

# **Buying or selling a home in Dearborn?**

Here's news to use from the Building and Safety Department

Before a property owner sells a house in Dearborn, the home must pass an inspection and be given a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) before closing. This ensures that the house is up to code and is safe to live in.

Inspections are scheduled by calling 943-2120 or 943-3335. Allow two weeks for the inspection to be scheduled. Fees are \$150 for single-family homes.

It is recommended that an owner or representative is home during the inspection, so he can discuss the violations with the inspector and get some helpful tips on how to correct them. Inspection reports are valid for one year.

## **Tips on fixing the most common problems**

City of Dearborn inspectors have discovered that the following areas bring the most violations when they are looking at homes:

- **Smoke detectors** are required inside and outside of each room used for sleeping and in each story of the home, including the basement.
- **Ground-fault interrupter outlets (GFIs)** are required to replace existing outlets in bathrooms, replace outlets within six feet of the kitchen sink and wall outlets in the garage and the exterior of the property.
- **Vacuum breakers**, or backflow prevention devices, are required on laundry tubs and outdoor water spouts.

- **Switch plate covers** are required over all electrical switches and outlets.
- **Handrails** are required on stairways.
- **Basement stairs** must be enclosed by a guardrail or wall.
- **Windows** must be properly glazed and sealed.
- **Garages** must not be neglected. Loose siding and chipped and peeling paint is not acceptable.

### **Helpful information when selling a home**

It's important to know that a certificate from a licensed heating contractor must be included in the closing, indicating that the heating unit was inspected and is functioning properly.

Also, certain home violations require a permit or compliance certificate, such as work for electrical or plumbing. Permits must have final approval before the final C of O inspection can be performed.

Once all violations have been corrected, a final inspection can be scheduled with the department.

City officials work hard to ensure that all city transactions and inspections take place in a timely manor, said Andrew Pizzino, manager of residential sales.

"We're not here to keep anybody out of a house, especially in this economy we're experiencing," Pizzino said. "We'll do all we can to make sure the homeowner gets to the closing as soon as possible."

### **Some exceptions apply**

The City of Dearborn recognizes that some home repairs, such as concrete or exterior paint, cannot be made during inclement weather. Therefore, a temporary C of O can be issued, as long as the proposed buyer deposits money in an escrow account to ensure that the repairs are made.

There are some cases when a home can be sold “as is.” However, an escrow must be posted by the potential buyer to ensure that repairs are made. A temporary C of O must be issued by the Building & Safety Department for closing only. The following cases apply: if the home is in probate proceedings due to the death of the owner, if the owner of the home is incapacitated, or if the home is in foreclosure.

### **Building and Safety is here to help**

Pizzino said that a majority of real estate agents in Dearborn and the surrounding cities are aware of the city’s residential sales procedures. The City of Dearborn has the right to issue tickets to all parties involved with a sales transaction if the rules and regulations are not followed.

“We know that a ticket does not make the problem right – it’s just a fine. We want to make sure that home is safe to live in,” Pizzino said.



*Many helpful tips can be found online under the Residential Sales section of the divisions of Building & Safety Department at the city’s website:*

*[www.cityofdearborn.org](http://www.cityofdearborn.org). Viewers can view the inspection form used to perform an inspection for the sale of a home.*

**PHOTO CAPTION:** Building inspector Ken Foley checks out a home to help the property owner prepare for a sale.

*[NOTE ~ If you did not receive a copy of the photograph that accompanies this news release, and would like one, call Randy Coble at (313) 943-2347.]*

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