

# HOUSING INSPECTION NEWS

## CERTIFICATE ISSUANCE POLICY

As a reminder, 40 month certificates will only be issued to properties which meet certain criteria AND complete the recertification cycle PRIOR to the expiration date of the valid certificate. **No exceptions will be made.** You may renew certificates up to 120 days in advance, so mark your calendars, call **EARLY** for inspections, and leave plenty of time for a reinspection to occur should one be necessary.

**THANK YOU!**



## NEW RENTAL INSPECTION RULES APPROVED

The City Manager approved changes to the rental housing inspection rules, which will take effect March 2, 2016.

The highlights of the new rule changes include:

- All properties, including those with 30 or more units that were previously excluded, will now be eligible to qualify for a 40 month certificate of compliance upon renewal. Certain criteria must be met to be eligible.
- A new 52 month certificate of compliance will be available for properties which have a proven track record of excellent management and maintenance. Certain criteria must be met to be eligible.
- Specifically identifying when a 16 month certificate will be issued.
- Formalizing the use of Conditional Certificates.
- Providing instructions for calculating expiration dates.
- Authorizing the use of a Vacate Order for occupied rental properties where the property owner/manager is not cooperating in the certification or re-certification of the property.



For the official rules, including qualifying criteria for extended certificates, visit:

[www.kalamazoo.org/rental-housing-inspections](http://www.kalamazoo.org/rental-housing-inspections)



What kind of future do you want for Kalamazoo? How do we make our collective vision a reality?

Participate in the 2025 Strategic Vision & Master Plan Update!

Visit:

[www.imaginekalamazoo.com](http://www.imaginekalamazoo.com)

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### Implementations made in 2015 to Assist Property Owners

- Certificate renewals permitted up to 120 days in advance (previously 90 days).
- Courtesy reminders mailed 120 days in advance (previously 90 days) and stamped with **"URGENT RENTAL CERTIFICATE RENEWAL"**.
- Inspection "cheat sheet" listing common violations, as well as rental registration database information, now included with each courtesy reminder.
- Appointment reminder calls three days prior to scheduled inspections.
- Rental registration application forms submittable on-line.
- Fifth Housing Inspector added to ease scheduling issues.

**More Coming in 2016!**

### Help us Keep Kalamazoo Clean!



- ◆ Call **337-8221** to report curb lawn, herby curby trash container and private property trash violations.
- ◆ Call **337-8847** to report tall grass and weed violations (annually May through October).

### Multi-Unit Recycling Available



Kalamazoo offers a free multi-unit recycling program for the managers, owners and occupants of residential properties with five or more units, funded by the solid waste millage. The recycling program offers a variety of container sizes, depending on the volume. Collections range from weekly to monthly, depending on need. Multi-unit recycling collects paper items, cardboard, plastic (#1, #2, #3, #4, #5 & #6), glass, tin/aluminum and other kitchen metals, as well as empty aerosol cans.

If your rental property is not currently participating in the City's recycling program, call 337-8215 to start today!



## SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL

City Ordinance specifies that it is the responsibility of citizens to remove snow from sidewalks adjacent to private property. Clearing snow and ice from sidewalks shows courtesy and caring toward all those who need to use sidewalks, including children walking to school.



All snow and ice which has accumulated on the adjacent public sidewalk should be removed in a timely fashion. Immediately after the accumulation of ice on such a sidewalk it is recommended that it be treated with sand, salt or other substance to prevent it from being slippery. Landlords that require their tenants to shovel should pass this information along.

Properties that are not compliant will be issued a warning by the Public Services Department. If the sidewalk has not been cleared within 48 hours of the warning, the Right-of-Way Coordinator will refer the violation to Public Safety for enforcement.

The City reminds property owners or occupants to please exercise caution and care when shoveling, especially during extreme cold. Also, if you are able, help elderly or disabled neighbors in need of assistance in this effort.

**Thank You!**



### Rental Inspection Fee Schedule:

*slight fee increases are effective February 19, 2016*

[www.kalamazoocity.org/rental-housing-inspections](http://www.kalamazoocity.org/rental-housing-inspections)



### Eviction Diversion Assistance Available to Tenants & Landlords

A collaborative program in Kalamazoo County can help tenants pay back rent to stabilize their housing situation. Tenants must be no more than three months behind in rent, landlords must want the tenant to stay and the tenant must be able sustain rent payments after assistance. Tenants may call 211 to be screened for eligibility for the Eviction Diversion Program.

