

HOUSING INSPECTION NEWS

ISSUE 27, FALL 2018



Rental Certificates In a Nutshell

Standard Certificate: 28 mo
 Early Renewal Certificate: 40 mo
 Proven Record Certificate: 52 mo
 Delinquent Properties: 16 mo

As a reminder, 40 and 52 month certificates will only be issued to properties meeting applicable criteria AND completing recertification PRIOR to the expiration date of the valid certificate, or that qualify for the guarantee. **No exceptions will be made.** Certificates may be renewed as many as 120 days in advance, so mark your calendars, call **EARLY** for inspections, and leave plenty of time for any required re-inspections. **Thank You!**

Easy Scheduling

Now there are two ways to schedule a rental inspection appointment:

 rentalinspection@kalamazoo.org

 (269) 337-8026



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Rental Housing Inspectors

Veteran inspector Mike Nelson left the City of Kalamazoo in the spring for another job opportunity. On September 24th, Kristopher DeBarmore was welcomed to the team, who comes with a construction and property management background. Kris will train with current inspectors for a couple months until taking over an assigned area. The inspectors are as follows:

- ◆ Randall Aldering: Vine, Central Business, S. Westnedge, Milwood
- ◆ Dylan Huls: Burke Acres, Northside (west), Stuart, Fairmont, West Main Hill
- ◆ Ken Koetje: Northside (east), Eastside, Edison (north)
- ◆ Kris DeBarmore: Edison (south), Southside
- ◆ Yvonne Wright: Campus, Winchell, Oakwood, Westnedge Hill




Don't Let Rental Certificate Lapse

There are important reasons for preventing a lapse in a rental certificate of compliance. Aside from a discounted inspection fee and a potentially longer certificate, which, in combination, can provide a significant savings (in both time and money); there are legal reasons as well. Time and again, the city is contacted by tenants, or their attorney, due to an eviction or other court case, to obtain the status on the certification of a property. The courts have not taken too kindly to handing down judgements in favor of landlords that have uncertified properties. In order to have the best chance to re-certify prior to expiration, call EARLY for the recertification inspection (120 days prior is recommended) or as soon as you receive the courtesy reminder notice (which will only be received if your address is kept up-to-date). If a certificate of compliance lapses for more than 4 months, the property may be subject to a vacate order until the property is certified.



How to Better Prepare for Inspections

Believe it or not, often the rental inspection is one of the only times property owners and/or managers enter a unit for inspection. It is recommended that property owners visit their properties on a regular basis and perform periodic checks of interior spaces for general conditions to identify items needing repair. It is wise to include the right to periodic inspections in the lease.

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

michigan.gov/leadsafe

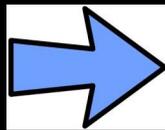


Recycle Coach App Available - Provides Reminders on Pick Up Schedules

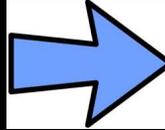
Take advantage of the free **Recycle Coach** app (available for iOS and Android). **Recycle Coach** provides info on items that can be recycled and can be set up to send reminders for the recycle pick up schedule. Additional reminders can be set for quarterly bulk trash pick up, brush clean up, leaf collection and more. Encourage your tenants to sign up as well to prevent items being placed at curb for collection too early.



Bulk Trash Quarterly:
March, June, Sept. & Dec.

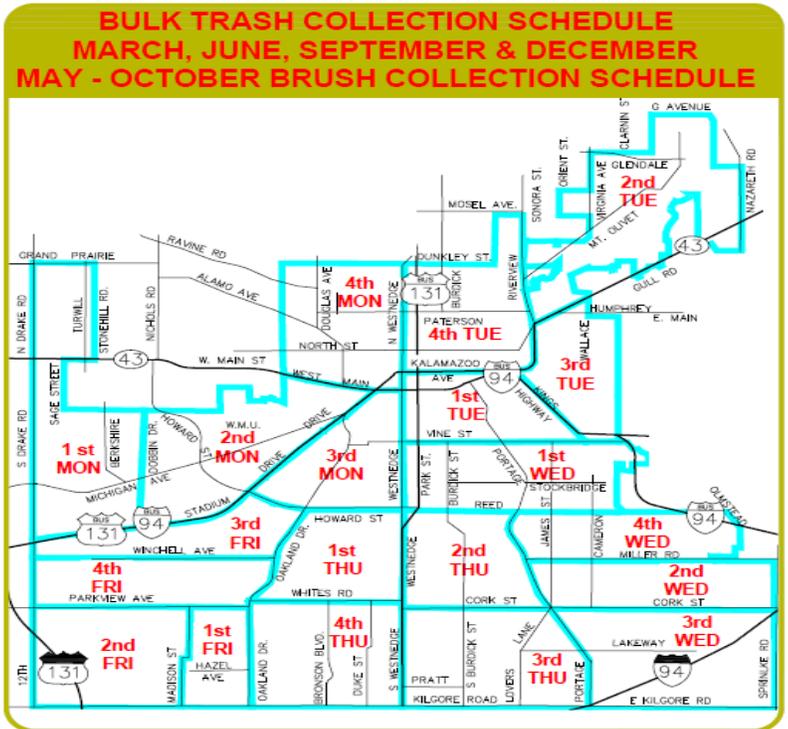


Brush Collection Monthly: May—Oct.



