HOUSING INSPECTION NEWS

ISSUE 28, SUMMER/FALL 2019

Rental Certificates In a Nutshell

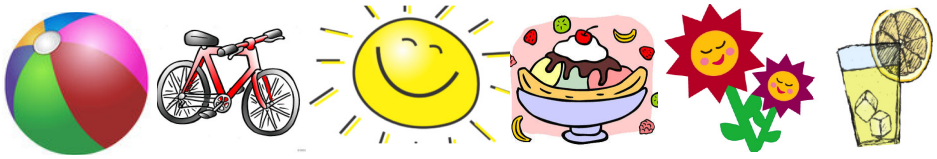
Standard Certificate:	28 mo
Early Renewal Certificate:	40 mo
Proven Record Certificate:	52 mo
Delinquent Properties:	16 mo

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!

In this Issue

Smoke Detector Recall	2
Prevent Rental Certificate Lapse	2
Nuisance Ordinance Moves to New Chapter	2
Help Keep Kalamazoo Clean	2
Update Your Address Lately?	2
Do You Have Vacant Units?	3
The Skinny on Short Term Rentals	3
Sidewalk Shoveling	3
Maintain Encroachments for Safety	3
Graffiti Removal Assistance Available	3
Recycle App Available	4
Bulk Trash & Brush Collection Schedule	4
Kalamazoo Lead Safe	5
Fair Housing Center	5
Certificate Guarantee	5
How to Reach Us	6
Avoid Costly Fees & Enforcement	6
Hot Code Topics	6



Community Planning and Economic Development: On the Move!

That's right! Public Services needs their space back, so Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) will be moving downtown in early November. The new offices will be located at 245 N. Rose Street, south of the Kalamazoo County building, between Eleanor Street and Water Street. For those that are familiar with downtown, this is the old PNC bank building. CPED offices will be located on the first floor. All phone and email contacts will remain the same.

Planning, zoning, economic development, community development programs, code enforcement, rental inspections, and building and trades will all be part of the relocation downtown. The move is expected to happen over the course of three days: November 6, 7 and 8. Specifically, rental housing inspections will be moving November 7. As a result there will be no housing inspections scheduled for November 7th or 8th in order to ensure all systems are up and running properly at the new location. Additionally, city offices are closed November 11 in observance of Veteran's Day.

Easy Scheduling

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

rentalinspection@kalamazoocity.org

(269) 337-8026

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 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.

Smoke Detectors: Important Recall Info

Nearly 180,000 battery-powered smoke and fire detectors have been recalled due to failure risks. Information on the Consumer Product Safety Commission website indicates the alarms can have a misaligned internal switch causing the alarms to not activate properly, posing a risk of failure to alert consumers to a fire.

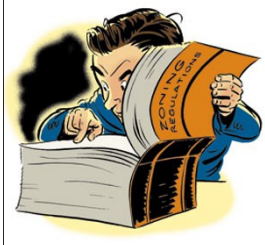
The recall involves Universal Security Instruments 10-year battery operated ionization smoke and fire alarms with **model numbers MI3050S and MI3050SB and with date codes between 2015JAN19 through 2016JUL11**. The alarms were sold online from July 2015 to December 2016. The smoke alarms are white in color and 5½ inches in diameter. "Universal" and "Smoke & Fire Alarm" are printed on the front cover of the alarm.

The label on the back of the alarm lists the model number and date code. The recall suggests consumers inspect their smoke alarms to determine if they will activate properly by pressing the test button. If the alarm sounds, no further action is required. If it does not sound, consumers should contact Universal Security for a replacement. Phone: 877-612-6955 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday or online at www.UniversalSecurity.com and click on "Product Safety Notice".

Prevent 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 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.

Nuisance Ordinance Moves to New Chapter



In May 2019, City Commission approved Chapter 21, Nuisances, as part of the City Code of Ordinances. Chapter 21 consolidates all the nuisance provisions including trash, brush, dangerous excavations, illegal storage, graffiti, we well as noise, nuisance parties and blighted structures. Enforcement of nuisances will continue as always. If compliance cannot be achieved through other prescribed means, property owners may be subject to a civil infraction citation. Chapter 21 is available on the city's website: https://ecode360.com/KA2666

Help 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).

Rental Inspection Fee Schedule:

www.kalamazoocity.org/cpdfeeschedule/file

Update Your Address Lately?

If the city doesn't have your address correct, you won't receive important info. 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. Registrations can also be updated online at:

www.kalamazoocity.org/rentalregistration

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.

The Skinny on Short-Term Rentals

Increasingly, sites like Airbnb and VRBO are used to book stays while traveling. As a result, property owners are looking to fill vacant rooms and make a few dollars by offering 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', specifically stays of less than 30 days. The Zoning Ordinance identifies the following 'Lodging' categories: Bed & Breakfast, Hotels and Motels. Bed & Breakfasts 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, including B&B's 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 city neighborhoods. If you have questions about the ability to use a property as a short-term rental, please contact the zoning inspector at 337-8026.

