

## Housing is an essential community resource

People looking for a place to live focus on community attributes including the character of the neighborhood, the condition and diversity of available housing, the quality of public schools, distance from the workplace, recreation and other amenities.

Given the importance of housing as a basic building block for the community, preservation and enhancement of housing is an important city goal.

Minimum housing and property maintenance standards have been established to protect and promote the health and well being of occupants of housing, and quality of life throughout city neighborhoods.

Whether you reside in an owner-occupied or renter-occupied home, or are the owner of rental housing, housing maintenance cannot be over emphasized.

Routine maintenance and improvements will ensure high-quality housing options are available for current and future residents, and will preserve and protect neighborhoods and property values.

This guide has been developed to provide home owners, rental property owners and tenants with information to assist in maintaining their housing and property within the established housing and property maintenance standards.

## Housing Services

The following services are available to assist property owners and/or tenants with regard to resolution of housing maintenance and housing availability concerns, which may include:

### Dispute Resolution or Eviction Diversion:

- Gryphon Place  
3245 South 8th Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
2-1-1 or (269) 381-help for 24-hour help line  
(269) 552-3434: Dispute Resolution
- Legal Aid of Western Michigan  
201 West Kalamazoo Avenue, Room 308  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007  
Phone: (269) 344-8113

### Housing Discrimination Concerns

- Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan  
410 East Michigan Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
(269) 276-9100 or (269) 276-9101

### Owner-Occupied Housing Improvement Programs

- Portage Community Development Department:  
7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, MI 49002  
(269) 329-4477 or (269) 329-4466

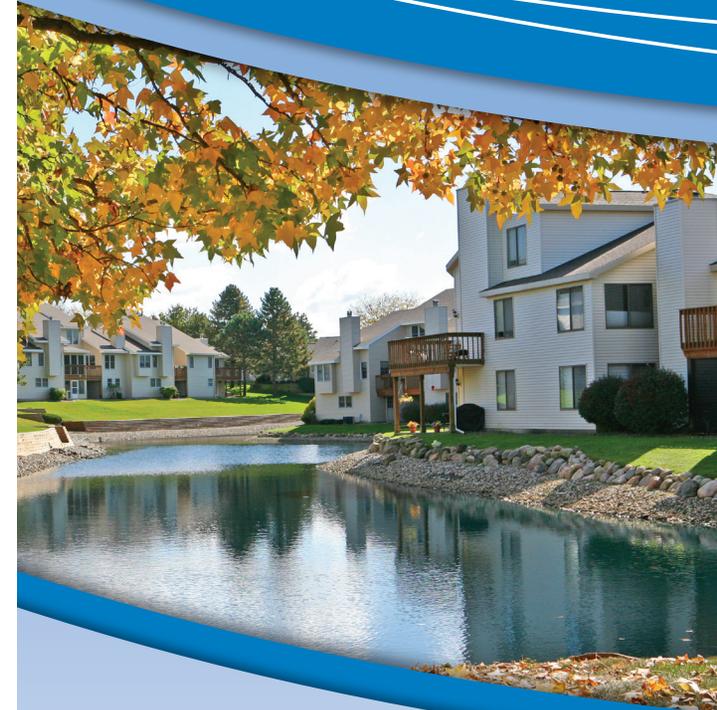
### **Report a Violation**

If you wish to report a housing and/or property maintenance ordinance violation, please contact the Department of Community Development at (269) 329-4466 or (269) 329-4477.

You may also visit [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov) and navigate to "Report It!"

# Neighborhood Quality

## A Guide for Housing Maintenance



**City of Portage**

7900 South Westnedge Avenue • Portage, Michigan 49002

[www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov)

# Housing and Property Maintenance Requirements

- ◆ **Roofs and exterior walls** must be structurally sound with no defects that admit rain, snow or dampness into the building interior.
- ◆ **Foundations** must adequately support the building at all points.
- ◆ **Windows and doors** must be kept in sound repair, and exclude rain and wind from entering the building. Windows and exterior doors must be capable of being secured and easily opened.
- ◆ **Window screens** must be provided during warm weather months to prevent insects from entering the dwelling.
- ◆ **Stairs and porches** must provide adequate support, be maintained in sound condition and include handrails for safety purposes.
- ◆ **Bathroom facilities** must be provided within a separate room that includes a properly functioning toilet, sink, bathtub or shower.
- ◆ **Heating systems** must be provided in sound, working condition and capable of safely heating all habitable rooms to 70° F with an outside temperature of 10° below zero. Every dwelling must also have a water heater in sound, working condition.
- ◆ **Electrical systems** must be installed, maintained and connected to a source of electrical power, free of hazards.
- ◆ **Smoke detectors** must be provided on each level of the dwelling and in each sleeping area.

- ◆ **Dwelling interiors** must be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition, free of rubbish, garbage accumulation and insect and/or rodent infestation.
- ◆ **Garbage storage** must be provided in approved containers with covers, and must be removed to prevent accumulation.
- ◆ **Overcrowding** must be prevented by providing at least 150 square feet of living area for the first occupant, and 100 square feet for each additional occupant within the dwelling.
- ◆ **Basements** used for living space must have an appropriate egress door or window for emergency exiting.

Exterior property maintenance is also an important component of neighborhood quality of life. The following violations should be avoided:

- ◆ Dilapidated accessory buildings, fences, swimming pools and other structures;
- ◆ Presence of junk and debris;
- ◆ Grass/weeds in excess of eight inches in height;
- ◆ Vehicles parked on the grass;
- ◆ Inoperable vehicles;
- ◆ Loud noises and/or excessive dog barking;
- ◆ Sidewalks not clear of snow, ice and/or debris.

# Rental Housing in Single-family Residential Neighborhoods

It is recognized that some homes located in single-family residential neighborhoods are occupied as rental property, which is permitted provided applicable Code regulations are met.

If you own rental property in one of the many excellent Portage neighborhoods, proper care and maintenance is important to ensure neighborhood stability.

- ◆ Tenants living in the home must meet the definition of “family” provided in the Zoning Code, which is: one or more persons related by blood, marriage, adoption, or guardianship; or a collective number of individuals living together and having a relationship that is functionally equivalent to a family.
- ◆ Homes in single-family residential districts cannot be rented in a manner where the living arrangement is temporary and/or of a resort-seasonal character in nature.
- ◆ Homes in single-family residential zoning districts cannot be split into two or more separate dwelling units.

If you are unsure of the zoning of your property, or have questions regarding the rental of a single-family home, please contact the Community Development Department at (269) 329-4477 for assistance.

The above information is a summary of Housing and Property Maintenance requirements. For a complete listing of City Code requirements, refer to Chapter 42, Article 14 and Chapter 24, Article 5 of the Portage Code of Ordinances at [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov) or contact the Department of Community Development at (269) 329-4477 for assistance.