



# Neighborhood Notes

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

## Crime Free Multi-Housing Training returns June 28

The Crime Free Multi Housing Program is a free training for rental property owners, managers, and staff provided by the Columbia Police Department. Benefits of the program include a stable, more satisfied tenant base, increase demand for rental units with a reputation for active management, lower maintenance and repair costs, increased property values and improved personal safety for tenants, landlords, and managers.



The next training will be held June 28, 2016 from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM at the Columbia Police Department Training Center, located at 5001 East Meyer Industrial Drive, Columbia, MO, 65203. Register by calling Officer Amy Bishop at 573-874-7426 or by going online under the Crime Free Multi-Housing section of the Columbia Police Department webpage.

## 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!

## Managing Move Out

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

## Tire & E-waste Collection – June 4

The Mid-Missouri Solid Waste District will again this year be hosting a tire and e-waste collection near the Hearn Center in Parking Lot N (Mick Deaver Drive off of Providence Road). This year's event will be held the morning of Saturday, June 4, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be a cost to leave your items for recycling.

## Rental unit count

As of April 29, 2016 the City of Columbia had 9,965 buildings and 26,888 units registered under the Rental Unit Conservation Law.

## 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.

## Spring is here – it's grass mowing time!

The grass is growing and hopefully everyone is keeping their lawns mowed. In the case someone is not, the City enforces the weed ordinance. The weed ordinance addresses vegetation that has attained a height of 12 inches. Property owners may receive an abatement notice if they are in violation. When properties are out of compliance, the City may abate the weeds and tax bill the property for mowing. Rental property owners are responsible for keeping their properties in compliance. If you have made your tenant responsible please work with them to ensure the lawn is getting mowed.

In 2015, ONS opened nearly 1,200 weed violation cases.

To report a weed violation, call 874-7339 or report via the City's website at [www.CoMo.gov](http://www.CoMo.gov).

## Building addressing

The City encourages property owners to convert to a numeric numbering system on buildings in order to improve addressing and identification for public safety response.

Alphabetic identification (Units A, B, C, etc.) should be replaced with a numeric system that helps identify levels. For example, basement units would be 1, 2, 3; ground floor 101, 102, 103, second floor, 201, 202, 203, etc.

To learn more about converting to the numeric system, please talk with your inspector or call the Building & Site Development Division at 874-7474.

## ONS cases now viewed on the web

A map of ONS active cases can now be viewed on the City's website. From our website [www.GoColumbiaMO.com](http://www.GoColumbiaMO.com), look for the maps icon and click on "View the Community Dashboard." The enforcement tab will show you the location and type of our current active cases.

ONS handled 4,209 cases – other than rental inspections - in the City's 2015 fiscal year (ending September 30, 2015). Nuisances (including trash, debris, hazardous trees) were the largest category of cases with 1,611 followed by weeds at 1,197 cases and property maintenance (violations on structures) at 577. City staff identify 58% of the cases with resident complaints making up the remaining 42%.

## Non-conforming bedrooms

Inspectors continue to find non-conforming bedrooms either in basements or attics without proper egress or in living areas not originally designed to be sleeping areas.

The International Property Maintenance Code states that all habitable spaces shall have at least one openable window to allow for light and ventilation. The code also says, "Every bedroom shall contain a minimum of 70 square feet and every bedroom occupied by more than one person shall contain a minimum of 50 square feet of floor area for each occupant thereof."

Our local amendments detail egress requirements for basement sleeping rooms and those two stories or more above grade.

Inspectors look for non-conforming sleeping rooms as they may create safety issues for the occupant. Each situation is unique. Please visit with your inspector about your situation.

## 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.

## 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. We have posted a link to the International Property Maintenance Code and our local amendments on the Neighborhood Services website if you want to read in more detail about what we are looking for.

## Occupancy Limitation Disclosures

On October 21, 2013 the City Council amended the ordinance requiring a notice of occupancy limitation to tenants. Some things to know:

- Those who lease or sublease their living unit must receive written notice of the zoning district and the occupancy limitations of Chapter 29.
- This notice shall be signed by the lessor and each lessee and shall be contained in the written lease or on a zoning occupancy disclosure form provided by the City.
- The ordinance was amended so that a police officer or city inspector may request the disclosure upon the investigation of over-occupancy. No person shall be found guilty of a violation by producing the documentation within 10 days of the request.

***Please note that we do not need a copy of your disclosure or to see the complete rental application.***

## 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.

### City of Columbia

#### Community Development Department Office of Neighborhood Services

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