

HOW DOES THE HOUSING CODE AFFECT BUYERS, SELLERS, AND RENTERS OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES?

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

If you are planning to sell your home, it is necessary that you have it inspected when you list it for sale. To arrange for the inspection, apply at the Ballwin Government Center, Monday-Friday, 8:00 am–5:00 pm. There is a charge of \$100 for this inspection that must be paid before the inspection is scheduled. This charge includes one reinspection. **If any cited violations are not corrected at the time of the first reinspection, a \$25 reinspection fee will be charged and must be paid before another reinspection can be scheduled.**

The inspection will include an examination of the building conditions and facilities explained in this brochure. If the building meets City code standards, a *CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE* will be issued. Where deficiencies exist, the homeowner is provided with a copy of the inspection report. A *Certificate of Compliance* can be issued only after the completion of the necessary corrective work. Once a *Certificate of Compliance* is issued, its validity extends for one year from the issue date to the person selling the home at that time. *Certificates of Compliance* are not transferable. The items listed as more important features of the Housing Code are not intended to be the only items that may be noted during the inspection. **The property owner is responsible for correcting all deficiencies contained in the report, regardless of whether the dwelling is eventually sold.**

A visual inspection of every dwelling unit is necessary before a *Certificate of Compliance* can be issued, or a new occupant is allowed to move in. The City of Ballwin does not make any guarantee or warranty as to the conditions of the buildings inspected, nor does the City assume any liability in association with the inspection on the *Certificate of Compliance*.

OCCUPANCY PERMIT

If you are planning to occupy a dwelling in Ballwin, whether you are purchasing or renting, you must first secure an **OCCUPANCY PERMIT**. This may be done by applying in person at the Ballwin Government Center, Monday-Friday, 8:00 am–5:00 pm. There is no fee for the Occupancy Permit.

The *Occupancy Permit* is designed to insure that the number of people planning to occupy a dwelling unit does not exceed the space limitation requirement of the Housing Code.

Before an *Occupancy Permit* is issued, an inspection of the building is required to determine the available space and to check for possible safety and health hazards. A *Certificate of Compliance* must be issued before an *Occupancy Permit* can be issued.

OTHER REQUIRED INSPECTIONS

METRO WEST FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
(636) 458-2100

LACLEDE GAS
(314) 621-6960

HOW DOES THE HOUSING CODE MAINTAIN NEIGHBORHOOD STANDARDS AND COMMUNITY VALUES?

Ballwin's occupancy program has been designed to maintain a quality-built environment. All structures in the City are subject to periodic inspection to assure that standards of construction and maintenance are preserved.

In addition, every housing unit to be purchased or rented is subject to inspection before it can be occupied. A *Certificate of Compliance* is issued by the Building Commissioner when the building meets City standards as a sound and safe building. Building Permits are required for new construction, alterations, replacements, etc.

Experienced City Inspectors check for compliance with the standards of the Ballwin Housing Code. These *MINIMUM* standards are deemed necessary to preserve the health, safety, and general welfare of residents.

Some of the more important features of the Housing Code are listed in this pamphlet so that citizens will understand the purpose of the occupancy program. Homeowners interested in good maintenance may also find these examples useful in evaluating the condition of their property.



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HOUSING CODE



PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY

MAINTAINING YOUR CITY, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND YOUR HOME

ASSURING THE LONG-TERM VALUE OF YOUR INVESTMENT AND THE VIABILITY OF YOUR COMMUNITY



EXAMPLES OF BALLWIN HOUSING CODE REQUIREMENTS



ELECTRICAL FACILITIES must comply with the National Electrical Code, and be adequate for the number and types of appliances now in common use in most homes in order to prevent electrical fires. Sixty ampere service is the minimum size service permitted and 100 ampere or more is recommended. Enough circuits should be provided to prevent overloading when a number of appliances are in operation. Failure to provide an adequate number of outlets in each room commonly results in dangerous use of extension cords. Every habitable room must have at least two separate outlets. In addition, properly grounded outlets are required in laundry areas and recommended in kitchens and bathrooms. All grounded type outlets (three-prong) must be properly wired. Garbage disposals must have a romex connector on the disposal wiring. All electrical panels must be free of voids or openings, which allow access to its interior. Service entry cable must be water tight and in good condition (this is the large cable coming into and out of the electric meter). Temporary repairs such as taping or coatings are not acceptable. Cable must be replaced if deterioration is noted. This repair often necessitates the replacement of the main electric panel.

HEATING FACILITIES: Every dwelling unit must be provided with heating facilities which are capable of safely and adequately heating all habitable rooms. Furnaces and flues must be securely installed and have proper clearance from combustible materials. All gas line connections must be made with approved piping and have a union and a shut-off valve. Fireplaces must be in sound condition without cracked or loose mortar or brick and dangerous creosote build up.

