

## Rent Withholding

If an owner fails to comply with an order from DNS in a timely manner, a tenant may have the right to deposit the rent money with DNS, and that money is held in escrow until compliance is achieved. (MCO-200-22). A state statute gives the tenant the right to abate the rent in certain situations where the habitability of the rental unit is affected. (Wis. Statutes. 704-07(4))

## Reinspection Fees

If an order is issued, the owner gets one free Meeting to Clarify, and one free reinspection when the repairs are all completed. All other inspection costs may be assessed to the tax roll at an increasing scale of \$101.40 for the first fee, and \$202.80 for every fee thereafter until the orders are abated.

## Chronic Nuisance Properties

Repeated police calls to a property, with no action by the owner to address the issues, may cause DNS to bill for subsequent Police calls. (MCO-80-10)

## Tax Roll Charges

Some violations of the code authorize DNS to take action to cure a problem after notice to the owner, and his/her failure to resolve the problem. Costs are placed on the tax bill as a special charge. Examples include: boarding-up of a building, emergency repair of a defective furnace during the winter, and cleaning up garbage or litter to name a few.

## Abandoned Property in Foreclosure (APIF) & Residential Property in Preforeclosure (RPPF) Programs

Lenders and mortgage holders who seek the return of their property through the foreclosure process need to be aware of special regulations that may be triggered during the foreclosure process. To determine which types of foreclosed property are subject to the ordinance visit these websites for specific details.

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/DNS/APIF>  
<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/DNS/RPPF>

## Vacant Property Responsibilities

If your property goes vacant for a period of 30 days, or 30 days after assuming ownership of a vacant building, the owner must file a registration statement with the department. The owner is also required to enclose and secure the building as well as provide for lot maintenance, interior and exterior maintenance, and security. Registration forms and fee schedules are available at [www.city.milwaukee.gov/dns](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/dns) or by calling 414-286-2268.

286-8569  
286-2514  
286-3838  
286-3874  
286-2268  
286-2557  
286-2513  
286-8211  
286-2532  
286-2532  
286-3860  
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286-8715  
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286-8207  
286-2163  
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286-3645  
286-2268  
286-8824  
286-2268  
286-3361  
286-5447  
286-3939  
286-3386  
286-0830  
286-5165  
286-2268

## Helpful Phone Numbers

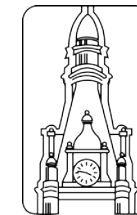
Abandoned Property in Foreclosure  
Boiler Section  
Code Compliance Program  
Commercial Code Enforcement & Vacant Bldgs.  
Complaint Hotline  
Condemnation Section  
Construction Section  
Development Center (DCD) & Permit Desk  
Electrical Section  
Elevator Section  
Enforcement (Court)  
Environmental Section  
Graffiti Complaint Hotline  
Landlord Training Program  
Microfilm (DCD)  
Neighborhood Improvement Dev. Corp.  
Nuisance Control  
Plumbing Section  
Property Recording Program  
Rent Withholding  
Residential Code Enforcement & Vacant Bldgs.  
Residential Rental Inspection Program  
Special Inspection Enforcement  
Sprinkler Section  
FAX Broadway South  
FAX Trades Inspection 10th Floor  
FAX Lake Tower 1st Floor North  
FAX Lake Tower 1st Floor South  
FAX Lake Tower 2nd Floor ENV/NUS  
DNS General Number

# So you want to be a landlord?



## A SUMMARY OF CITY REGULATIONS THAT EVERY NEW RENTAL PROPERTY OWNER NEEDS TO KNOW

*This is a very brief summary of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances [MCO] for rental property owners. Copies of ordinances are available from the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) in Room B-1, City Hall. Call LRB (286-2297) for ordinance language. Copies are also available on-line at [www.city.milwaukee.gov](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov)*



Helpful Tips from the  
**City of Milwaukee**  
**Department of**  
**Neighborhood**  
**Services**

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov>

## Property Maintenance Code

Milwaukee has an 18-page code which generally states that properties must be kept in a well-maintained condition. The owner's responsibility includes such things as keeping the building painted, dry, properly heated, and free of vermin and fire hazards. Inspection is triggered by complaint, referral, point of sale inspection requirements and by the department's own initiative. Call 286-2268 to speak to the district Code Enforcement Inspector.

