

*ADVISORY REGARDING THE*  
**LICENSING OF STUDENT HOUSING**

DATE: February 1, 2010

AUTHOR: Ed Fegley, Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Bloomsburg

PURPOSE: To clarify the application of ordinance 841 Ch. 11.

First and foremost I would like to simplify the purpose of the Rental Unit Occupancy Regulations (RUOR). The purpose is to promote the neighborly cohabitation between students and non-students. The primary objective is to help promote the safety and welfare of all residents by encouraging the maintenance of all structures used for the occupancy of student housing. To this extent, the Town of Bloomsburg (town) has elected to utilize the 2003 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), among others, as a guideline for property maintenance.

*For a more detailed explanation see Ord. 841 (Code of Ordinances) Ch. 11 §11-101.*

The first step in the utilization of any property within the town for the purposes of student housing is to obtain a *certificate of zoning compliance* from the zoning office. The certificate of zoning compliance is issued for properties that have not been licensed for student housing in the past. If your property has been licensed for student housing within the last year, a certificate of zoning compliance is not necessary. If your property has been licensed for student housing longer than one year ago, you must submit a zoning application. If you are considering purchasing a property for the purposes of student housing, this step is critical. **BEFORE YOU PURCHASE A PROPERTY FOR STUDENT HOUSING**, submit a zoning application to the code office detailing all that you know of the property and what your intentions are with the subject property. A site plan and floor plans may be required. The fee for this service is fifty dollars (\$50). For that fee the code office will perform a review of the property and tell you the following:

- Eligibility for student housing
  - Including previous license information (if applicable);
- Maximum number of occupants for student housing (if applicable);
- Previous variances and/or special exceptions (if applicable);
- Use non-conformities (if applicable);
- Dimensional non-conformities (if applicable)
- Other misc. info.

With this information, you can make an informed decision regarding the purchase of the subject property and not be “surprised” in the future. Of course this review will be based on current regulations and if regulations change in the future, you will be responsible to keep up with the changes.

Once you've verified that your property is eligible to be utilized for the occupancy of student housing, the second step is to apply for a regulated rental unit (RRU) license through the town's code office (applications are available through the town's web-site) by submitting the following items required by the RUOR ordinance.

- RRU license application
  - Note: If the proposed RRU is owned by a corporation (inc. llc. etc.) the chief executive officer, or other responsible party, must be listed on the application;
- Appendix A & B (combined with application);
- A floor plan of the dwelling unit;
- A copy of the rental agreement (lease);
- Fees, currently twenty five dollars (\$25) per student occupying the dwelling unit.

The code office staff will review this information and contact you with any questions or concerns and/or to schedule an inspection.

Step three is the inspection of the rental unit. ***NOTE: Utilities must be activated for the inspection. ie: electric & water.*** The inspection begins with an assessment of the exterior of the structure and also of the yard areas. The inspection then proceeds to the interior where all areas of the dwelling unit must be accessible for this inspection. Starting on the first floor, moving to the basement and then to the remainder of the dwelling unit. In the case of a multi-unit dwelling, non-student housing dwelling units will not be required to be inspected. However, common areas such as basements, exterior areas, etc. must be inspected. Some items, such as heating units, service panels, water mains, etc., that supply utilities to the subject rental unit must be inspected regardless of location. After the completion of the inspection, the inspector will review the findings with the applicant (or designated agent). A few days later, a written inspection report will be sent to you via certified mail. If no deficiencies were found, a license will be included. If deficiencies were found, you will have sixty (60) days to correct any deficiencies found during the inspection. Or, if you disagree with the findings of the report, you may file an appeal within thirty (30) days of the postmark date of the letter. This letter will also include the date and time of the scheduled follow up inspection. **IF YOU CAN NOT MAKE THIS APPOINTMENT, CONTACT THE CODE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY TO RESCHEDULE.** If you (or your designated agent) do not attend the follow up inspection, a fifty dollar (\$50) missed appointment fee may be assessed and you will be responsible to reschedule the follow up inspection. Please note that no inspections will be scheduled until all outstanding fees are paid. If all deficiencies have been corrected, you will receive a license within a few days via first class U.S. mail.

*For more information regarding the items to be inspected, see the "Minimum RRU requirements" in the forms section of the Code Enforcement/Zoning page of the town's web-site. For even more detailed information see the International Code Council's publication entitled 2003 International Property Maintenance Code, a copy is available for review at the Town Hall.*

Step four is the fore mentioned follow up inspection. This inspection is very basic and straight forward. The inspector will return to verify that all previously identified deficiencies have been corrected. If, in fact, this is the case, you will receive the RRU license via first class U.S. mail within a few days. However, if the follow up inspection shows that all deficiencies have not been corrected, the follow up inspection will have been deemed “failed” and no license will be issued. If deficiencies remain after the follow up inspection, you must contact the code office to schedule a second follow up inspection to verify compliance. There will be an additional charge of twenty five dollars (\$25) per dwelling unit for this follow up inspection and any additional follow up inspections that may be required. All fees must be paid before additional follow up inspections will be scheduled.

If you permit the occupancy of a RRU without obtaining a valid current license, this office may issue citations on a daily basis which can carry a maximum fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) each. It should be noted that as per the RUOR, each day that occupancy is permitted without a license shall constitute a separate offense.

Your license, when obtained, is valid for a period of one year. Starting July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. You may apply for a license for occupancy in January to be occupied immediately. However, that license will expire the next June 30<sup>th</sup>. On the other hand, you may apply for a license in January for occupancy to begin in September of the same year. If this is the case, the license will be valid beginning the next July 1<sup>st</sup> until the following June 30<sup>th</sup>.

***The code staff understand that the different regulations can be challenging for a first time RRU owner so, if you have questions please contact one of the code staff members for further direction.***

I hope this advisory was helpful. If you have suggestions or comments about this advisory, please contact me.

Ed Fegley  
Code Enforcement Officer  
Town of Bloomsburg  
(570) 784-7123 ext. 118  
[efegley@bloomsburgpa.org](mailto:efegley@bloomsburgpa.org)