

### Letters of Compliance **101**

January 2020

A Letter of Compliance (LOC) must be obtained for any dwelling unit that is used in whole or in part for human habitation per Chapter 13 of the Ames Municipal Code.

LOCs are issued for terms of one, two, three, or four years and cannot be renewed without inspection.

A one year LOC will be issued for all dwellings that had a verified incidence of over occupancy in the previous year and those dwellings due to documented history of neglect and lack of maintenance which require additional inspection to obtain compliance.

Properties that had life safety violations found at the time of inspection and

those in which the alarm or fire sprinkler systems have not been maintained will be granted a two year LOC. This would include having the system inspected and tagged for the current year. Additionally, properties that were subject to more than two verified property complaints within the previous year will be limited to a two year LOC. Failure to correct deficiencies found at the time of inspection in the time period specified also limits the property to a two year LOC.

Properties that are found to have minor code violations that are corrected at the first re-inspection and multiple family dwellings that do not have sprinkler pro-

tection throughout are eligible for the 3 year LOC.

Four year LOC's are available only to single family dwellings with NO code violations at the time of the initial inspection and those properties which are equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler protection system throughout.

A 4 year LOC is also issued to newly constructed multiple family dwellings or single family dwellings for which a building permit and a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued.

**Letters of Compliance will be reduced or extended according to these guidelines.**

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### **101**

### Guest Lodging (Airbnb)

Guest Lodging is the advertising, offering, or otherwise making available use of a home (house/apartment) or a room in a home for overnight lodging for a period of thirty-one (31) consecutive days or less in exchange for money, goods, labor, or service. This does not include ho-

tels or motels. A Guest Lodging license through Planning is required in order to offer Guest Lodging. Even homes currently registered as a rental property will require a Guest Lodging license in order to offer Guest Lodging. A Letter of Compliance is required only for type of

Guest Lodging known as "Vacation Lodging".

To determine which type of Guest Lodging applies to your situation, refer to the 2-page Summary Table located on the Planning Department's website (see link below).

#### Important

- More home fires occur in the winter than any other time of the year. Check in with your tenants and remind them to test their smoke detectors to make sure that they are operating correctly or offer to do it for them.
- If a gas fired furnace and water heater haven't been serviced and inspected for awhile, now might be the time to prevent avoidable carbon monoxide deaths by ordering an inspection by a licensed mechanical contractor.

Link to the Summary Table: <https://www.cityofames.org/home/showdocument?id=53134>

Contact Planning & Housing with questions: 515-239-5400

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## Who is Administrative Services? And, where are they?

Administrative Services is housed with Planning & Housing and Public Works on the second floor of city hall. There are four Principal Clerks that handle various duties for Fire/Inspections, Planning & Housing and Public Works. Natalie Reke-meyer is primarily the “go to” for rental housing, but any of the clerks are able to assist. All of the Principal Clerks manage the phones and the front counter for the three departments. You can find them on the second floor of City Hall just down from the Clerk of Court. Their contact numbers are listed in the staff contact information on the back of this newsletter.



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## Property Sale

A rental inspection is not required when a property is sold and it has a valid Letter of Compliance.

However, registration is not transferable from the current owner to the new owner. It is the responsibility of the current owner to inform the Inspection Division of the sale and to provide the new owner’s contact information (if they have it).

The buyer must register the property in his/her name or company name

**Do I need an inspection when I purchase a property that already has a valid Letter of Compliance?**

and furnish appropriate contact information. It is recommended that this information be provided to Inspections within 30 days following the closing.

These steps are important to ensure that the appropriate party is billed for rental housing fees for the time that they owned the property. Rental fees are billed in May and are due and payable within 30 days per the Ames Rental Housing Code.

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## Inspections Welcomes a New Face

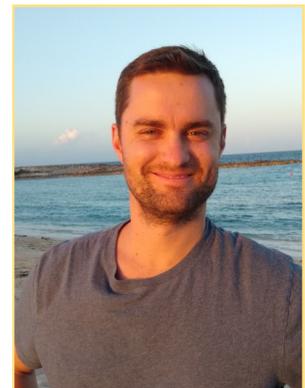
Inspections is finally fully staffed for the first time in awhile. The latest addition to the Division is our new Plans Examiner, Scott McCambridge.

Scott is a native of Boone, IA but has spent the last seven years in the Iowa City area. He has approximately six years of experience in the construction industry and six year of code/law enforcement experience.

Before coming to Ames, Scott was a Police Officer in Eastern Iowa. Scott says that his

experience as a Police Officer has given him a better understanding of working with people to come up with creative solutions that work for everyone. He stresses the importance of clear communication. Scott’s strength lies in residential construction, however, he is gradually taking on more commercial projects.

In his free time, Scott enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife and two boys.



# What happens when a tenant files a complaint with the City?

1. A complaint form is filed by a tenant with the Inspection Division.
2. The complaint is entered into the system and is assigned to a Housing Inspector.
3. The Housing Inspector will review the complaint and determine if there is a code violation/s.
4. The Housing Inspector will contact both parties to obtain information and help to determine the course of action needed to correct the code violation/s.
5. The landlord will be informed of the needed corrections and will be given a reasonable time period to correct the violations.
6. Once the time period is up, the Housing Inspector will verify with the tenant that the corrections have been made and that they have no further concerns.
7. The case will be closed.