## Appeal Rights

Every order issued by the City is appealable to an independent board. **A filing fee is required, and there is a window of time indicated on the order.** DNS also will grant an informal appeal by a supervisor's independent review of the inspector's judgment.

## Property Registration

[(MCO 200-51.5) The ownership information for all buildings other than owner-occupied one-and two-family dwellings must be registered with the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS). This will allow the City to contact the owner, in many cases prior to inspection, to try and resolve most problems by telephone (\*there are exceptions). For additional information visit: [www.milwaukee.gov/propertyregistration](http://www.milwaukee.gov/propertyregistration) or call 286-8569

## Interior/Exterior Maintenance

DNS issues corrective orders on junk-vehicles, rubbish, nuisances, and animal feces on private property. Call DNS at 286-2268. DNS also handles exterior paint violations. \*The Health Department enforces codes regarding interior lead-paint regulations. Call 286-5987.

## Zoning Codes

DNS enforces the zoning codes which include such violations as commercial auto repair in a residentially zoned property, excessive rummage sales, and illegal exterior storage. Call 286-2268.

## Boiler Inspection

According to both State and City code, the building owner is responsible for maintaining a valid certificate of operation for their boilers. The certificate is issued only after a satisfactory safety inspection by an authorized inspection agency or City inspector and is valid for a 3-year period (a State serial number, and City sticker will be applied). For more information, contact the Boiler Inspection Section at 286-2514.

## Fire Inspection

Apartment buildings with 3 or more units, mixed use buildings and all commercial buildings require an annual fire inspection by state law. DNS's Code Enforcement inspectors conduct these inspections and a tax roll charge is assessed per ordinance.

## Licensed Premises

Hotels, motels and rooming houses are licensed and inspected annually. Occupancy of a rental unit by more than 3 unrelated adults requires a rooming house license. Call 286-3874.

## Weatherization Requirements

The State requires rental property to be weatherized. See link for details. <http://dps.wi.gov/Programs/Industry-Services/Industry-Services-Programs/Rental-Weatherization/> or call: (608) 266-2112

## Landlord Training

This is an award-winning, free 5-hour course held twice a month to instruct rental-property owners on how to keep destructive and illegal activity out of their property among other things. Subjects covered include applicant screening, rental agreements, ongoing management, and crisis resolution as well as resources on other related topics. Many lenders will not grant a mortgage without proof of attendance in this course. Advance registration required. Call 286-2954.

## Illegal Lockout/Self-Help Eviction

Avoid legal liabilities involved by improperly evicting a tenant. Call 286-2954 to attend a FREE Landlord Training Session.



The City offers **FREE** landlord training classes.

## Retaliatory Eviction

The code prohibits retaliation by an owner against a tenant that files a valid complaint with the Department. Call 286-2268.

## Graffiti

It is every property owner's responsibility to remove graffiti from their property quickly. National studies have shown that the faster it is removed, the less likely it is to return. **Free paint is available!** Failure to promptly remove graffiti allows the City to do so at the owner's expense. Call 286-8715.

## The Code Enforcement Process

*(A very-abbreviated explanation)* An inspection is triggered by a complaint, referral, required inspection or by the department's direction (i.e. block surveys). If violations are observed, the inspector prepares a violation order or advisory letter, and mails it to the last-known owner(s)\* with a stated period of time to comply. A phone-call and reminder letter are sent, then reinspection is made after the due date. If the owner has made the required repairs, the case ends. If not, the inspector attempts to contact the owner to determine why not. A reinspection fee may be charged that increases with each missed due date. Inspectors may grant extensions along certain guidelines. If the owner does not respond, the case is referred to the court section, and a citation or a summons and complaint is prepared and served, leading to an initial appearance date in municipal court. If all the repairs are done prior to the trial date, a lower forfeiture (fine) is recommended than in the case where the repairs are not made. Fees can multiply quickly, so a swift, educated response is wise (i.e. if you don't know how to make a repair find someone that does A.S.A.P.). (\*when in doubt, inspectors are encouraged to err on the side sending every possible owner notice even if that means sending prior owners letters.)

## TIPS:

If you receive an order to make repairs: **do not ignore it in hopes that it will go away.** DNS electronically records all orders and computers automatically remind inspectors and management of the need for further action. Call the inspectors to keep them informed of your plans, progress and problems; they can help a great deal if you include them as partners (i.e. they keep people safe, healthy, and alive). Treat inspectors the way you want to be treated.