

INSPECTION CONNECTION

City of Kenosha Department of Neighborhood Services and Inspections

Spring/Summer 2008

Commercial Building and Fire Prevention Code Changes Effective March 1, 2008

After review by legislature, changes to COMM 60-66 (Commercial Building Code) and COMM 14 (Fire Prevention Code), have gone into effect as of March 1, 2008.

With regard to new construction, there was a significant increase in multi-family buildings which were equipped with new fire sprinkler protection.

The phase provides sprinkler installation in 2008 for new construction of multi-family buildings of more than eight units, and will be lowered to new multi-family dwellings of three or more units in 2011.

In addition, there will not be a new "Enrolled Code," which has been a printed combination of the Wisconsin and model building codes. Instead, the Safety and Buildings Division will print code insert pages. The pages are designed to fit Wisconsin code provisions into the looseleaf versions of the adopted model code.

The adopted model code is the 2006 International Building

Code, and can be obtained from <http://www.iccsafe.org/>.

The Wisconsin insert pages are available from the Safety and Buildings Division www.commerce.wi.gov/SB/.

HVAC Contractor Licensing

In order to maintain compliance with State Statute 101.178 (3) (c), HVAC contractors who possess a valid Wisconsin HVAC Qualifier certificate are no longer required to obtain or renew a City of Kenosha HVAC Contractor license.

HVAC contractors who do not possess a Wisconsin HVAC Qualifier certificate, and who have been licensed by the City prior to April 1, 2007, are still required to renew their City license on an annual basis. These renewals shall be made in a timely manner, or the license shall become null and void.

In order to obtain an HVAC permit in Kenosha, you will need to present either your Wisconsin HVAC Qualifier certificate or your City HVAC Contractor license.

We encourage those contractors who do not yet possess a

Wisconsin HVAC Qualifier certificate to continue their efforts to obtain one.

Vacant Building Ordinance to Go into Effect

Effective January 1, 2008, all owners of vacant commercial buildings are required to secure a Vacant Building Permit from the City if his/her building has been vacant for at least six months.

The purpose of the permit program is to insure that vacant commercial buildings are being maintained.

The ordinance requires an annual interior and exterior inspection of the vacant buildings by City inspection staff. The inspection staff will identify any code violations, and the owner will be required to correct those violations.

The only exceptions to the permit requirement are buildings that have a current, valid building permit or raze permit.

If you own a vacant commercial building and have any questions, please contact our office.

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 otherwise 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 active construction sites that require strict erosion and sediment control measures.

It is prohibited by City Ordinances to blow or deposit any of the following materials on 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 in this matter will help maintain our lakes, streams, and waterways for our enjoyment.

Construction Signs – Do's and Don't's

The City of Kenosha recognizes the business community's need to promote its individual products and services. In order to promote safe, attractive, and functional highway vistas, the City of Kenosha's Sign Code regulates construction signs. As an informed contractor, your knowledge of the regulations will be a benefit to your clients and avoid conflicts during the busy construction season.

What constitutes a Construction Sign?

A construction sign is a sign that is on a construction or demolition site which identifies a construction or redevelopment project or parties participating in the project on the premises upon which the sign is located.

How many Construction Signs are allowed and when can the signs be installed?

One (1) construction sign per

street frontage, placed on the premise where work is in progress is allowed. Signs cannot be erected prior to the beginning of work for which a valid building or demolition permit has been issued. Pre-construction signs are not permitted.

Can another real estate, leasing, or financing sign be erected with the Construction Sign?

No. Information related to financing, leasing, or selling the property may be integrated into the construction sign.

Can flags or other attention-getting devices be used?

No. Attention-getting flags or other devices are signs and are not permitted in conjunction with the construction sign.

Where can the sign(s) be installed?

Construction signs are only permitted on the principal building or ground area. Ground signs shall maintain a 15' setback from the property line and may not obstruct vision clearance areas. Construction signs are **NOT** permitted on trees, fences, or other structures.

When does the sign require removal?

The sign shall be removed within ten (10) days of completion of work or the expiration of the permit - whichever is sooner.

What are the size regulations?

Single-family residence:
16 sq. ft. maximum

Developments less than 2 acres:
64 sq. ft. maximum

Developments more than 2 acres:
96 sq. ft. maximum

What are the consequences of not abiding by the Sign Code?

City Staff will inspect the construction site to verify compliance with the sign code. Fees escalating from \$60 to \$360 per inspection can be charged to the property owner (your client). If unpaid, the fees will be assessed against the property. In addition, work on the project may be halted or permits held until compliance is obtained.

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 strains 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 on the upper floor, attic, or in the 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 sometimes 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 continually 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 now being taken by clerical staff. At the end of each day, clerical staff will forward the following day's schedule to the appropriate inspector. Because of the volume of inspections, it is not possible to schedule an inspection for a specific time. Also remember that we can only take an inspection request 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 your 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.)

Critical information to remember when scheduling inspections:

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

Footing: For the day they are scheduled.

Exterior sewer and water: For the day they are scheduled.

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

Final: Five (5) days from the time it is ready for inspection.

Occupancy: 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; those requests 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 your subcontractors are properly licensed.

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

Pay Permits Online or by Telephone

Remember...you may pay your permit fees online 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 online. 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 a lot of information and forms, as well as 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 [http://www.nsi@kenosha.org](mailto:www.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 Department	(262) 653-4080
Department of Public Works	(262) 653-4050

You may also contact our website at www.kenosha.org

Inspection Division Contacts

Commercial Building Inspector	(262) 653-4268
Residential Building Inspector	(262) 653-4266
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