash chutes.
8. Inventory tools, equipment, refrigerators and stoves in stock.
9. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
10. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.
11. Lease enforcement: Residents are responsible for snow removal from front and rear egress of their unit only if they have instances where a dwelling has an independent means of egress, not shared with other occupants, and a written letting agreement so states, the occupant is responsible for maintaining free of snow and ice, the means of egress under his or her exclusive use and control..

12. Keep all chimneys, exhaust and intake vents free of snow throughout the winter season and keep dryer exhaust vents free of snow throughout the winter season.
 - Blocked chimneys, exhaust vents and intake vents could result in carbon monoxide poisoning and can affect the performance of the furnace.

February Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Monitor and issue on-going snow removal work orders.
2. A/C, heat and air handler filter change.
3. Clean sanitary systems, lubricate valves and pumps.
4. Clean and lubricate trash chutes and doors.
5. Strip, wax and buff vinyl composite tile (VCT) and linoleum flooring.
6. Vehicle Inspection:
 - Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor and thermostat.
 - Check windshield washer fluid.
 - Check belts and hoses.
 - Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - Clean out air cleaner.
 - Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - Check heater and defroster.
 - Check wiper blades for wear.
 - Check underbody for corrosion and hose off.
7. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
8. Clean/disinfect compactors and trash chutes.
9. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
10. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.
11. Lease enforcement: Clear common hallways and stairs free from all obstructions. (PHN 2012-12) According to the State Sanitary code 105 CMR 410.451 - No person shall obstruct any exit or passageway. The owner is responsible for maintaining free from obstruction every exit used or intended for use by occupants of more than one dwelling unit or rooming unit. The occupant shall be responsible for maintaining free from obstruction all means of exit leading from his unit and not common to the exit of any other unit.

12. Keep all chimneys, exhaust and intake vents free of snow throughout the winter season and keep dryer exhaust vents free of snow throughout the winter season.
Blocked chimneys, exhaust vents and intake vents could result in carbon monoxide poisoning and can affect the performance of the furnace.

March Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Second Sunday, reset light timers and clocks for daylight saving time.
2. Monitor and issue on-going snow removal work orders.
3. Clean storage rooms and maintenance areas.
4. Touch up all common area paint.
5. Clean heater vents in all common areas.
6. Vehicle Inspection:
 - Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor and thermostat.
 - Check windshield washer fluid.
 - Check belts and hoses.
 - Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - Clean out air cleaner.
 - Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - Check heater and defroster.
 - Check wiper blades for wear.
 - Check underbody for corrosion and hose off.
7. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
8. Clean/disinfect compactors and trash chutes.
9. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.
10. Lease enforcement: Furniture, trash and debris free from exteriors.
11. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
12. Keep all chimneys, exhaust and intake vents free of snow throughout the winter season and keep dryer exhaust vents free of snow throughout the winter season.
 - Blocked chimneys, exhaust vents and intake vents could result in carbon monoxide poisoning and can affect the performance of the furnace.

April Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Fire extinguisher annual recertification.
2. Inspect all entry doors.
3. Clean dryer vents, exhaust vents and roof vent motors.
4. Service lawn equipment.
5. Inspect roofs and siding.
6. Clean common area flooring and carpeting.
7. Clean/disinfect dumpsters and compactor.
8. Cleaning of parking areas, roadways, driveways, walkways and storm drains.
9. Inspect trees and trim as needed (maintain 10ft distance from buildings).
10. Vehicle Inspection:
 - Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor and thermostat.
 - Check windshield washer fluid.
 - Check belts and hoses.
 - Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - Clean out air cleaner.
 - Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - Check heater and defroster.
 - Check wiper blades for wear.
 - Change engine oil in all vehicles (2nd quarter)
11. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
12. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
13. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.
14. Lease enforcement: Check for proper AC installation (according to policy)
(See Addendum A: Suggestions for Air Conditioner Policy)

May Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Clean all manholes.
2. Emergency generator PM.
3. Clean A/C condensers.
4. Sidewalk and parking lot crack and crevice sealing and repair.
5. Weed treatment at all sites.
6. Edge and mulch all planting beds.
NOTE: Please note that in accordance with 527 CMR 17, which took effect September 2012, the new application of mulch within 18 inches around combustible exteriors of buildings such as wood or vinyl, but not brick or concrete, is prohibited. (See Addendum B: 527 CMR: Board of Fire Prevention Regulations & Preventing Mulch Fires)
7. Clean/disinfect compactors and dumpsters.
8. Prune/trim all shrubs and bushes away from buildings (maintain 2ft clearance from all structures).
9. Fertilize lawns.
10. Vehicle Inspection:
 - Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor and thermostat.
 - Check windshield washer fluid.
 - Check belts and hoses.
 - Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - Clean out air cleaner.
 - Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - Check heater and defroster.
 - Check wiper blades for wear.
11. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
12. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
13. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.

- It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.

14. Lease enforcement: Cooking grills and fire pits (according to policy)

- DHCD recommends the ban of fire pits on all public housing property. There is extreme risk to life and safety with the unsupervised use of fire pits.
- All cooking grills should be used a minimum of 10 feet from all structures.

June Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Summer boiler shut-down and PM service. (Non-heating season June 16th to September 14th).
2. Change A/C, heat and air handler filters.
3. Check interior emergency lighting.
4. Weed and edge all planting beds every 2 weeks (June 1st to Oct 1st).
5. Inspect site railings, walkways and stairs for potential hazards. Identify and repair, as needed.
6. Edge and mulch all planting beds.
NOTE: Please note that in accordance with 527 CMR 17, which took effect September 2012, the new application of mulch within 18 inches around combustible exteriors of buildings such as wood or vinyl, but not brick or concrete, is prohibited. (See Addendum B: 527 CMR: Board of Fire Prevention Regulations & Preventing Mulch Fires)
7. Clean/disinfect dumpsters and compactor.
8. Check flags and replace as needed.
9. Vehicle Inspection:
 - Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor and thermostat.
 - Check windshield washer fluid.
 - Check belts and hoses.
 - Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - Clean out air cleaner.
 - Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - Check heater and defroster.
 - Check wiper blades for wear.
10. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
11. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
12. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.

13. Lease enforcement:

- Pools, trampolines and swing-sets (according to policy, see PHN 2003-04)
- Furniture, trash and debris free from exterior.

July Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Clean dryer vents, exhaust vents and roof vent motors.
2. Inspect gutters, downspouts and splash blocks – repair as needed.
3. Inspect common area windows (glass, seals, balances and locks).
4. Inspect and repair site fencing.
5. Clean/disinfect dumpsters and compactor.
6. Vehicle Inspection:
 - Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor, and thermostat.
 - Check windshield washer fluid.
 - Check belts and hoses.
 - Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - Clean out air cleaner.
 - Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - Check heater and defroster.
 - Check wiper blades for wear.
 - Change engine oil in all (3rd quarter)
7. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
8. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
9. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.
10. Lease enforcement: Pet Policy (according LHA Approved Pet Policy).

August Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Make up air units PM.
2. Strip, wax and buff VCT and linoleum flooring.
3. Clean/disinfect dumpster compactors.
4. Vehicle Inspection:
 - a. Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - b. Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor, and thermostat.
 - c. Check windshield washer fluid.
 - d. Check belts and hoses.
 - e. Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - f. Clean out air cleaner.
 - g. Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - h. Check heater and defroster.
 - i. Check wiper blades for wear.
5. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
6. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
7. Lease enforcement: Common hallways and stairs free from all obstructions. (PHN 2012-12)
 - According to the State Sanitary code 105 CMR 410.451 - No person shall obstruct any exit or passageway. The owner is responsible for maintaining free from obstruction every exit used or intended for use by occupants of more than one dwelling unit or rooming unit. The occupant shall be responsible for maintaining free from obstruction all means of exit leading from his unit and not common to the exit of any other unit.
8. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.

September Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Check electrical panels in boiler rooms and all common areas.
2. Domestic hot water systems PM.
3. Boiler tune-up. (Heating season is September 15th through June 15th)
4. Clean storage rooms and maintenance areas.
5. Touch up all common area paint.
6. Clean heater vents in all common areas.
7. Clean/disinfect dumpsters and compactor.
8. Vehicle Inspection:
 - Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor and thermostat.
 - Check windshield washer fluid.
 - Check belts and hoses.
 - Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - Clean out air cleaner.
 - Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - Check heater and defroster.
 - Check wiper blades for wear.
9. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
10. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.
11. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.
12. Lease enforcement: Removal of all AC's (according to policy)
(See Addendum A recommended Air Conditioner Policy)

October Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. October 7th through the 13th – Fire Prevention Month – Perform PM and check all fire systems, sprinklers, fire pumps, fire extinguishers, common area egress, etc.
2. Annual cleaning of septic systems.
3. Annual sewer station PM.
4. Boiler tune-up. (Heating season is September 15th through June 15th)
5. Change A/C, heat and air handler filters.
6. Clean/disinfect dumpsters and compactor.
7. Annual cleaning of all gutters.
8. Leaf removal.
9. Prune and trim all shrubs and bushes. (maintain 2ft clearance from all structures)
10. Fertilize lawns.
11. Buy and stock ice melt for winter.
12. Clean dryer vents, exhaust vents and roof vent motors.
13. Service snow blowers.
14. Cleaning of parking areas, roadways, driveways, walkways and storm drains.
15. Clean, service and store lawn equipment.
16. Vehicle Inspection:
 - a. Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - b. Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor, and thermostat.
 - c. Check windshield washer fluid.
 - d. Check belts and hoses.
 - e. Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - f. Clean out air cleaner.
 - g. Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - h. Check heater and defroster.
 - i. Check wiper blades for wear.
 - j. Change engine oil in all vehicles. (4th quarter)
17. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
18. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors during annual inspections.

19. Unit inspections – schedule so as to complete 100% each year.
 - It is recommended that inspections be completed by an administrative staff member or the executive director and a maintenance staff employee. This will ensure that the executive director and administrative staff become aware of the property conditions and any lease enforcement issues.
 - It is recommended that you inspect a manageable number of units each month which allows for all maintenance deficiencies to be completed within the timeframe stated in the DHCD Property Maintenance Guide (PMG), two weeks.

20. Lease enforcement: Decorations (Halloween) cords running through doors and windows.
 - a. Inspect all basements for proper clearance from heating systems (5ft).
 - b. Fire prevention notices to tenants.

November Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. First Saturday in November reset light timers and clocks back 1 hour for daylight saving time.
2. Monitor and issue on-going snow removal work orders.
3. Inspect trees and trim as needed (maintain 10ft clearance from all structures).
4. Monitor and issue on-going snow removal work orders.
5. Clean common area carpets and flooring.
6. Clean/disinfect compactor and trash chutes.
7. Vehicle Inspection:
 - a. Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - b. Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor, and thermostat.
 - c. Check windshield washer fluid.
 - d. Check belts and hoses.
 - e. Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - f. Clean out air cleaner.
 - g. Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - h. Check heater and defroster.
 - i. Check wiper blades for wear.
 - j. Check underbody for corrosion and hose off.
8. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
9. Lease enforcement: Blocked egresses.
10. Keep all chimneys, exhaust and intake vents free of snow throughout the winter season and keep dryer exhaust vents free of snow throughout the winter season.
 - Blocked chimneys, exhaust vents and intake vents could result in carbon monoxide poisoning and can affect the performance of the furnace.

December Preventive Maintenance Tasks

1. Monitor and issue on-going snow removal work orders.
2. Check and replace flags as needed.
3. Clean/disinfect compactor and trash chutes.
4. Vehicle Inspection:
 - a. Check all fluid levels: crank case, transmission, etc.
 - b. Check antifreeze, radiator rust inhibitor, and thermostat.
 - c. Check windshield washer fluid.
 - d. Check belts and hoses.
 - e. Check plugs, wiring, battery, clean and grease terminals.
 - f. Clean out air cleaner.
 - g. Check wheel alignment and tire balance (signs of uneven wear).
 - h. Check heater and defroster.
 - i. Check wiper blades for wear.
 - j. Check underbody for corrosion and hose off.
5. Inventory of supplies and small parts.
6. Lease enforcement: Decorations (Christmas) Cords running through doors and windows.
7. Keep all chimneys, exhaust and intake vents free of snow throughout the winter season and keep dryer exhaust vents free of snow throughout the winter season.
 - Blocked chimneys, exhaust vents and intake vents could result in carbon monoxide poisoning and can affect the performance of the furnace.

