



# Neighborhood Notes

News for rental property owners & managers from the Office of Neighborhood Services – August 2016

## Sidewalk Maintenance

As summer wears on, grass and vegetation creeps over sidewalks and into the right of way. Maintenance of the sidewalk in front of or adjacent to a property is the responsibility of the owner, operator, or person in control, such as a tenant. Sidewalk should be "clear and free from rubbish, filth, refuse, dirt, snow, ice and from any and all obstructions..." Trees and tree limbs should also be cut back so they don't interfere with the passage of motor vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians using the right-of-way. Thanks for doing your part to keep sidewalks clear!

## Managing Move Out

By the time you read this, hopefully you have your student tenant turnover well under control! With new tenants, please make sure they know what day trash is picked up and that they are aware trash cannot be set on the curb prior to 4 p.m. the day prior.

One effect of turnover can be the items tenants leave behind. In the worst cases, items are put on the curb and create a nuisance violation and a mess for the neighborhood.

Here are some ideas:

- If you need a special pick up or dumpster please call the City's Solid Waste Utility to make those arrangements – 874-6291.
- If tenants have furniture or other items that can be re-used by others, please consider one of Columbia's resale shops. They may even be able to schedule a pickup!
  - o Salvation Army – 443-2786
  - o Love, INC – Love Seat – 447-0200
  - o Goodwill – 442-4050

Please know that making sure our neighborhoods stay clean is important to our residents and ONS. We will be increasing our enforcement activity in areas where nuisances have been an issue in the past during move out season.

## Inspection Scheduling

In order to expedite rental inspections, our staff schedules with the goal of grouping inspections in the same area of town, with the same owner or manager and also to take them in the order of expiration. We know that time may not always work for you and want to be flexible.

**If you receive an inspection appointment that will not work for your schedule, please contact our office at 817-5050 and we can find another**

**time that will work.** The sooner you call us the better so we can reschedule the inspector. This makes the best use of everyone's time.

## Code Changes

Every three years, Columbia's Building Construction Codes Commission reviews the latest version of the International Code Council code books to determine how to apply these locally. The 2015 code has been adopted (as amended) and will take effect October 1.

There were limited changes to the International Property Maintenance Code which is the primary reference during rental inspections. The new code includes changes related to smoke detectors:

**[F] 704.2.1.3 Installation near cooking appliances.** Smoke alarms shall not be installed in the following locations unless this should prevent placement of a smoke alarm in a location required by Section 704.2.1.1 or 704.2.1.2.

1. Ionization smoke alarms shall not be installed less than 20 feet (6096 mm) horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance.
2. Ionization smoke alarms with an alarm-silencing switch shall not be installed less than 10 feet (3048 mm) horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance.
3. Photoelectric smoke alarms shall not be installed less than 6 feet (1829mm) horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance.

**[F] 704.2.1.4 Installation near bathrooms.** Smoke alarms shall be installed not less than 3 feet (914 mm) horizontally from the door or opening of a bathroom that contains a bathtub or shower unless this would prevent placement of a smoke alarm required by Section 704.2.1.1 or 704.2.1.2.

ONS staff realizes that some units may not have the physical space to meet these code requirements and will work with owner and managers. We have also posted an article explaining the differences in smoke alarms on our website at

[www.CoMo.gov/Neighborhoods](http://www.CoMo.gov/Neighborhoods).

## Rental unit count

As of July 29, 2016 the City of Columbia had 9,976 buildings and 26,961 units registered under the Rental Unit Conservation Law. This is an increase of 196 buildings and 883 units over one year ago.

## Tenant Complaints

In FY15, ONS received 194 tenant complaints, representing less than 1% of all rental units in the City. When a complaint is received, we verify that the tenant has made the landlord aware of the issue and given them a chance to remedy the problem. City staff also realize evictions and other civil matters complicate some situations. The goal of responding to tenant complaints is to have the property safe and in good repair.

Tenant complaints tend to spike in the month of August, many times because new tenants have moved into a unit that has not been properly cleaned.

## Energy Efficiency Programs

Did you know that Columbia Water & Light's residential rebate and loan programs are available to single family and duplex rental properties as well?



The Home Performance with Energy Star provides up to \$1,200 in rebates for energy efficiency improvements including replacing windows & doors, adding insulation, reducing air leakage, reducing duct work leakage and installing an efficient heat pump. Homes that have participated in the program see an average of 30% improvement in energy efficiency. Visit [ColumbiaPowerPartners.com](http://ColumbiaPowerPartners.com) to learn more!

## Inspectors' shoes stay on for safety

Please know our inspection staff keep their shoes on during interior inspections as a safety precaution. Our staff understands we are entering someone's home. Inspectors conduct the interior inspection first before walking around the exterior to reduce the risk of tracking in dirt.

## Revised Rental Application Form

Please note that the rental application has changed and now has **two places** for rental property owners or managers to sign: once to indicate the information is accurate and once to agree to an inspection. The application will not be considered complete without both signatures.

## Rental Inspection Checklist

We don't want what our inspectors look for during the inspection to be a surprise to you! A "Rental Inspection Checklist" is mailed with your rental inspection appointment. Please take a look and we encourage you to do a pre-inspection so you can catch any issues before we do. Please call our office if you need clarification on any item as well.

## Meet the ONS Staff

ONS has six inspectors who you might work with on various cases along with others who support our work. Here's a review of who is who, what we do, and how to reach us!

- David Brockhouse – Code Enforcement Specialist – Rental inspections & property maintenance cases – 441-5567, [david.brockhouse@CoMo.gov](mailto:david.brockhouse@CoMo.gov)
- Sara Ferrill - Code Enforcement Specialist – Rental inspections & property maintenance cases, liaison to North Strategic Planning Neighborhood – 874-6351, [sara.ferrill@CoMo.gov](mailto:sara.ferrill@CoMo.gov)
- Lisa Frank, Code Enforcement Specialist – Health code violations, nuisances, unlicensed cars west of Providence. Liaison to Central Strategic Planning Neighborhood – 874-7562, [lisa.frank@CoMo.gov](mailto:lisa.frank@CoMo.gov)
- Bruce Martin – Sr. Code Enforcement Specialist – Nuisance structures, property maintenance, rental inspections – 817-6420, [bruce.martin@CoMo.gov](mailto:bruce.martin@CoMo.gov).
- Marsha Perkins - Sr. Code Enforcement Specialist – Health code violations, nuisances, unlicensed cars east of Providence, Liaison to East Strategic Planning Neighborhood – 874-7441, [marsha.perkins@CoMo.gov](mailto:marsha.perkins@CoMo.gov).
- Ken Reeves - Code Enforcement Specialist – Rental inspections & property maintenance cases – 874-6334, [ken.reeves@CoMo.gov](mailto:ken.reeves@CoMo.gov)

Other ONS staff you might work with:

- Officer Amy Bishop – CPD Officer assigned to our Division – 874-7426, [amy.bishop@CoMo.gov](mailto:amy.bishop@CoMo.gov).
- Bill Cantin – Neighborhood Communications Coordinator – 874-7248, [bill.cantin@CoMo.gov](mailto:bill.cantin@CoMo.gov).
- Leigh Kottwitz – Neighborhood Services Manager - 874-7504, [leigh.kottwitz@CoMo.gov](mailto:leigh.kottwitz@CoMo.gov).

Julie Giboney and Katie Schatzer are our administrative professionals who keep everything going; they can be reached at 817-5050 or [neighborhood@CoMo.gov](mailto:neighborhood@CoMo.gov).

### City of Columbia

#### Community Development Department Office of Neighborhood Services

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