### Who's That Calling?

If you've been lucky enough to have a rental inspection in the past four months, you may have noticed that the city now uses an automated call service for appointment reminders. Approximately three days prior to an inspection, a recorded call is placed to the contact person for the appointment. Hopefully this will decrease the number of missed appointments and prompt property owners to call and reschedule if the property will not be ready for inspection.



### AVOID PARKING TICKETS

To avoid a parking ticket, remind your tenants that parking is prohibited on city streets between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., except where indicated otherwise by street signs.

### PERMITS REQUIRED

Permits are required for the replacement of furnaces and water heaters. Rental property owners must have installations performed by licensed professionals. If you have any questions, call the Permit Tech at **337-8026**.



### HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS LATELY?

Please keep your owner and agent contact information current! Submit all address related changes using a Rental Registration Application within 10 days of a change. Submit online form at: [www.kalamazoocity.org/rental-housing-inspections/rapplication](http://www.kalamazoocity.org/rental-housing-inspections/rapplication)



### Carbon Monoxide Detector Requirements

Effective Feb. 8, 2016, newly constructed dwelling units, as well as all dwelling units where alterations, repairs, or additions require a permit (or where sleeping rooms are added, even if permit isn't required) shall be equipped with one or more carbon monoxide detectors. Carbon monoxide detectors must be placed outside all sleeping areas.



### Smoke Detector Requirements

Effective Feb. 8, 2016, where interconnected smoke detectors are required in a dwelling unit, there are now a few different alternatives available. Battery or hardwire technology alternatives are acceptable as long as they sound an alarm on all devices throughout the dwelling unit.

for more info visit:

[www.kalamazoo.org/rental-housing-inspections](http://www.kalamazoo.org/rental-housing-inspections)

For information on the Lead Paint EPA Renovation, Repair & Painting Rule visit

[michigan.gov/leadsafe](http://michigan.gov/leadsafe)



### RENTAL REGISTRATION DATABASE

To access the rental database look for "Lookup Property Information" at:

[www.kalamazoo.org](http://www.kalamazoo.org)

and then "Rental Property Search" from the menu.

## BULK TRASH PICK-UP SCHEDULED TO CHANGE IN 2016



Mid-2016, the City will be converting to quarterly bulk trash pick-up (currently monthly). Watch for details in your spring **View from the Curb**. It will be important to inform your tenants of the changes when they occur.

### Get to Know Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed is an aggressive, rapidly growing, semi-woody perennial, native to Eastern Asia. It is classified as an invasive species in Michigan.



It is often mistaken for bamboo, and is sometimes called "Michigan Bamboo". Its roots can spread up to 10 feet in depth and 65 feet in any direction. It may look pretty, but it's incredibly destructive. House foundations, sewer lines, and roads are all in danger when Japanese knotweed is growing nearby. It is illegal in Michigan to "spread" this plant through intentional planting, giving it away to friends, or selling it to anyone. Mowing or trimming it is also illegal **IF** the clippings are left on the ground. Clippings need to be bagged and sent to a landfill, treating it like hazardous waste. All it takes is one small clipping or root fragment to grow a new plant, and once established, it is VERY expensive to try to kill, and it takes between five and eight years to eradicate. Japanese knotweed has "superpowers" in the form of incredible growth rates (2-3 inches a day) and the ability to "play dead" for years if it feels threatened. Cities, including Kalamazoo, are starting to become aware of this threat and take action. It is already a significant problem in England. More information will be coming later in 2016 on the city's website. Until then you can learn more at the State of Michigan website:

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[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)



### WHY DO I NEED TO SUBMIT MY LEASE?

If you own property located in the Single Dwelling Zone District (RS-5 that is registered as a rental, you may have received a letter from the city's Zoning Inspector requesting a copy of your lease to verify that the property is compliant with the occupancy restrictions

of the RS-5 Zone District. The RS-5 Zone District restricts occupancy to either a functional family or no more than two unrelated adults in a non-owner occupied dwelling.

By providing a copy of the lease, the zoning inspector can confirm the occupancy meets the current standard or use it as evidence in regards to possible complaints about the occupancy of the dwelling. By providing a copy of the lease, staff will be able to verify the property is compliant and communicate that information to any neighbors concerned about possible over-occupancy. The lease saves staff and property owner's time in investigating a property that is in compliance. When submitting the lease, you are free to black out any personal or financial information found on the document. If you have any questions about the occupancy standards regulated by the Zoning Ordinance, please contact Zoning Inspector Bobby Durkee at 269-337-8172.