ADDENDUM A

Suggestions for Air Conditioner Policy

Your air conditioner policy should include:

1. Written request from tenant followed by written permission from Local Housing Authority (LHA).
2. Maximum BTU size. (Most LHA's restrict them to 5000 BTU's depending on size of apartment.)
3. Total number of AC units allowed.
4. AC units must be energy star approved.
5. Extension cords (if needed) must be a 12-3 heavy duty appliance cord with ground.
6. Installation date no sooner than June 15th – End of heating season.
7. Removal date at least by September 15th – Start of heating season.
8. Proper installation instructions. You should solicit 3 price quotes from local contractors that are willing to install the AC units according to the following criteria.
 - a. Wood Sash:
 - i. An "L" bracket is to be used for securing both the top sash and lower sash together so they are not able to be opened.
 - ii. Weather stripping to be installed between the upper and lower sash.
 - iii. No duct tape, cardboard, cloth or other unprotected material that is not weather proof will be used as side panels.
 - b. Vinyl Sash:
 - i. A wood dowel or other suitable material is to be placed on top of the lower sash and directly under the handle (if present) of the upper sash to secure both sashes from being opened.
 - ii. An "L" bracket can be used when there is no upper sash handle.
 - iii. Weather stripping installed between the top and bottom sash.
 - iv. No duct tape, cardboard, cloth or other unprotected material that is not weather proof will be used as side panels.
 - c. Proper pitch of AC unit to direct condensation away from the inside of the apartment.
 - d. The price quote list can be given to tenants for them to choose an installer. Advise the tenant to keep the receipt as proof of an "approved" AC installation.
9. Air conditioners must be maintained in good working order and kept clean.
10. When a room only has 1 window, a window mounted AC is prohibited as it blocks emergency egress. A portable AC that does not prevent an emergency escape may be used. Portable AC units that use condensation reservoirs may flood the apartment and are therefore not recommended.

ADDENDUM B

527 CMR: BOARD OF FIRE PREVENTION REGULATIONS

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PREVENTING MULCH FIRES

527 CMR: BOARD OF FIRE PREVENTION REGULATIONS

527 CMR 17.00: FOREST PRODUCTS

Section

17.01: Purpose and Scope

17.02: Application

17.03: Incorporation of NFPA 1, Chapter 31 (2009 Edition) by Reference with Modifications

17.04: Modifications of the Provisions of NFPA-1, Chapter 31 (2009 Edition)

17.05: Fire Safety Considerations Relating to the Use of Mulch

17.01: Purpose and Scope

The purpose and scope of 527 CMR 17.00 is to protect the public and reduce the hazards of fire and explosion by establishing minimum requirements for the safe outside storage of certain forest product materials described in 527 CMR 17.02.

17.02: Application

(1) The requirements of 527 CMR 17.00 shall apply to the outside storage of the following materials:

- (a) Lumber and wood panel products at retail and wholesale lumber storage yards;
- (b) Lumber and wood panel products at other than retail and wholesale storage yards;
- (c) Ties, poles, piles, posts, and other similar forest products at pressure-treating plant yards;
- (d) Outside storage of wood chips, mulch, hogged material, and wood by-products;
- (e) Logs;
- (f) Forest products used as mulch.

(2) In the event of a conflict between the provisions of 527 CMR 17.00, and any other provision of 527 CMR, the standard that requires the greater level of safety shall prevail.

17.03: Incorporation of NFPA 1, Chapter 31 (2009 Edition) by Reference with Modifications

For the requirements of 527 CMR 17.00, the provisions of (National Fire Protection Association) NFPA -1, Chapter 31, (2009 Edition), entitled Forest Products are hereby incorporated by reference, as modified by 527 CMR 17.04.

17.04: Modifications of the Provisions of NFPA-1, Chapter 31 (2009 Edition)

(a) Section 31.1 is modified to read as follows:

31.1 General. The outside storage of Forest Product materials within the purpose and scope of 527 CMR 17.01 shall be in accordance with the provisions of 527 CMR 17.00.