Eviction Diversion Assistance Available to Tenants & Landlords

Eviction diversion is a collaborative program to help tenants pay overdue rent and 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 to sustain rent payments after assistance. Tenants may call 211 to be screened for eligibility.



The Skinny on Short-Term Rentals



More and more people are using sites like Airbnb and VRBO to book stays while traveling. As a result, people are looking to fill their vacant rooms and make a few dollars by offering their properties or rooms up for short term stays to travelers. This is causing some problems in neighborhoods, and could be a violation of a couple of different city ordinances.



Short-term rentals are considered a form of 'Lodging'. Lodging stays are stays of less than 30 days. The Zoning Ordinance identifies the following 'Lodging' categories: Bed & Breakfast, Hotels and Motels. Bed & Breakfast are permitted in the multi-dwelling and commercial zone districts. However, hotels and motels are limited to the commercial zone districts. All short term rentals must be approved by the zoning inspector.

Further, all rentals, including short-term rentals, must be registered as rental properties and inspected and certified. City staff generally review the internet for advertised short term rentals a couple times a year to crack down on illegal activity that can potentially change the character of the city's neighborhoods.

If you have questions about the ability to use a property as a short-term rental, please contact the planning & zoning staff at 337-8026.



Incremental Development Alliance

The City of Kalamazoo is partnering with the Incremental Development Alliance to improve the way government works to support infill housing, small real estate entrepreneurs and construction related workforce development. This engagement process will focus on projects in the core neighborhoods with new or existing buildings up to three stories, between 500 and 10,000 square feet in size.



Much of the existing city government is focused on the handling of funding sources from state and federal agencies, which are largely focused on a narrow niche of building types (single family houses, large multi-family tax credit buildings and large commercial/industrial complexes). The goals of this project are:

1. To equip the City to provide resources to investors working on small sites that fill in the gaps of the physical environment.
2. Build capacity to collectively address vacant lots and under-utilized buildings.
3. Develop a value per acre metric illustrating WHY the city needs productive infill.
4. Measure people, value, and demand of housing the so that there are discrete links between buildings and people they serve.
5. Improve the pipeline of individuals (high school, higher education, career change) engaging in career readiness and vocational trades. skills training who have the ability to repair and restore the city's building stock.
6. Grow the knowledge capacity of property owners and existing residents around real estate fundamentals so development activities come from people deeply rooted in their place within each neighborhood.

The goal is to align government processes to enable the most needed kinds of real estate development projects on the most prevalent sizes of property available in Kalamazoo. Completing the plan in 2018 will allow projects for 2019 to be considered within the budget process. Additional resources from foundations and community partners will also be pursued.

It is projected that program activities will begin in 2019, which will include lots more information, training opportunities, and technical assistance.



Certificate Guarantee



The certificate guarantee provides that **IF** property owners take TWO basic steps, they will be guaranteed a chance (subject to other requirements) to earn extended 40 or 52 month certificates in the event that the inspectors schedules cannot accommodate inspections. The TWO vital steps are:

1) Call for first certificate renewal inspection between 120 days and 90 days before certificate expiration. A COURTESY reminder notice is sent out 120 days prior to expiration. If your address is not current with the rental registration program you may not receive this notice—so if you move please be sure to file a new rental registration application.

2) If a re-inspection is necessary after the first inspection, call for the reinspection immediately after the first inspection, but not later than 10 days from the date on the Correction Notice. If the city cannot schedule the reinspection prior to expiration, the property will still qualify for an extended certificate. If the city must reschedule for any reason after it's made, the guarantee will continue to be valid. If the inspections are missed, rescheduled or a third inspection is necessary, the guarantee is void. For all qualifying criteria for extended certificates, visit:

www.kalamazoocity.org/rental

Rental Inspection Fee Schedule:

www.kalamazocity.org/cpdfeeschedule/file

Help us Keep Kalamazoo Clean!



Call **337-8221** to report trash on the curb lawn, trash on private property or herby curby trash containers out past trash pick up day.



Call **337-8847** to report tall grass and weed violations (annually May through October).



Do You Have Vacant Units?