Graffiti Removal Assistance Available

Property owners who have been the victim of graffiti 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 (best handled by painting over 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.

Rental Registration Database

To access the rental database go to:
www.kalamazoocity.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 single winter season. Be sure tenants are aware of these requirements if shoveling is their responsibility as part of the lease.

Maintain Encroachments for Safety

The Public Services Department investigates complaints of vision obstructions and road/sidewalk encroachments. Vision obstructions are nuisances that include, but are not limited to, the overgrowth of brush, bushes, and/or trees which are blocking vision and causing unsafe passages for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The ordinance requires that sight distances at corners must be maintained for vehicular traffic and growth on and over sidewalks and roadways (such as landscaping and tree branches) must be maintained.

Encroachment obstructions are items placed in the city right-of-way, and may include signs, vehicles, sports equipment, storage Pods, waste receptacles, etc. Encroachments can also cause vision obstructions and create unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. If you have any questions or an encroachment complaint, contact Public Services at 337-8601.

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

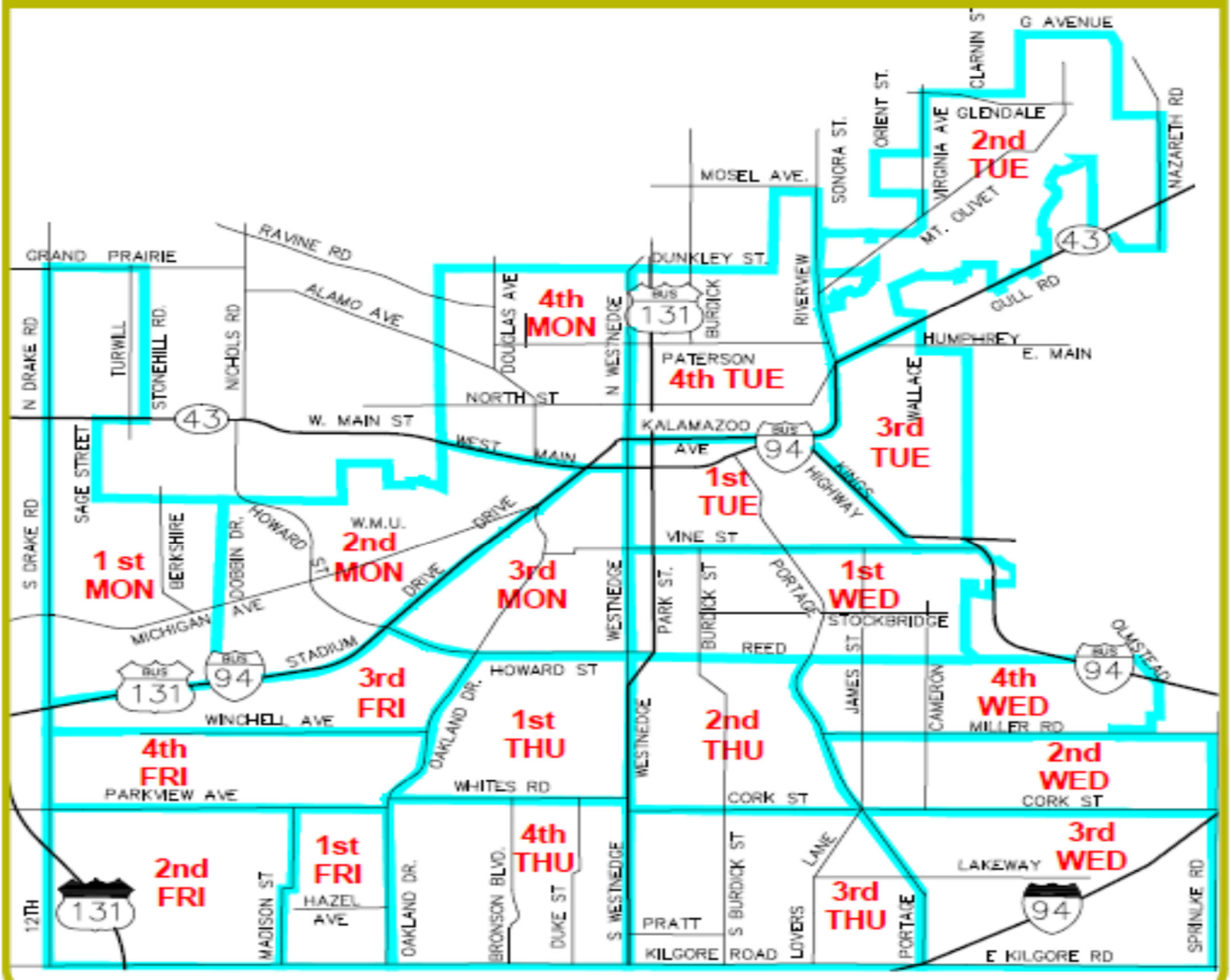
michigan.gov/leadsafe

BE LEAD AWARE

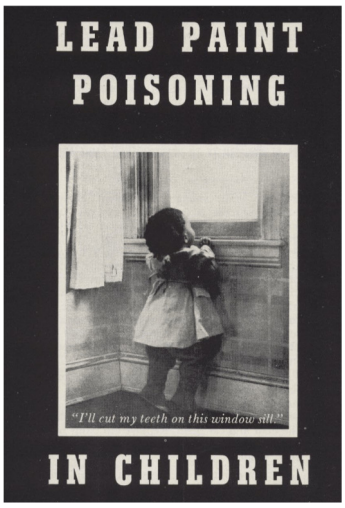
Recycle Coach App Available Provides Reminders on Pick Up Schedules

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 COLLECTION SCHEDULE
MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER & DECEMBER
MAY - OCTOBER BRUSH COLLECTION SCHEDULE



Kalamazoo Lead Safe



We have a problem in our community. Every day our children are gradually being poisoned by lead present in the aging housing stock. Annually thousands of children are poisoned by lead, either from their household's water line or, more commonly, by the presence of lead-based paint in their own home. If you own a home that was built prior to 1978 it is highly likely that lead-based paint was used.

Lead poisoning in children is entirely preventable. The City of Kalamazoo, partnering with Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services (KNHS), can assist you to learn about lead safe work practices, understanding the legal ramifications for neglecting lead hazards in your home or rental property you own, and how to access funding specifically made available to make Kalamazoo Lead Safe.

The City of Kalamazoo has received a grant from The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for $2 million to support local families and qualified landlords with the expense of removing lead-based paint hazards found in their home. The application and work will be administered by KNHS. Owners may be eligible for funding if your home was built prior to 1978 and are current on property taxes (or on a repayment plan). Landlords may be eligible if your tenant(s) earn an income at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (income to be verified at application by KNHS), and there are lead-based paint hazards found in the home. KNHS will perform inspections to determine if lead hazards exist.

To request further information, please contact KNHS at (269) 385-2916 or email MarisaM@KNHS.org to request an application packet.

Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan

The Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan (The Center) provides education and outreach programs geared towards housing providers. The Center provides valuable information on rights and responsibilities under federal, state and local fair housing laws. They work with many partners to identify discriminatory practices under fair housing law and recommended remedies to correct such practices. The Center's staff members provide fair housing presentations to many different organizations and groups in the nine counties that they serve.

The Center also educates consumers and community members about how to recognize and report housing discrimination by providing information and referral services to callers with all types of housing related inquiries. Such inquiries are commonly related to issues such as housing subsidies or financial assistance, tenants' rights, the condition and repair of housing and other landlord-tenant concerns. When callers with non-fair housing inquiries contact the Center, they are given general information about the protections provided by the fair housing laws and are then referred to an appropriate community group, government agency or social service agency.

If you would like more information about fair housing activities or education, please call the Center at (269) 276-9100.

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; and 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 above two requirements are met, if the **city** is not able to schedule the reinspection prior to expiration, the property will still qualify for an extended certificate. If the **city** must reschedule for any reason after the reinspection is scheduled, 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***

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@kalamazoocity.org to schedule an inspection.***

INSPECTOR	AREA SERVED	PHONE
All Inspection Scheduling (*please do not call inspector directly*)		**337-8026**
Rental Registration Online Database		**www.kalamazoocity.org/rental**
Debra Miller, Code Enforcement Program 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 (registration/billing)	337-8589
Laquana Coleman	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 Hostiguin	Code Compliance II Inspector (south of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main)	337-8553
Bob McNutt,	Building/Development Manager	337-8026
Roger Iveson	Building Official	337-8560
Deanna Benthin	Building & Trades Permit Tech (permit questions)	337-8173
Pete Eldridge	Assistant City Planner	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
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

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.
- **Junk Autos:** Any car that is not in operating condition, or is not properly licensed, is considered a junk auto. Junk autos located in the public right-of-way will be tagged by Public Safety for towing. Junk autos on private property (other than in an enclosed garage) will be provided a courtesy 10-day notice prior to being referred to Public Safety for tagging/towing.

Hot Code Topics

Don't Paint Outlets/Switches. Remember to remove outlet covers and tape off outlet and switch receptacles before painting. Painting these electrical devices is considered "tampering" and will require replacement upon inspection.

Bedroom Requirements: Bedrooms must be at least 70 sq. ft. for one person, and 50 sq. ft. per person if shared. Minimum room dimension (l, w & h) is 7' (exceptions for sloped ceilings exist). There must be proper natural light and ventilation and a properly sized egress window. There must also must be a door for privacy. The door does not have to lock as long as it latches securely. A closet is NOT required. Bedrooms require a smoke detector.

Permits: Make sure you know if a permit is needed for planned improvements. Call the Permit Tech at **337-8026.**