



DEPARTMENT OF  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
HEARINGS

## DETROIT ANTI-BLIGHT / CODE ENFORCEMENT FACT SHEET

### WHAT'S NEW

The City of Detroit Department of Administrative Hearings (DAH), created on January 1, 2005, is an innovative approach to enforcing the Detroit City Code as it applies to property maintenance and blight prevention. The department is an independent City agency that handles blight violations.

Along with the advent of the DAH, the City is launching a **more aggressive code enforcement strategy**. Police officers, City inspectors and Neighborhood City Hall managers will be **issuing Blight Violation Notices to those who blatantly disregard City ordinances** that are in place to keep Detroit clean and healthy.

### IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick created the Department of Administrative Hearings because he believes that **blight violations have a major impact on the quality of life in Detroit** and the City must have an effective system to handle violations.

### TYPES OF CASES

Cases that come before the department include **violations of property maintenance, zoning, solid waste, and illegal dumping ordinances**.

**Blight violations are civil cases. Formerly processed as criminal misdemeanors**, they were - until recently - adjudicated at the 36th District Court. Such violations often became part of a large backlog at that court and many cases were not effectively prosecuted. The new method of handling blight violations, under the DAH, is designed to be more efficient.

### STRUCTURE OF THE DAH

**The DAH has three separate hearing divisions:** Property Maintenance, Zoning, and Solid Waste/Illegal Dumping.

**Types of ordinance violations that will be heard in the Property Maintenance division include:** failure to obtain certificates of compliance, failure to obtain a certificate of rental registration, rat infestation, failure to remove snow and ice from sidewalks, inoperable vehicles, failure to maintain exterior of property, and failure to comply with emergency orders.

**Types of ordinance violations that will be heard in the Zoning division include:** violation of special land use grants, change of land use without a permit, change of building use without a permit, and failure to obtain the required certificate of maintenance of grant conditions.

**Types of ordinance violations that will be heard in the Solid Waste/Illegal Dumping division include:** early bulk placement at the curb, early or late placement of residential garbage containers at the curb, improper storage of solid waste, animal/fowl excrement, and illegal dumping.

## THE HEARING PROCESS

Citizens who are issued a **Blight Violation Notice** will be given a chance to present his/her defense(s) at a hearing. **DAH hearings are presided over by administrative hearing officers** who are licensed Michigan attorneys and independent contractors.

City inspectors, police officers, and other City officials present the City of Detroit's case at hearings.

**Citizens have a right to appeal** the hearing officers' decisions to the Wayne County Circuit Court.

## PENALTIES AND FINES

**The City will actively and aggressively pursue violators, and the collection of fines.** Fines are outlined for specific violations in the Detroit City Code and listed on each Blight Violation Notice. Hearing officers cannot impose jail time for any violations. The maximum fine that can be imposed is \$10,000.

**If a citizen ignores a Blight Violation Notice,** a decision and order of default will be issued finding the citizen responsible for the violation alleged in the Blight Violation Notice.

**Failure to pay fines, fees and costs** will result in collection actions being started against the violator, which may include garnishment of wages and/or judgment liens being placed upon property.

## EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN

City officials will conduct a constituent education campaign on property maintenance, proper storage, and solid waste disposal during December 2004 to prepare citizens for the City's anti-blight efforts.

## LOCATION, HOURS, PHONE NUMBER, AND MORE INFORMATION

The Department of Administrative Hearings is located at **561 E. Jefferson** (between Beaubien and St. Antoine) in downtown Detroit. Hours of operation are **8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekdays.**

For more information, call the DAH at **(313) 224-0098** or click on the DAH Web site at **[www.detroitmi.gov/dah](http://www.detroitmi.gov/dah)**.

Interested citizens can get a complete DAH Citizens' Guide at any Neighborhood City Hall, at the DAH offices, and at various other City locations. It can also be downloaded from the Web site.



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