

HOUSING INSPECTION NEWS

ISSUE 29, SPRING 2020

Is there anything we can help you with?

If you're within the City limits, call 3-1-1 for all city non-emergency services.

If you're not in the city, call 337-8000.

One call to City Hall!

Call
3-1-1
 or 337-8000 for all non-emergency city services



241 W South Street
 kalamazoo.org




STAYING SAFE DURING COVID-19



Rental inspections were discontinued temporarily as of March 16, 2020. This will last at least through April 10, 2020, and be evaluated weekly if a continuation is required. Additionally, all property owners who held a valid certificate of compliance as of March 16, 2020 will receive an automatic four month extension of that certificate. The changes have already been made in the computer and a letter will be sent to all property owners in the coming weeks.

We are hopeful that this extension will be long enough to allow make up appointments to be scheduled after inspections resume without a significant back up in inspectors schedules.

Thank you for your patience as we work through this difficult time for everyone involved. Meanwhile, stay home and stay healthy!

**DEADLINE
 *EXTENDED***

In this Issue

Rental Certificate Lengths	2
Prevent Rental Certificate Lapse	2
Be Prepared for Inspections	2
Easy Scheduling	2
Civil Rights Ordinance Changes Proposed	2
Keep Kalamazoo Clean	2
Update Your Address	2
Do You Have Vacant Units	3
Lead Paint Hazard Reduction Program	3
Graffiti Removal Assistance Available	3
Eviction Diversion Assistance	4
Short Term Rental	4
We Have Moved	4
Certificate Guarantee	4
How to Reach Us	5
Avoid Costly Fees & Enforcement	5
Hot Code Topics	5

RENTAL APPOINTMENT CANCELLATION FEE EFFECTIVE FEB. 2020



The rental inspection program has been plagued with last minute cancellations for years. Not only is it nearly impossible to fill a last minute cancellation with someone on the waiting list (due to tenant notification requirements), the cancelled inspection takes yet another spot on the inspectors future calendar. In response, City Commission approved a \$35 cancellation fee for rental appointments cancelled within 72 hours of an appointment. Courtesy reminder robo calls will be scheduled so that if cancellation is needed, there will be a 24 hour window to do so. Please try to be ready and keep all scheduled appointments. If you know you won't be ready, please call in advance as much as possible so the inspection slot can be filled.





Rental Certificates Lengths

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!



Be Prepared 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. It's also a good idea to check exterior property areas for needed fixes and make repairs in advance of inspections.

Easy Scheduling

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



rentalinspection@kalamazoo.org



(269) 337-8026

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 judgments 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.

CIVIL RIGHTS ORDINANCE CHANGES PROPOSED

On February 24, the Kalamazoo City Commission reviewed a proposal to update Chapter 18 of the Kalamazoo Code of Ordinances, which addresses Community Relations and Discrimination. Among the changes proposed are new protections for people using housing vouchers or county identification cards, as well as those who have previously been incarcerated. Additionally, rental housing application fees would be limited to actual costs, and a civil rights board would be established to review contested cases of discrimination that would come under the purview of the ordinance.

The proposal is a collaboration between several community partners including the Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy and Action in the Community (ISAAC), and Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Kalamazoo.

If adopted, this would be the first major change to address housing issues in Kalamazoo since gender identity and sexual orientation were added as local protections in 2009. Similar ordinances were adopted by the City of Grand Rapids in August 2019.

Documents can be reviewed online at: <https://www.kalamazoo.org/news/505-community-invited-to-share-feedback-on-chapter-18-proposal>

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.kalamazoo.org/cpdfeeschedule/file



Update Your Address Lately?

If your rental registration isn't up to date, 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.kalamazoo.org/rentalregistration

Owner address changes must also be reported to the City Assessor at 269-337-8036





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.

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

michigan.gov/leadsafe

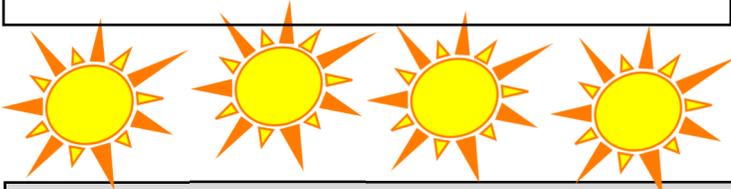


Calling All Email Addresses



The city is trying to do more and more by email. If we don't have your most current email address please update your rental registration here:

www.kalamazoo.org/rentalregistration



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.kalamazoo.org/rental and then "Rental Database Search" from the listed links to other information

The City of Kalamazoo Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Program

The City of Kalamazoo, in partnership Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., (KNHS), is removing and abating lead-based paint hazards in qualifying residential households without cost to the applicant.

According to the CDC approximately 24 million housing units have deteriorated leaded paint and elevated levels of lead-contaminated house dust and more than four million of these dwellings are homes to one or more young children. Properties built prior to 1978 that have peeling or cracking paint, most likely have lead paint chips and/or lead dust as well. Areas of specific concern are often around windows, doors, cabinets, stairways, porches and floors.

Lead-based paint chips and dust can be detrimental to the health of a child's health, resulting in behavior problems, learning disabilities and in extreme cases seizures or death. The toxicity of lead when absorbed in the body can also result in brain damage as well as damages to other vital organs such as the kidneys, nerves and blood.

Don't chance the health of children. If you rent to tenants with children (or a pregnant woman) in properties built prior to 1978, and those tenants can meet eligibility requirements levels (low to moderate income), your property may qualify for the program. Contact KNHS today.

Applications are being taken and processed by KNHS located at:

1219 S. Park Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
269-385-2916



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.

Short-Term Rentals

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.



Community Planning & Economic Development Has Relocated



WE HAVE MOVED

Our new offices are located downtown at:

245 N. Rose Street
Suite 100 (1st Floor)
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

The offices are in the PNC building between Water & Eleanor Streets across the street from the Kalamazoo Valley Museum. All phone numbers have remained the same and can be found on the last page of this newsletter.



www.jesperdebeurman.dk




Guarantee

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 reinspection 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.kalamazoo.org/rental



How to Reach Us...

Call 311 (in city) or 269-337-8000 (outside city)

Community Planning & Economic Development
Code Administration
245 N. Rose, Suite 100, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

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.**

INSPECTOR	AREA SERVED	PHONE
All Inspection Scheduling (please do not call inspector directly)		337-8026
Rental Registration Online Database		www.kalamazoo-city.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
Mike Nelson	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
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
TBD	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
PUBLIC SAFETY NON-EMERGENCY		337-8120

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.

- ◆ **Curbblawn Nuisances:** Discarded items, brush and other unsightly materials that are placed in the curbblawn 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

 **Smoke Detectors.** Make sure to follow manufacturer's recommendation for installation and replace after expiration. **DO NOT PAINT** smoke detectors, it may destroy the sensor. Have a lease provision that prohibits tenants from tampering with smoke detectors.

 **Plumbing Leaks:** Do not rely on tenants to report plumbing leaks. Systematically inspect properties to look for any plumbing problems to catch them before an emergency happens.

 **Shared Laundry Facilities:** Laundry rooms shared by three or more units must have a fire extinguisher of the 2A type.

 **Maintain Clearances:** Maintain at least 36" around gas fired appliances for fire safety