(b) Section 31.1.1 is modified by adding the following:

31.1.1 Terms and Definitions

Unless otherwise stated in 527 CMR 17.00, terms and definitions used in 527 CMR 17.00 shall be defined in accordance with the provisions of NFPA 1, Chapter 3 (2009 Edition)

AHJ or Authority Having Jurisdiction, shall mean the head of the fire department or the state fire marshal and their designees, as prescribed by M.G.L. c. 148.

Building, shall mean a building as defined in M.G.L. c. 148, § 1.

Mulch, shall mean any type of forest material that is produced for the purpose spreading or application over the surface of the soil as a protective cover, to retain moisture, reduce erosion, provide nutrients, and suppress weed growth, seed germination and for general landscaping purposes.

17.04: continued

This Code, shall mean 527 CMR, unless otherwise particularly indicated.

(c) Section 31.2 is modified to read as follows:

31.2 Permits. Permits, issued by the head of the fire department shall be required for the storage of materials as provided in Table 31.2.

Table 31.2 Permit Requirements

Wood Products	Permits Required
Mulch produced or stored outside	Storage in Excess of 300 yards ³

(d) Section 31.2 is modified by adding the following:

31.2.1 Permit Requirements: Permits required by 527 CMR 17.00 shall be subject to the provisions of 527 CMR 1.04(1) through (8). A copy of a certified statement signed by the owner or facility manager indicating compliance with 527 CMR 17.00 shall be included with the permit application.

(e) Section 31.3.1.1 is modified by adding (6) as follows:

6. Forest products used as mulch.

(f) Section 31.3.2.1.4 is modified to read as follows:

31.3.2.1.4 Where the storage of materials regulated by 527 CMR 17.00 are permitted to accumulate in a quantity or location that may constitute an undue public safety hazard, adequate fencing of not less than six feet in height with an approved locked gate located as necessary to allow the entry of fire department apparatus shall be provided. The fencing shall encompass the material or property.

Modify 31.3.3.3.4 by adding at the end of the sentence the words: or as otherwise approved by the AHJ.

Modify 31.3.3.4.1.1 by adding at the end of the sentence the words: or as otherwise approved by the AHJ.

Modify 31.3.3.4.2.1 by adding at the end of the sentence the words: or as otherwise approved by the AHJ.

(g) Section 31.3.6.4 is modified by adding the following:

31.3.6.4.4 Property- line clearance of not less than 25ft at the base of the pile shall be provided.

17.05: Fire Safety Considerations Relating to the Use of Mulch

On or after September 1, 2012, mulch shall not be newly applied within 18" of any combustible portion of any building [See Figure 17.05]. Exception:

1. Any building, regardless of the existence of fire separations, containing six (6) dwelling units or less.

17.05: continued

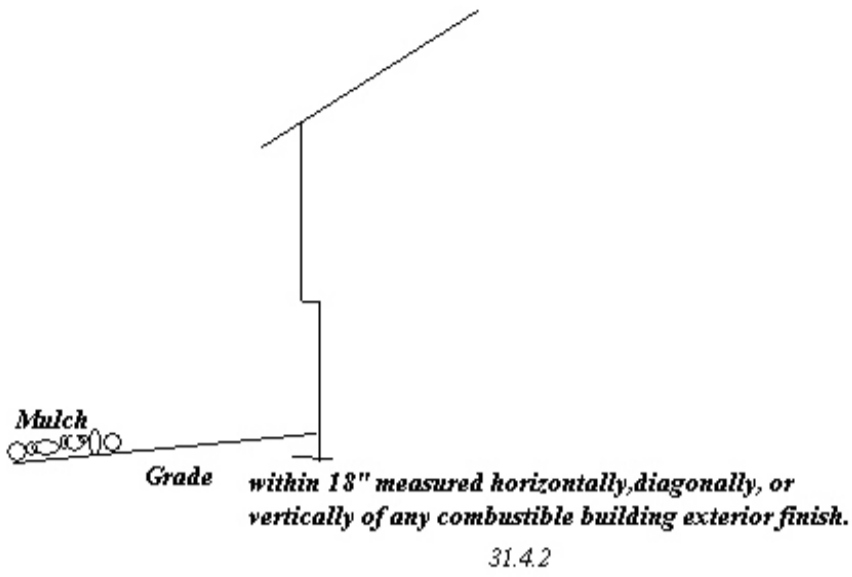


Figure 17.05

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

527 CMR 17.00: M.G.L. c. 22D, § 4, c. 148, §§ 10 and 28.

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527 CMR: BOARD OF FIRE PREVENTION REGULATIONS

NON-TEXT PAGE

Preventing Mulch Fires

Mulch is a combustible material that can be easily ignited by improperly discarded smoking materials. Hundreds of small and large fires are started this way every year. The risk is that what starts as a small outdoor mulch fire can quickly spread to buildings. A mulch fire can be well underway before someone notices or is alerted by smoke alarms or sprinkler systems activating.



