

2018

# Rural Alaska Healthy Homes Checklist



*Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium  
Community Environment & Health  
January 2018*

# **Rural Alaska Healthy Homes Checklist**

## **DESCRIPTION**

This checklist is a rapid healthy homes assessment tool developed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)-Environmental Health Consultation group. It can be used by an environmental worker, clinic personnel, homeowners, or anybody who may be requested to do a home assessment in rural Alaska. The guiding principles of this checklist were adopted from the National Center for Healthy Housing's Seven Principles of a Healthy Home and modified for use in rural Alaska.

## **SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF A HEALTHY HOME**

According to the National Center for Healthy Housing, a healthy home is one that is:

- Dry
- Clean
- Ventilated
- Safe
- Chemical-Free
- Pest-Free
- Maintained

More information about healthy homes and the Seven Principles can be found on the National Center for Healthy Housing website: [www.nchh.org](http://www.nchh.org), or visiting the U.S. EPA website.

## **THE HOME ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The first step is identifying a home. This could be done by request from the home occupant, a healthcare provider for example. After a home is identified, explain that the assessment may identify ways to make a healthier home environment, and then ask for permission to proceed. Let the occupant know that they will receive recommendations for a healthier home and how they can get a copy of the report. Then, follow up with occupants, or housing authorities as needed to put the recommendations into action. **Remember that any health information discovered during the assessment must be kept confidential.**

## **USING THE CHECKLIST**

This checklist can be used to identify potential problems and offer simple recommendations to make a home a healthier environment. For each topic, listed are questions that could lead to action items. Go through the home room by room answering questions on the checklist with the occupant. The desired answer (yes or no) is underlined. After completing all of the questions that apply to the home, the recommendations can be discussed with the occupant as needed. A written report should be created for the homeowner after the assessment. A photo is included with each topic. Many of the photos are examples of issues often identified in homes.

If the assessor is uncomfortable giving a recommendation or finds need of assistance, they may contact the ANTHC-Healthy Homes team by visiting, calling, or sending an email. Contact information provided below:

**ANTHC-Community Environment & Health, Healthy Homes Program**

**4500 Diplomacy Drive, Ste. 420**





**Anchorage, Alaska 99508**

**Phone: 907-729-3600**

**Email: [ceh@anthc.org](mailto:ceh@anthc.org)**

# Healthy Homes Checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Occupants: \_\_\_\_\_ Assessor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Topic	Question	Answer*	Recommended Action	Photo
1.	Life Safety & Hand Hygiene	<p>a. Is there a <b>working</b> carbon monoxide (CO) alarm and smoke alarm in the home?</p> <p>b. Can occupants wash their hands regularly? (e.g.-before eating and after using bathroom)</p> <p>c. Are there any exposed wires visible in the home?</p>	<p>a. <u>Yes</u> or No</p> <p>b. <u>Yes</u> or No</p> <p>c. Yes or <u>No</u></p>	<p>Per Alaska State Law, a CO detector must be in each home. Install a CO detector and smoke alarm in the home.</p> <p>Handwashing is the number one way to prevent the spread of disease. Wash often!</p> <p>If possible, have a certified electrician address any electrical problems in the home. This may need referral to a local housing authority.</p>	
2.	Smoking & Pollution Sources	<p>a. Does anyone smoke anything in the home?</p> <p>b. Are there pollution sources in the home? (e.g.- engine parts, fuels or chemicals)</p> <p>Pollution sources can be found throughout the home, but are commonly located in arctic entry ways, bathrooms, or under sinks.</p>	<p>a. Yes or <u>No</u></p> <p>b. Yes or <u>No</u></p>	<p>Keep smoking outside of the home.</p> <p>For less pollution in the home, store fuels and chemicals outside in a secure area.</p> <p>If possible, work on engine parts outside, or in a well-ventilated area away from people in the home, such as a shed or village workshop.</p>	
3.	Ventilation	<p>a. Does the home have ventilation? (e.g.- vents, an HRV, exhaust fan over the stove, etc.)</p> <p>b. If yes, are vents used and free of obstruction? (Ventilation should be inspected throughout the home, in the bathroom, bedrooms, and in the kitchen).</p>	<p>a. <u>Yes</u> or No</p> <p>b. <u>Yes</u> or No</p>	<p>Open windows will improve ventilation. Installing a Fresh 80 vent will also improve ventilation.</p> <p>Ventilation is important for removing polluted air and bringing in fresh air. Ventilation also keeps moisture levels in check, making it harder for mold to grow.</p>	
4.	Wood Stove	<p>a. If the home has a wood stove, is it EPA certified? (EPA certification should be printed on the stove label)</p> <p>b. Does trash, cardboard, plastic, or anything other than dry wood and kindling ever get burned in the wood stove?</p>	<p>a. <u>Yes</u> or No</p> <p>b. Yes or <u>No</u></p>	<p>An EPA certified woodstove will produce less indoor pollution and heat the home more efficiently. If possible, install an EPA certified woodstove.</p> <p>When burning, use only dry, split, and seasoned wood and kindling. Trash, plastic, and cardboard can produce harmful pollutants when burned and should not be burned.</p>	

5.	<b>Mold &amp; Moisture</b>	<p>a. Does the home have visible mold growth? (often found in the bathroom, or on ceilings, walls, and sometimes window sills)</p> <p>b. Are there any leaks or places where moisture is entering the home?</p>	<p>a. Yes or <b>No</b></p> <p>b. Yes or <b>No</b></p>	<p>Small amounts of mold can be cleaned with soap and water, or a dilute bleach solution for smooth surfaces. Wear gloves, goggles, and an N-95 respirator mask when cleaning mold.</p> <p>A mold problem is a moisture problem. Make sure the home does not have leaks or water entry points. Proper ventilation will also control moisture.</p>	
6.	<b>Other Heating Sources</b>	<p>a. Does the home have a heat source such as a Toyo stove or a boiler?</p> <p>b. If yes, is it in good working order and maintained?</p> <p>c. Is it vented so that exhaust does not enter the home?</p>	<p>a. Yes or No</p> <p>b. <b>Yes</b> or No</p> <p>c. <b>Yes</b> or No</p>	<p>Heating appliances will last longer and burn cleaner if properly run and maintained.</p> <p>Companies like Rural Energy Enterprises, may be able to trouble shoot problems if contacted.</p> <p>Make sure exhaust does not enter the home.</p>	
7.	<b>Chemical Storage</b>	<p>a. Are chemicals or household cleaners (bleach, Lysol, etc.) kept in the home?</p> <p>b. If yes, are they labeled and stored in a cabinet that cannot be accessed by children?</p> <p>c. Are any medications stored where children may reach them?</p>	<p>a. Yes or No</p> <p>b. <b>Yes</b> or No</p> <p>c. Yes or <b>No</b></p>	<p>Chemicals, household cleaners, and medications can be harmful, especially to children.</p> <p>Store and label chemicals, household cleaners, and medications separately and in a locked cabinet away from the reach of children.</p>	
8.	<b>Pests</b>	<p>a. Are pests (insects, rodents, etc.) a problem in the home?</p> <p>b. If yes, does the pest have access to food, water, and a way to enter the home for shelter?</p>	<p>a. Yes or <b>No</b></p> <p>b. Yes or <b>No</b></p>	<p>Pests can be a nuisance and some can transmit disease. To prevent infestations, seal any holes and crack in the home and keep the pest from accessing food, water, and shelter (e.g.-trash bins, food on counter).</p> <p>Pesticides should only be used when other methods fail. <b>READ THE LABEL</b> before use.</p>	

