



Central Student Government

Assembly Resolution 13-061

A Resolution to Require Inspections for Beyond the Diag Listings

Resolution Information

Sponsor(s)	Theodore Masterson, Engineering
External author(s)	
Endorser(s)	
Long title	A Declarative Resolution to Encourage U-M to Mandate Inspections for “Beyond the Diag” Listings
Author Summary	This resolution calls upon all landlords and sublessors to submit to an inspection of the space they are interested in renting out before listing it on the University of Michigan’s Beyond the Diag off-campus housing website. This inspection would catch safety issues, noticeable damage, and any appliances that don’t work as expected, ensuring that the space is habitable.

Assembly Information (to be completed by the Speaker)

Requirements	Reading in two separate meetings; simple majority vote; Presidential approval.
Committees	Communications

Committee Information (to be completed by the respective Committee Chairs)

Committee (if applicable)	Passed For First Reads (Y/N; Initials)	Passed For Second Reads (Y/N; Initials)
Rules		
Finance		
Communications	Y; AG (Sponsor Present)	Y; AG (Sponsor Present)
Resolutions		

Attest

Jarek Schmanski, LSA
Speaker of the Assembly

Unanimous Consent

Date: 26 March 2024

Presidential Approval

Meera Herle, Ford

Date

Section 1.

The Central Student Government Assembly finds and declares all of the following:

WHEREAS,

Central Student Government (CSG) seeks to help students locate and secure suitable housing. As such, it is CSG's opinion that all landlords and sublessors should submit to an inspection of the property they are interested in renting out before listing it on the University of Michigan's Beyond the Diag off-campus housing website, to assess the space's condition and liveability. This inspection would catch safety issues, noticeable damage, and any appliances that don't work as expected. Currently, there are lax restrictions on what can be listed on the Beyond the Diag website, and for many prospective tenants a physical tour is the only way to make sure the space is acceptable and doesn't have noticeable issues. Not all tenants may be aware of ways to inspect for damage, and landlords may prevent tenants from using tools or testing appliances to make sure they function correctly; AND

WHEREAS,

Adding an inspection requirement to all off-campus housing listings would improve transparency, the quality of off-campus housing, as well as the convenience of finding housing for students. It would also hold landlords with poorly-maintained properties accountable to fix up their spaces and remove safety hazards. This would also be an opportunity to educate new students, looking for apartments for the first time, on what issues to look for in off-campus housing.

Section 2.

THEREFORE it is, by the Students of the University of Michigan, through Central Student Government:

RESOLVED,

CSG implores U-M to have all Beyond the Diag listings inspected by a qualified inspector, contracted either from the University or from some other source.

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

That if a requirement be adopted, we believe that each listing on the Beyond the Diag website should include a section written to reflect the results of the inspection.

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

This could be similar to websites such as GovPlanet and IronPlanet, which auction government and commercial vehicles and equipment, and which have inspectors to identify and document problems.

AND FINALLY RESOLVED,

If a landlord or sublessor does not submit to the inspection, a notice will be put under their listing that they did not complete an inspection run by Beyond the Diag. Inspections will be done by appointment, and the person will be required to physically enter the space. The landlord will sign a waiver permitting entry, photography, and the use of tools to test appliances.

A "check mark system" will be used for landlords who did not submit to a University Beyond the Diag inspection. That way, they can use a result from an Ann Arbor city inspection to verify that their property is in acceptable condition. Proof that their property passed the inspection will be required to earn a check mark.

Safety hazards, if found, will not prevent a landlord from listing their space on the Beyond the Diag website, but prospective tenants will be made aware of these safety hazards directly on the website listing.

These rules will not apply to fraternity and sorority houses, which are off-campus houses at the University of Michigan. However, if a fraternity or sorority lists any of their rooms on the Beyond the Diag website, either to fill occupancy quotas

or after a chapter closes, the presidents of their respective alumni boards will be required to submit to an inspection of their property.

