

# ***INSPECTION CONNECTION***

## **City of Kenosha Department of Neighborhood Services and Inspections**

**Winter/Fall 2009**

### **Change in Office Hours**

Beginning January 1, 2010, our office hours will be Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 12:40 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

### **Safety and Buildings, Building Contractor Registration (BCR) Program**

As of July 1, 2009, building contractor businesses in Wisconsin were required to be registered with the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Safety and Buildings Division. The four-year, \$25.00-per-year Building Contractor Registration (BCR) will be for businesses whose work is regulated under any of the Commerce codes affecting commercial buildings, places of employment, one- and two-family dwellings, and public swimming pools. People holding dwelling contractor certifications will not need the BCR to obtain one- and two-family permits, but they may want the registration to do commercial construction work. A web page with all of the information regarding the new registration is available at: [www.commerce.wi.gov/SB/SB-BuildingContractorProgram.htm](http://www.commerce.wi.gov/SB/SB-BuildingContractorProgram.htm).

Also from the Safety and

Buildings Division, Henry Kosarzycki has resigned, effective September 26, 2009. Henry was our local liaison to the Safety and Buildings Division, and his expertise and guidance will be missed.

### **Chinese Drywall Crisis**

If you have received complaints from homeowners who had homes built between 2004 and 2007, of a distinct odor of rotten eggs in the home, upper respiratory problems, or premature corrosion to copper air conditioning coils, the reason may be simple, although, the fix may not.

Domestic supplies of drywall and other construction materials were severely depleted due to high demand and usage during the years of the construction industry boom and disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. The symptoms outlined above have been traced back to half-inch thick, 4' x 12' drywall boards manufactured under unknown conditions in China. This drywall of unknown quality has made its way to at least twelve states (including Wisconsin). At least 60,000 homes have used it in construction, although consumer advocacy group,

America's Watchdog, says the number could be much higher.

Typical costs to repair the damage range from \$50,000.00 to \$75,000.00 for a 2,000 square foot house.

If you feel the materials you have used fall into this category, you can find more information at [www.ChineseDrywall.com](http://www.ChineseDrywall.com) or contact the U.S. Product Safety Commission at 1.800.638.2772.

### **Inflatable Swimming Pools**

With the growing popularity of inflatable swimming pools, it is important to remember that an inflatable swimming pool capable of containing 24" or more of water is required to observe the same safety rules as any other conventional type swimming pool.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission released a 2008 study which indicated that the recorded number of pool and spa submersion injuries of children under the age of five has averaged 2,700 per year for the last three years.

By ordinance, any swimming pool or spa capable of holding 24" or more of water, requires safety barriers, fences, and gates maintained in working order.

To get a complete list of code and permit requirements, visit us on-line or stop in and ask for a copy of the "Basic Code Requirements for Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs." Pools are to be enjoyed...please do so safely.

### **Erosion and Sediment Control**

As of January 1, 2009, all residential and commercial projects require that erosion control matting be installed in all parkways between the sidewalk and street, and an area extending six feet (6') from the sidewalk to the structure, and in any area that has a concentrated water flow; such as, drainage swales, downspout discharge, and any drainage way that leads to a storm sewer. This requirement shall be installed and approved prior to receiving occupancy approval.

For erosion control matting, you may install sod or entirely cover the exposed land disturbance. Either method is acceptable.

### **Construction Site Erosion and Sediment Control**

After a severe winter, it is obvious that many tracking pads have been damaged due to weather conditions and lack of maintenance. Tracking pads are to be installed with a minimum of 3" to 6" stone, 12" deep, a minimum length of 50', or a length designated by your approved erosion control plan. State and local codes require that the contractor inspect, maintain, and repair any damaged or non-compliant erosion control measures throughout the course of construction to avoid tracking

mud or diverting sediment onto the streets where it can be conveyed to the storm sewer system. Failure to maintain the tracking pad or any portion of erosion and sediment control measures could result in reinspection fees, possible withholding of inspections, or the issuance of a "Stop Work" order until such time that the violation is corrected.

### **Non-construction Site Erosion and Sediment Control**

It is not only an active construction site that requires strict erosion and sediment control measures.