### Graffiti Removal Assistance Available

Property owners who have been the victim of graffiti now have an avenue for help. The core neighborhood associations now have supplies available to remove graffiti, including solvents for brick and masonry surfaces and wipes for glass, metal or other hard surfaces. These supplies are not suitable for painted surfaces. (If it is a painted surface, usually the best course of abatement is to paint over the graffiti.) Residents wishing to participate and utilize the free graffiti removal supplies must sign a waiver and provide before and after photographs. Contact your neighborhood organization for more information.



# How to Reach Us...

Community Planning & Development  
Code Administration  
415 Stockbridge Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Inspectors are happy to answer questions. The best time to reach an inspector is before 9 a.m. or after 4 p.m. Every effort is made to return all calls within 24 hours. The department is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Please call the inspection scheduling line to schedule an inspection.**

<u>INSPECTOR</u>	<u>AREA SERVED</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
<b>All Inspection Scheduling (please do not call inspector directly)</b>		<b>337-8026</b>
Debra Miller, Housing Inspection Supervisor		337-8026
Tina Perry	Housing Inspector (Vine, Central Business, S. Westnedge, Milwood)	337-8507
Yvonne Wright	Housing Inspector (Burke Acres, west part Northside, Stuart, Fairmont)	337-8506
Mike Deitz	Housing Inspector (south Edison, Southside)	337-8515
Mike Nelson	Housing Inspector (Campus, Winchell, Oakwood, Westnedge Hill)	337-8447
Jim Graham	Housing Inspector (east Northside, Eastside, north Edison)	337-8165
Karleen Steppenwolf	Rental Registration Coordinator	337-8589
Bob McNutt	Building Official & Code Administration Manager	337-8026
Becky Gnatuk	Code Compliance II Inspector	337-8567
Rachael Luscomb	Code Compliance II Inspector	337-8212
Marvella Vincent	Code Compliance I Inspector	337-8154
Thomas Carter	Code Compliance I Inspector	337-8553
Pete Eldridge	Zoning Administrator	337-8806
Bobby Durkee	Zoning Inspector	337-8172
Hannah Hudson	Seasonal Weed Inspector (May thru October)	337-8366
Sharon Ferraro	Historic Preservation Coordinator	337-8804
Deanna Benthin	Building Permit Tech (all building & trade permit questions)	337-8173
WEED HOTLINE (24 HOUR)		337-8847
TRASH/TRASH RECEPTACLE HOTLINE (24 hour)		337-8221
GENERAL CODE ENFORCEMENT HOTLINE (24 hour)		337-8221
VACANT/ABANDONED/DANGEROUS PROPERTIES		337-8026
SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING QUESTIONS		337-8215
WATER SUPPLY/QUALITY		337-8576
WATER/SEWER EMERGENCY		337-8149
WATER/SEWER EMERGENCY AFTER HOURS		337-8148
SIDEWALK CONCERNS		337-8731
CITY TREES (trees in right-of-way)		337-8731
POTHoles		337-8731
STREET CONSTRUCTION		337-8601
TRAFFIC SIGNALS/SIGNS		337-8601
TREASURY (tax/property valuations/bill payment)		337-8036
ASSESSING (change of address)		337-8011
PARKS & RECREATION		337-8191
CITY CLERK		337-8792
JUNK CARS (Public Safety dispatch)		337-8994
PUBLIC SAFETY NON-EMERGENCY		337-8120
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY</b>		<b>911</b>

## Avoid Costly Fees & Enforcement Action

The City of Kalamazoo Code Administration division handles trash nuisance violations. Avoid costly fees and nuisance enforcement by removing unsightly trash, litter and garbage and properly storing trash receptacles on your property. Please note that increased enforcement of City Ordinances may subject property owners to violation notices and subsequent cost recovery fees. Please be sure to share this information with tenants.

- ◆ **Curblawn Nuisances:** Furniture, trash, brush or any other unsightly materials that are placed in the curblawn outside of bulk trash collection are considered a public nuisance and subject to immediate corrective action without notice. Clean-up costs are billed to the property owner of record.
- ◆ **Trash on Private Property:** Keep all litter, trash, junk and debris picked up. Property owners in violation are subject to nuisance violation notices, which have a \$74 cost recovery fee.
- ◆ **Garbage Container Storage:** Garbage and recycling containers must be stored on private property no closer to the street than the front façade of the dwelling. Keep garbage containers sealed at all times. Containers stored in violation of the ordinance are subject to immediate relocation which is billed to the property owner.

- \* Know your weekly trash pick up day and only place trash containers recycle bins out the day prior to scheduled pick up.
- \* Know your monthly bulk trash pick up day and only place items out for collection the day prior to scheduled pick up.