



## **RENTAL DWELLING REGISTRATION** **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Background:**

On March 16, 2009 the Owosso City Council approved an ordinance requiring the registration of residential rental properties. The purpose of the rental dwelling registration program is:

- To track rental trends and know which properties are being rented.
- To maintain accurate and up to date contact information for property owners in case the City needs to contact the owner due to an emergency or a code violation.
- To provide educational material to property owners and tenants on City regulations.
- To ensure that all residential rental units meet the City of Owosso's minimum health and safety standards. (One way that this is accomplished is through our rental dwelling inspection program.)

The City recognizes the significance of residential rental property. Residential rental properties are an integral part of every community. They can help bring new people into the community that may ultimately purchase property and rental property can also be an essential starting point for young families moving into the area. However, the community recognizes the need to keep all properties maintained and to ensure the viability and value of our neighborhoods. This registration program is one tool to help promote the continued maintenance of quality and safe rental properties and to enhance and maintain property values throughout our community.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### ***Who is required to register?***

All rental dwelling units in the City of Owosso are required to be registered with the City. The City ordinance defines a rental dwelling unit as "any single structure, building or other facility promised and/or leased to a residential tenant for use as a home, residence, or sleeping unit." This definition includes, but is not limited to, all rented single family homes, duplexes, multiple family dwellings, apartment units, rooming houses, boardinghouses and apartment complexes.

#### ***Why do I have to register my property?***

The City recognizes a compelling interest in establishing standards for the maintenance of sanitary and safe residential rental structures in the City as an important factor for the general health, safety and welfare of all of its citizens. As stated, this ordinance was designed to promote the continued maintenance of quality and safe rental properties and to enhance and maintain property values. For the long term planning and growth of the community it is fundamental that the City have accurate information regarding the number and types of rental units located throughout the City. It is also essential that the City have accurate contact information for rental property owners or their local representatives if an emergency situation or an unresolved code violation were to arise.

### ***When will I need to register my property?***

Registration of all residential rental units is required every five years.

Existing Rental Units - All existing rental units were required initially to register by October 2, 2009 and then will be required to register every five years thereafter.

Newly Constructed Rental Units - All newly constructed rental units are required to register prior to any use of occupancy and every five years thereafter.

Change of Ownership - A new owner of a rental unit, which is sold, transferred or conveyed, must register the change of ownership within 30 days of the date of closing. Any existing registration will be transferred to the new owner and will be valid until its expiration, after which the new owner will be required to register every five years.

Conversion to Rental Units - All existing nonrental units which are converted to rental dwelling units must register prior to the date which the property is occupied for rental purposes and then will be required to register every five years thereafter.

### ***What information must I supply when registering my property?***

A completed registration form must include:

- The name, address and telephone number of the property owner (no post office box will be accepted).
- The name, address and telephone number of the owner's local representative/property manager, if the property owner has opted to use one.

Please review the Rental Dwelling Registration form for full information requirements.

### ***Will there be inspections prior to or following registration?***

In order to ensure compliance with the City of Owosso housing and property maintenance standards, all existing rental dwelling units will be inspected a minimum of one time in a five year period. Routine rental unit inspections will be scheduled on a rolling basis. Complaint based inspections or inspections due to immediate health or safety concerns or code violations related to the unit will be scheduled immediately. Newly constructed or converted rental units must be inspected prior to initial occupancy.

### ***What is the registration fee, inspection fee and penalty fee?***

The fee for registration is \$25.00 per rental unit. This fee will be assessed every five years. There is currently no fee for rental unit inspections. The penalty fee for failing to register a rental unit is \$200.00 per occurrence for the first offense and \$400.00 per occurrence for every additional offense within a two year period. Failure to respond to a request for a rental unit inspection may result in tickets, fines and/or additional fees.

### ***What happens if I receive a letter from the City but my home is not being rented?***

You might receive a letter requesting you to register even if you are not renting your properties. A property may be listed as a possible rental property by the City because it is classified as non-homestead or because the property was previously classified as a rental. Since these conditions are not perfect indicators of a rental property, some properties may receive a letter even if the property is not being rented.

If you receive a letter but are not renting your property, you will not need to register and there will be no fee. However, you will need to complete the form explaining this and return it to the City so that we can update our records.

*For more information regarding rental registration, please contact the City of Owosso at City Hall, 301 W. Main St, Owosso, MI 48867 or by calling (989) 725-0547.*