It is prohibited by City Ordinances to blow or deposit any of the following materials onto the sidewalk, lawn park area, driveway approach, street, gutter, or storm sewer:

- Dirt
- Snow
- Sand
- Mulch
- Litter
- Debris
- Gravel
- Leaves
- Oil/Grease
- Gas/Anti-freeze
- Grass Clippings

Your cooperation will help maintain our lakes, streams, and waterways for the enjoyment of all.

### **Post-construction Storm Water Management Ordinance**

Another requirement resulting from DNR and Department of

Commerce rule changes is the requirement for the creation of a post-construction storm water maintenance plan and permit. This will be an additional plan review process conducted during the Conditional Use Permit or Site Development review.

This ordinance, "Chapter 36, Post-construction Storm Water Management," is currently in the process of being reviewed and approved. Copies should be available on-line in late October or early November.

When completing an application for a Conditional Use Permit or Site Development Approval, you will be required to submit certain information for the post-construction management of storm water control measures and installations, for the Storm Water Utility to review, approve, and permit. These requirements will also affect the issuance of building permits, as well as the approval of final occupancy permits.

If you have any questions regarding this portion of the review, please call Shelly Billingsley at 262.653.4150 or e-mail her at [sbillingsley@kenosha.org](mailto:sbillingsley@kenosha.org).

### **Illegal Residential Conversions**

The problem of illegal conversions of residential buildings is a persistent and pervasive one that places many of our residents in danger, and puts tremendous strain on community resources.

An illegal conversion is the creation of one or more additional dwelling units within a home without first receiving permits from the City of Kenosha. Such conversions often involve the alteration or modification of an existing one- or two-family home by adding an apartment to the upper floor, attic, or basement.

An illegal conversion is a serious offense under the City of Kenosha Zoning Ordinance. Illegal conversions reduce the quality of life in our neighborhoods by crowding more people into an area than was originally intended. This unplanned growth causes a severe strain on municipal services; and, frequently results in school overcrowding, reduced parking, understaffed police stations, and increased sewer and sanitation problems. In addition, illegal conversions are frequently done in violation of existing fire and building codes, and constitute a significant danger to tenants and other individuals living in the buildings.

Failure to obtain required permits seriously impacts the property owner when illegal dwelling units and construction work are revealed. In addition to fines, the owner is required to reconstruct the dwelling to its former legitimate status. Also, units that may have been accepted as "nonconforming" (in existence prior to 1984), would have to be eliminated to comply with existing ordinance standards.

It should be noted that there are circumstances whereby it is permissible to add an apartment to a home:

- The building must be in an area which is zoned to allow additional dwelling units.
- The property lot and building size must meet the zoning requirements.
- Building and mechanical permits must be obtained to add the new dwelling unit.

Illegal dwelling units may temporarily benefit the individual property owner but harm the community financially by providing services (waste collection, police, fire protection) to a property that is not adequately assessed to pay for City services.

### Scheduling of Inspections

Inspection requests are taken by clerical staff. At this time, it is not possible to schedule an inspection for a specific time. Also remember that inspection requests are only taken for the following day. In the near future, we hope to be able to accept inspection requests for several days in advance and schedule them accordingly.

To ensure that an inspection request is processed properly, please furnish the following information:

- Permit number
- Address of inspection
- Contractor name
- Type of inspection
- Contact person and phone number

- Any access information (lock box number, "back door open," etc.)

Crucial information to remember when scheduling inspections:

1. For the most part, inspections will be scheduled accordingly:

**Footing:** For the day it is scheduled.

**Exterior sewer and water:** For the day it is scheduled.

**Rough-in:** 48 hours from the time it is ready for inspection.

**Final:** Within five (5) days from the time it is ready for inspection.

**Occupancy:** Within five (5) days from the time it is ready for inspection; but, none are conducted on Friday.

2. When planning an occupancy inspection, remember the scheduling sequence. At times an occupancy inspection is requested the day before or the day of a closing; that request will be denied, thereby creating a potential hardship for the home buyer.

### Be Sure to Get All the Permits You Need!

When planning your project, getting all the permit applications and approvals from our department is only part of the process. Depending on the scope of the project, approvals and permits may be required from other departments and agencies.

In our application packets and on our website, we try to provide you with as much information as possible regarding other departments' requirements for your project.