ALL STRUCTURES WITH POST OFFICE ADDRESSES must list the street number, in arabic numerals, on the building in a place and of a size to be clearly visible from the street adjacent to the property.

PLUMBING fixtures must be properly connected and vented, and free of sanitation hazards. Piping must be sound and free of leaks. All piping connections and joints between dissimilar metals must have dielectric unions. All water heaters must have a safety valve with the proper rating for the water heater, it must be in working condition and have a properly sized drip tube running to within 6 inches of the floor. All gas water heater flues must have clearance from combustibles the same as those required for heating facilities.

BATHROOMS must be free of leaking fixtures or pipes which, over a period of time, can cause rotting of wooden floors, structural framing, or drywall/ plaster finishes. Toilets, sinks, tubs and showers must be free of chips and cracks, and properly trapped and vented to avoid siphonage and the escape of sewer gasses. Adequate lighting and ventilation must be provided. If there is no openable window, an exhaust fan, vented to the exterior, is required.

KITCHENS frequently have health hazards which are not readily noticeable, such as cracked or chipped sinks, untrapped or unvented plumbing, holes in walls, etc. A common safety hazard is grease accumulation in exhaust fan housings, which is an easy place for a fire to start. Each gas appliance must have a shut-off valve on the branch line to the appliance.

BASEMENTS must be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition, free of fire and electrical hazards. Basement bedrooms are not permitted unless there is provided a separate means of personal egress from the bedroom, in addition to accessing the main stairway. Basement bathrooms must have an exhaust fan, vented to the exterior, or an openable window.

ALL DEADBOLT LOCKS must be operated by a thumbturn from the interior side of the residence. Deadbolts requiring the use of a key, from the interior, are not acceptable.

STAIRS AND PORCHES/DECKS must be structurally sound. Every flight of stairs, interior or exterior, having 3 or more risers, and every porch/ deck more than 30 inches above the ground, must have hand rails and guard rails. Guardrails cannot form a ladder effect and maximum opening shall be less than 4 inches. Contact a Ballwin Building Inspector for configuration requirements for these facilities.

ROOF, GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS frequently cause problems which may go unnoticed until serious deterioration has occurred. Metal flashings, gutters, and downspouts, if defective or clogged, can cause unseen damage to gutter boards, soffits and walls. A common roofing problem results from re-roofing over existing material; too many overlays can cause the roof to sag from excessive weight and prevents proper verification that the existing sheathing is not water damaged or is still capable of providing adequate nailing base.

MASONRY generally will not show obvious signs of deterioration to the untrained eye. Mortar must be maintained in a sound condition to prevent moisture penetration which can result in structural deterioration and safety hazards. Bricks and mortar must be free of cracks, scaling and similar deterioration.

DOORS, WINDOWS & EXTERIOR WOODWORK must be kept in good condition. Window balances must function as originally designed. Windows must open as designed and stay open without sticks or other support. Woodwork generally deteriorates rapidly when exposed to moisture and sunlight. All exposed surfaces must be protected by paint, stain, or other suitable protective coating. All screens and window glass must be in good condition. Building defects, which permit the entrance of rodents or other vermin, must be corrected.

CLOTHES DRYERS must be vented to the exterior, according to manufacturers' installation instructions.

GARAGES and other accessory structures (including porches, carports, walls, fences, driveways, sheds, retaining walls, pools, planters, etc.) frequently receive less maintenance attention than dwellings. All accessory structures must be functional and in good repair or they must be removed to avoid creating fire and safety hazards or vermin harborage. All garage door openers must be wired in accordance with the National Electric Code, and without the use of extension cords. All drywall between a garage and an inhabited structure must meet the 1 hour fire rating and not be compromised by holes, cracks, or openings. The door between the garage and the house must be 1¾ inch solid core wood or approved equivalent. No storage of hazardous materials, except in small quantities in rated containers, is allowed.

NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS ALLOWED in a bedroom is determined on the basis of bedroom area. A maximum of one occupant is allowed in a bedroom of 70 to 100 square feet, a maximum of two occupants are allowed in a bedroom of 100 to 150 square feet. Every bedroom must have access to a bathroom toilet without walking through another bedroom. Living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens cannot be used as bedrooms. Such limitations are necessary to prevent the overtaxing of sanitation facilities. Bedrooms in basements are not allowed unless there is an alternate exit besides the stairs. This should consist of either a door directly to the exterior or a window with a sill height of not more than 44 inches above floor with a net clear opening dimension of 5 square feet on grade and 5.7 square feet above grade. Minimum opening height shall be 24 inches; minimum opening width shall be 20 inches. (Special considerations if window opens into window well arrangement).

SMOKE DETECTORS are required on all levels, in all dwelling units. Such units should be of the ionization or photo electric type, and they must be functioning and testable.