Photo courtesy of photos-public-domain.com

Regulation on Mulch Safety

Safe use of mulch is regulated through 527 CMR 1.00, section 10.14.10.4. The regulation prohibits new application of mulch within 18" around combustible exteriors of buildings, such as wood or vinyl, but not brick or concrete. Residential buildings with six units or less are exempted from the regulation, but all homeowners may want to adopt these safety practices. The regulation applies to all other buildings including commercial properties.

Tips for Property Managers, Building Owners & Landscapers

- Provide a minimum of an 18-inch clearance between landscape mulch beds and combustible building materials, such as wood, vinyl siding and decks.
- Use non-combustible mulch such as rock or pea stone around gas meters and combustible portions of the structure.
- Provide proper receptacles for smoking materials at all entrances to public buildings and in designated smoking areas. Place them at least 18" away from the building, do not mulch in these areas and remember to regularly empty smoking receptacles.
- Grounds and maintenance crews should be aware when conditions are favorable for mulch fires and increase surveillance of mulch beds.
- Keep mulch beds moist when possible.

Million Dollar Mulch Fires

- The most notable mulch fire in Massachusetts occurred in May 2015 in a large Arlington apartment complex. One man died in the fire started by smoking materials discarded in a mulch bed, which spread to a car, then to the building. Thirty-six apartments and six cars were destroyed. The building had no sprinklers and the estimated dollar loss was \$6.7 million.
- In April 2012, improperly discarded smoking materials ignited mulch outside an assisted living center in Braintree. The fire forced many older adults to evacuate in the early morning hours. Several suffered smoke inhalation injuries.
- In May 2008, a cigarette ignited a mulch fire at a Peabody apartment complex. It caused \$6.7 million in damage to the building, displaced 750 people temporarily and 36 permanently.

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Report Mulch Fires

- If you see anything smoking in a landscape bed, put it out if you can and report it. If the burning material is not thoroughly wet or removed it can re-ignite.
- Report any smoke or fire by calling 9-1-1.



Be a Responsible Smoker:

Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time.

- If you smoke, remember to properly dispose of all smoking materials.
- Always use appropriate receptacles for disposing of smoking materials and matches.
- Do not discard cigarettes in mulch or potted plants.
- Use ashtrays that won't burn or catch fire and that are deep enough to contain butts. Wet butts down before throwing out.
- As more people smoke outdoors rather than inside, many building fires started by smoking begin on decks, porches, and exterior stairways.
- Be smart in your choice of containers for butts. Consider using metal cans with sand for outdoor disposal.
- Never throw lit smoking materials out of a car window. It is a fire risk and it is illegal to do so. The penalty for throwing lit materials from a car is a fine of \$100 and/or thirty days imprisonment (M.G.L. c. 148 § 54).

How Mulch Fires Start.

Care must be taken to prevent mulch fires.

- In many mulch fires, the smoldering mulch tunnels under the surface and then breaks out into open flame.
- Mulch that is piled too deeply, more than a few inches, can build up heat and spontaneously catch fire.
- Mulch fires start more readily when the weather is hot and it has been dry for an extended time.
- Factors such as below-average rainfall, dry conditions, warm temperatures, and high winds increase the risk of mulch fires.

Storage and Manufacturing of Mulch

- 527 CMR 1.00, section 10.14.10.4 has safety requirements for those who store or manufacture mulch. It limits the size of mulch piles and requires a distance of 30-feet between piles and 25-feet from the lot line.
- Large piles of mulch can spontaneously combust from all the heat they generate, so it is important to be vigilant and employ good housekeeping. The distance between mulch piles keeps a fire from spreading from one pile to another, or to a building.



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