The following additional permits and approvals may be needed for your project:

- Site-plan review from the City Development Department
- Parking lot, sidewalk, and driveway approach permits from the Public Works Department
- Sign, trash enclosure, and fence permits from the Zoning Division
- Structural plan approval from the State Department of Commerce
- Plumbing plan approval from the State Department of Commerce
- Various licenses from the City Clerk's office
- Licensing by the County Health Department
- Erosion control or floodplain permits from the State Department of Natural Resources

Another reminder is to make sure that all of your subcontractors are properly licensed.

Keeping all of the above in mind is one way to make sure your project runs smoothly.

### **Permit Information Packets and Brochures**

With our permit application

packets you will receive information relative to permit and inspection requirements. Please read all of the information provided. You will find information on permit timelines, code requirements, inspection processing, and minimum requirements to take you to successful completion of your project. By reading and understanding this information, you can avoid possible delays or reinspection fees during the course of construction. As always, if you have any questions regarding any of the information provided to you, please call us and we'll be glad to assist you.

### **Dwelling Contractor Qualifier Continuing Education Classes**

The Racine-Kenosha Builders Association is sponsoring several educational events that will provide the required continuing education units needed to maintain your Dwelling Contractor Qualifier certification.

The current slate of classes is conveniently scheduled for the Racine/Sturtevant area.

Applications are available at our front counter, or you may contact Michelle Dawson for applications or information on future continuing education opportunities at:

Racine-Kenosha Builders Association  
P.O. Box 706  
2700 Wisconsin Street  
Sturtevant, WI 53177  
Phone: 262.886.5901

Fax: 262.886.5902  
[Info@rkbuilders.com](mailto:Info@rkbuilders.com)

### **Pay Permits On Line or by Telephone**

Remember...you may pay your permit fees on line or by telephone through Official Payments Corporation (OPC). (NOTE: There will be a fee to OPC for this service). OPC accepts Discover, Mastercard, Visa, and American Express cards. You can access the official website from your home or office computer, or utilize the on-line payment station located in our office.

#### On-line Payments:

Access the web site at <http://www.officialpayments.com>

Have the following information available: \*(if multiple permits, you must enter each permit number separately)

1. Permit Number(s)\*
2. Credit Card Information
3. The Amount of the Permit Fee

Follow on-line instructions.

#### Telephone Payments:

Call 1.800.272.9829

Have the following information available: \*(if multiple permits, you must enter each permit number separately)

1. Permit Number(s)\*
2. Credit Card Information
3. The Amount of the Permit Fee
4. Jurisdiction Code #5864

Follow the prompts.

## Neighborhood Services and Inspections' Web Site

### Commercial Occupancy Status

**Available On Line:** If your project is covered under a Conditional Use Permit or a Site Development review, the status of your occupancy permit is now available on line. When you enter our website, go to the "Permits Status/Inspection Results" link, and if you enter the project address or permit number, a screen will appear indicating which departments have signed off on the project, and whether the approval is for temporary or permanent occupancy. The screen will also display any escrow amounts required by a department. So far, the feedback on the availability of this information has been positive, as it has reduced the number of phone calls on behalf of the contractor to find the status of his/her project.

**Erosion Control:** The Erosion Control website is now up and running. Just go to our Neighborhood Services and Inspections home page and you'll find the link. You'll find much information, many forms, and useful links to the Department of Commerce and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources websites.

If you have any suggestions or comments on how we can improve our site to better serve you, please contact us at [nsi@kenosha.org](mailto:nsi@kenosha.org)

## Contact Numbers

City Assessor's Office	262.653.2545
Department of City Development	262.653.4030
Fire Prevention Bureau	262.653.4110
Department of Neighborhood Services and Inspections	262.653.4263
Parks Division	262.653.4080
Department of Public Works	262.653.4050
Storm Water Utility	262.653.4050
Kenosha Water Utility	262.653.4300

You may also contact our website at [www.kenosha.org](http://www.kenosha.org)

## Inspection Division Contacts

Commercial Building Inspector	262.653.4268
Residential Building Inspector	262.653.4267
Commercial Electrical Inspector	262.653.4272
Residential Electrical Inspector	262.653.4271
Plumbing Inspector	262.653.4270
Erosion Control Inspector	262.653.4247