Housing Resources, Inc. works to find stable housing for families in need in the Kalamazoo area. Landlords who would like to place vacant units on HRI's Available Housing List can call (269) 488-0967 for information. Landlords with properties already on the list already should update the Subsidy and Check Policy, which was mailed out last year. If you have questions please contact Valetta Sellers-Evans at (269) 488-0916.

Installing and Maintaining Fire Extinguishers

Mounting Fire Extinguishers

- Mount fire extinguishers in the path of egress (between kitchen and exit door, but not near or above oven)
- Use the approved mounting bracket that is provided with the extinguisher
- The bottom of the extinguisher should be no less than four inches from the finished floor
- The top of the extinguisher valve should be no more than five feet from the finished floor (easy to reach)
- Follow the manufacturer's mounting instructions



Maintaining Fire Extinguishers:

- Check every 6 months that the gauge indicates "charged"
- Remove the extinguisher from the mounting bracket and turn the extinguisher upside down—the dry powder should shift inside the cylinder
- If the dry powder does not shift, tap the side of the cylinder with your palm or a rubber mallet
- Once the dry powder breaks loose, tilt the cylinder up and down to agitate the powder
- Check the date of manufacture, and replace according to manufacturer's instructions. If there is no manufacturer's date, the unit must be replaced every three years
- Return extinguisher to the mounting bracket

Rental Registration Database



To access the rental database go to:

www.kalamazocity.org/rental

and then "**Rental Database Search**" from the listed links to other information

SIDEWALK SHOVELING



The City of Kalamazoo has amended the sidewalk snow removal ordinance. The new ordinance requires the owner or occupant of a property to clear snow from the sidewalk adjacent, abutting or adjoining their residence/business within 48 hours of accumulation. The occupant or owner will also be responsible for applying sand, salt or similar material to prevent slippery conditions within 12 hours of accumulation. Any person in violation of the ordinance may receive a municipal civil infraction including a fine of \$50 for the first offense, \$100 for the second offence and \$200 for a third offense within a six month period. Be sure your tenants are aware if shoveling is their responsibility as part of the lease. For more information regarding this ordinance please visit the City's website at:

<https://ecode360.com/9697614>

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 Updated 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.kalamazocity.org/rentalregistration



Graffiti Removal Assistance Available

Property owners who have been the victim of graffiti now have an avenue for help. The core neighborhood associations 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 & Economic 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 lobby is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **Please call the inspection scheduling line or email rentalinspections@kalamazoo-city.org to schedule an inspection.**

<u>INSPECTOR</u>	<u>AREA SERVED</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
All Inspection Scheduling (please do not call inspector directly)		337-8026
Debra Miller, Housing Inspection Supervisor		337-8026
Randall Aldering	Housing Inspector (Vine, Central Business, S. Westnedge, Milwood)	337-8507
Dylan Huls	Housing Inspector (Burke Acres, west part Northside, Stuart, Fairmont)	337-8429
Kris DeBarmore	Housing Inspector (south Edison, Southside)	337-8447
Yvonne Wright	Housing Inspector (Campus, Winchell, Oakwood, Westnedge Hill)	337-8506
Ken Koetje	Housing Inspector (east Northside, Eastside, north Edison)	337-8515
Karleen Steppenwolf	Rental Registration Coordinator	337-8589
Bob McNutt	Building Official & Code Administration Manager	337-8026
Vacant	Code Compliance I Inspector (north of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main)	337-8567
Rachael Luscomb	Code Compliance II Inspector (south of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main)	337-8212
Marvella Vincent	Code Compliance II Inspector (north of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main)	337-8154
Carmela Hostigun	Code Compliance II Inspector (south of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main)	337-8553
Pete Eldridge	Zoning Administrator	337-8806
Jared Chambers	Zoning Inspector	337-8172
Chris Miner	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
PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY		911

Avoid Costly Fees & Enforcement Action

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:** Discarded items, brush and 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.
- ◆ **Garbage Container Storage:** Garbage and recycling containers must be stored on private property in back of the front façade of the dwelling. Containers stored in violation of the ordinance are subject to immediate relocation which is billed to the property owner. Also, know your weekly trash pick up day and quarterly bulk trash pick up day, and only place items out for collection the day prior to scheduled pick up.

Hot Code Topics



Damp Michigan Basements: Michigan basements are subject to dampness in summertime from condensation due to temperature and humidity differences. Mold spores grow in damp conditions. The best way to combat this problem is with good air flow and by using a dehumidifier.



Common Laundry Rooms: Common laundry rooms, specifically those serving three or more units, must be equipped with a smoke detector and a fire extinguisher. The fire extinguisher must be type 2A10BC and mounted in a visible and accessible location, preferably by the door away from the dryer.