

## Property Standards

Property Standards ensures that Property Standards by-laws are enforced. It is a minimum standards by-law, not a beautification by-law. They received a total of 10,313 complaints last year (2005): 2,600 property standards, 2,057 noise complaints, 2,800 yard maintenance, and 500 zoning. There are 20 inspectors in total one of whom is dedicated to taxi licensing and the other 19 to inspections.

They deal with:

- Noise complaints (Hamilton Police Services are involved if there are minors present),
- Business licensing
- Residential care facilities
- Taxi licensing
- Yard maintenance (garbage, cars, etc.)
- Heat by-law – between September 30 and May 31, the temperature should be 68 degrees or higher per habitable room.
- Vital Services By-Law: Property Standards is working with the utility companies to ensure that tenants who rent units where utilities are included in the rent and the landlord does not pay the utilities have continued service. When necessary, the city will step in and pay the arrears and charge the landlord's property tax bill.

Property Standards works on a complaints basis. The process to have inspections made is to fill our work orders and ask landlords/superintendents to make repairs prior to calling Property Standards. A tenant that calls Property Standards should be ready to give their full address and consent for an inspector to enter their rental unit. They inspectors can only enter if given consent by the tenant or the landlord. Heat and utilities are dealt with immediately. Other issues should be dealt with within 48 hours of Property Standards receiving the call. A landlord found in violation will be issued a 14-day order to comply. The landlord has the right to appeal the order that could extend the time period while waiting for an appeal date (usually, around 30 days.) If a landlord does not comply, Property Standards would send in a contractor to do the repairs and add it to the property tax bill. If landlords are not complying, tenants should keep their inspector informed.

As a matter of **policy** (written policy or just how they operate?) Property Standards does not inspect city properties, including City Housing Hamilton's properties. A complaint from a tenant in a City Housing Hamilton's properties will be directed to Deborah Felice who will ensure that repairs are being made. If the repairs are not made in a timely manner, Mike will receive a follow up phone call from Property Standards to enquire into the progress of the repairs. If Property Standards needed to issue an order they would.

Inspectors are not advocates for tenants or landlords. They have to be subpoenaed to go to the Tribunal. It costs \$5.00 to get documents from them and people need to sign a Freedom of Information release. Alternatively, if the inspector posts something on the walls tenants can photocopy or take pictures of it.

Property Standards will order people evicted if they are living in a place that doesn't meet codes and/or by-laws. **ASK JUDY WHAT THE TIMELINE IS FOR THEM TO MOVE OUT.** The Health Department would be called in for certain unsafe conditions including sewage in a rental unit. Property Standards could order a landlord to pay for accommodation until problems are fixed.

Tenants can call the Property Standards number and will be passed on to the proper department (building, Fire, health). The Health Department deals with pest infestations (e.g. mice, roaches) and inspectors are getting mould training. The Building Department deals with building permits and condemning buildings. Animal Control deals with barking dogs.

Property Standards will let the Children's Aid Society know about any child suspected abuse/neglect issues.

Property Standards main number: 905-546-2782