

# Helpful Tips For Preparing Your House For Sale

Preparing your home for the Real Estate market can be a challenge in this economy. Here are some helpful tips to prepare your home for the required Village of Berkeley Pre-Sale Ordinance.

**This handout should be shared with both Seller and Buyer.**

(\* = Denotes work will require a building permit and/or a licensed contractor)

- The Electric Service should be a minimum of 100 Amp with a minimum of 20 circuit breakers. \* (New construction of an upgraded electric service and/or upgrade of an electric service panel will require a building permit)
- All receptacles shall be three prong grounded type. \* (New construction of an upgraded electric service and/or upgrade of an electric service panel will require a building permit)
- Receptacles in wet locations shall be GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupter) protected. (Examples: outlets near water sources such as kitchen/bathroom/laundry sinks/wet bar) Outdoor outlets and outlets in garages/sheds are also required to be GFCI protected. (Dedicated outlets for stoves, ranges, refrigerators, sump and ejector pumps, and garage openers are exempt from this requirement if they are not accessible.) \* (New construction of an upgraded electric service and/or upgrade of an electric service panel will require a building permit)
- All floor surfaces shall not pose a trip hazard. Examples: Loose or missing floor tiles and torn carpet. Loose stairs and large cracks in driveways.
- All sidewalks, walkways, stairs, driveways, parking spaces and similar areas shall be kept in a proper state of repair, and maintained free from hazardous conditions. \* (New construction of driveways, parking spaces, patios, sidewalks, walkways and stairs will require a building permit)
- All accessory structures, including detached garages, fences and walls, shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair. \* (New construction of detached garages, fences and walls will require a building permit)

- All exterior surfaces, including but not limited to, doors, door and window frames, cornices, porches, trim, balconies, decks and fences shall be in good condition. \* (New construction of roofs, siding, windows, gutters and downspouts will require a building permit)
- Buildings shall have approved address numbers placed in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street. The numbers shall be Arabic Numerals or alphabet letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches high with a minimum stroke width of a half-inch.
- The roof and flashing shall be sound, tight and not have defects that admit rain. Roof drains; gutters and downspouts shall be maintained in good repair and free from obstructions. Roof water shall not be discharged in a manner that creates a public nuisance. \* (New roofs, gutters and downspouts require a building permit)
- Every exterior stairway, deck, porch and balcony shall be maintained structurally sound, in good repair, with proper anchorage and capable of supporting the imposed loads. \* (New construction of exterior stairways, decks, porches and balconies will require a building permit)
- Every exterior and interior flight of stairs having more than four risers shall have a handrail on one side of the stair and every open portion of a stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface that is more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below shall have guards. Handrails shall not be less than 30 inches high or more than 42 inches high measured vertically above the nosing of the tread or above the finished floor of the landing or walking surfaces. Guards shall not be less than 30 inches high above the floor of the landing, balcony, porch, deck, or ramp or other walking surfaces. \* (New construction of exterior stairways, decks, porches and balconies will require a building permit)
- If there are not handrails or guards existing for the above locations at the time of the Pre-Sale Inspection, “new” handrails and guards will be required to be constructed to the specifications of the 2003 International Residential Code. The “new” handrails shall be at height of not less than 34 inches and not more than 38 inches. The “new” guards shall be at a height of 36 inches if the walking surface is located more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below. Open sides of stairs with a total rise of more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below shall have guards not less than 34 inches. \* (New construction of stairs, handrails and guardrails will require a building permit.)

- Smoke alarms shall be installed in the following locations:
  1. In each sleeping room.
  2. Outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.
  3. On each additional story of the dwelling, including basements but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split-levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.
- Effective January 1, 2007, every Illinois home is required to have at least one carbon monoxide alarm in an operating condition within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes. Homes that do not rely on the burning of fuel for heat, ventilation or hot water; are not connected to a garage; and are not near a source of carbon monoxide (as determined by the local building commissioner) are not required to install carbon monoxide detectors.
- Emergency Escape And Rescue Windows: The Village of Berkeley has made a change to the Pre-Sale Ordinance Policy. The policy change states that in the event a bedroom was constructed without a permit, an emergency escape and rescue window shall be required and installed. This policy change shall include any “new” bedrooms, built without a permit, that were added in basements, accessible attics, and main floors. \* (New construction of emergency escape / egress windows, and window wells will require a building permit.)
- Egress window wells for bedrooms in basements shall have a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches (9 square feet). Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps. Egress windows shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches above the floor. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 sq. ft. The minimum net clear height of the window shall be 24 inches. The minimum net clear opening width shall be 20 inches. Any combination of the minimum height and minimum width shall equal not less than 5.7 sq. ft.\* (New construction of emergency escape / egress windows, and window wells will require a building permit.)

- All plumbing fixtures shall be properly installed and maintained in working order, and shall be kept free from obstructions, leaks, and defects. All plumbing fixtures shall be maintained in a safe, sanitary and functional condition. \* (New construction of plumbing fixtures will require a building permit.)
- Sump and/or ejector pits must have approved covers and shall be fastened properly.
- All mechanical appliances, fireplaces, solid fuel-burning appliances, cooking appliances and water heating appliances shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe working condition, and shall be capable of performing the intended function. \* (New construction of furnaces, air conditioning units and water heaters will require a building permit.)
- Water heaters shall have a relief valve discharge line that extends to 2 inches to 6 inches off the floor.

The goal of this handout is to lessen the stress of selling your home. Completing these alterations will update your existing home and also increase the market value. Please be aware that many of these requirements will require a building permit. If you are unsure if your new project will require a building permit, please contact the Village of Berkeley Building Department to assist you. The Village of Berkeley Building Department suggests that the homeowner hires only licensed and qualified contractors.