Appendix A: Common Issues and Safety Hazards in Residential Units

- GFCI outlets missing
 - GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlets are required in any spaces that are near faucets or may be exposed to water, including bathrooms, kitchens, and outdoors. If only 1 GFCI outlet is installed in a room, the rest of the outlets in that room must be daisy-chained to the GFCI outlet so they're also protected. They will trip if they sense any stray current, catching electrical faults and preventing shock. Some older houses do not have GFCI outlets in these rooms, which poses a huge safety risk (household 120V is more than enough voltage to shock someone with lethal amounts of electric current).¹
- Ungrounded outlets
 - Ungrounded outlets can be used safely with insulated appliances (ones that have a 2-prong plug) or if a grounding adapter is installed correctly (assuming the junction box they are installed in is grounded). However, not everyone is aware of this, and grounding adapters are often installed into the outlet incorrectly. Appliances with a 3-prong grounding plug are then plugged into the incorrectly installed adapter, which is very dangerous because there's effectively no ground in the circuit. Grounding is important to trip breakers if there is an internal wiring fault on the appliance, is effective fire protection, and it can somewhat reduce the risk of shock while a person is in contact with the appliance.
- Outlets wired incorrectly
 - Sometimes outlets may be wired incorrectly, especially if an unqualified individual attempted a DIY repair. The outlet may simply not work as expected, or it could be outright dangerous. A simple outlet tester can catch these.
- Water damage
 - Discolored paint, musty air, rotted wood, and swelling under bathroom wallpaper may be signs of water damage, and can be caused by leaky pipes or shower door gaskets. This can cause mold growth that poses a health concern, and water damage could be more serious if it compromises the building's structure.
- Door locks not working
 - If a door lock is tough to open, or it does not work at all, it's usually an easy fix, but it can be a major source of inconvenience for a student with their hands full trying to get their door open after a long day.
 - If the door to the house doesn't lock correctly, that puts the residents at a huge risk for break-ins.
- Window not opening/shutting
 - Windows can be harder to open depending on the weather, but if they don't open at all then that can be an issue for someone.
- Chirping smoke detectors
 - If a smoke detector has low battery, the battery should be replaced or a new smoke detector should be installed (battery replacements can't be done on sealed battery smoke detectors) immediately in case of fire.
- Toilet flap or faucet leaking
 - A leaky toilet flap or faucet can cause a high water bill, which may be passed onto the tenants as a higher utilities fee.
- Kitchen appliances not working
 - If a gas stove doesn't want to light (requires a lighter or a long wait to light), that can pose a major safety hazard to someone new to cooking, since enough gas released can create a fire risk or cause poisoning.
 - If there are appliances in the kitchen that are present but aren't functioning, such as dishwashers and microwaves, the tenant should be aware of that before moving in expecting them to work.

¹ <https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/osh3075.pdf>

- Refrigerators can make loud noises when running. The loud noise may just be an annoyance but it could mean something's wrong with the evaporator or compressor motors. Due to the time and cost of repairing refrigerators, landlords may leave them unfixed for as long as possible, which could be until the next tenant moves in.
- Wi-Fi speed
 - If a landlord provides internet, then this should be tested during the inspection. Internet speeds are important since a lot of assignments are done through Canvas, and some classes are still conducted remotely. People in remote jobs also need to have a good Internet connection for their work. Having a good bandwidth is also important when watching lecture recordings. If the Wi-Fi speed is slow or spotty, students should be made aware of that before they plan on moving into the place.
- Cracked or missing floorboards
 - Older spaces with hardwood floors may have damage to the floorboards, which could be serious if there's a hole or a board is missing. It is important to fix this since injury could occur if someone's foot gets stuck in it, and it creates an entryway for rodents.
- Rodents
 - If there are mouse baits in the room and they have bits taken away from them, that's a pretty good indicator that there are rodents in the room. Sometimes they stay in the walls and the tenant will hear them scratching around at night, but no one wants mice in their room or leaving droppings on the kitchen counter.
- Drafty windows
 - If a window doesn't close all the way, cold air can blow in and make the room too cold or cause the heater to trip, increasing heating costs. Adding weatherstripping is an easy and cheap fix for this problem.