## Side notes:

If necessary, an on-site inspection can be conducted but is not required to remedy the complaint.

The Housing Inspectors cannot assist tenants with legal matters or items that are lease related or that are not required by the rental code.

The tenant has to make contact with their landlord in writing asking them to correct the problem before a Housing Inspector will become involved unless there is a life safety concern.

Home, Inc. (see below) may be a resource.

## Home, Inc.

Home, Inc. assists both tenants and landlords in Iowa in understanding their housing rights and responsibilities through counseling and educational services.

Home, Inc. provides free confidential counseling. They can provide information, referral, and crisis oriented counseling regarding rental housing issues such as rental deposits, leases, maintenance and repair, and terminations or evictions.

If you do not have a copy of their hand-

book, you should! It can be printed from their website at [www.homeincdsm.org](http://www.homeincdsm.org). The handbook also includes some very useful forms.

If you would like to contact Home, Inc. by phone to ask questions or discuss a rental problem, call 515-243-1277. Their office hours are from 8:30 to 12 and 1 to 4:30 (Monday–Friday).

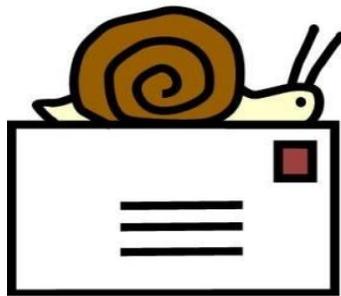
Home, Inc. is a non-profit organization.

## Who ya gonna call?

## Do we have your current e-mail?

If you haven't provided your current email to us, please do so as soon as possible. Almost all of our correspondence for things like scheduling inspections, re-inspections, and issuance of Letters of Compliance is done by email.

Also, please remember that it is the responsibility of the property owner and property manager to keep all contact information current with our office (choose the "update" box on the rental



## No More Snail Mail

registration form).

If a property is no longer being rented, you will need to complete the "Remove from Rental" form or you will continue to incur the rental housing fees. The forms to update contact information and to remove a property from rental are on our website at:

[www.cityofames.org/rental](http://www.cityofames.org/rental).



Inspection Division  
*A Division of the Ames Fire Department*  
515 Clark Ave.  
P. O. Box 811  
Main Line 515-239-5153  
Fax 515-239-5404

**[inspections@cityofames.org](mailto:inspections@cityofames.org)**  
**[www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org)**

## Contact Information

| Name                                      | Phone Number | Email  |
|---|--------------|--|
| Ryan Cable, Plumbing Inspector            | 515-239-5158 | <a href="mailto:rcable@cityofames.org">rcable@cityofames.org</a>             |
| Natalie Herrington, Housing Inspector     | 515-239-5167 | <a href="mailto:nherrington@cityofames.org">nherrington@cityofames.org</a>   |
| Scott McCambridge, Plans Examiner         | 515-239-5253 | <a href="mailto:smccambridge@cityofames.org">smccambridge@cityofames.org</a> |
| Holly McDonald, Housing Inspector         | 515-239-5186 | <a href="mailto:hmcDonald@cityofames.org">hmcDonald@cityofames.org</a>       |
| Adam Ostert, Assistant Building Official  | 515-239-5228 | <a href="mailto:aostert@cityofames.org">aostert@cityofames.org</a>           |
| Nick Patterson, Electrical Inspector      | 515-239-5336 | <a href="mailto:npatterson@cityofames.org">npatterson@cityofames.org</a>     |
| Stephen Pohl, Plumbing Inspector          | 515-239-5157 | <a href="mailto:spohl@cityofames.org">spohl@cityofames.org</a>               |
| John Shaver, Building Inspector           | 515-239-5252 | <a href="mailto:jshaver@cityofames.org">jshaver@cityofames.org</a>           |
| Matt Stern, Community Codes Liaison       | 515-239-5154 | <a href="mailto:mstern@cityofames.org">mstern@cityofames.org</a>             |
| Dan Thomas, Housing Inspector             | 515-239-5254 | <a href="mailto:dthomas@cityofames.org">dthomas@cityofames.org</a>           |
| Sara VanMeeteren, Building Official       | 515-239-5255 | <a href="mailto:svanmeeteren@cityofames.org">svanmeeteren@cityofames.org</a> |
| Travis Versteegt, Building Inspector      | 515-239-5159 | <a href="mailto:tversteegt@cityofames.org">tversteegt@cityofames.org</a>     |
| Jason Ziph, Fire Inspector                | 515-239-5156 | <a href="mailto:jziph@cityofames.org">jziph@cityofames.org</a>               |
| Lorrie Banks, Principal Clerk             | 515-239-3198 | <a href="mailto:lbanks@cityofames.org">lbanks@cityofames.org</a>             |
| Eileen Carter, Principal Clerk            | 515-239-5805 | <a href="mailto:ecarter@cityofames.org">ecarter@cityofames.org</a>           |
| Laura Colebrooke, Principal Clerk         | 515-239-5806 | <a href="mailto:lcolebrooke@cityofames.org">lcolebrooke@cityofames.org</a>   |
| Ben Lievens, Customer Support Coordinator | 515-239-5273 | <a href="mailto:blievens@cityofames.org">blievens@cityofames.org</a>         |
| Natalie Rekemeyer, Principal Clerk        | 515-239-3199 | <a href="mailto:nrekemeyer@cityofames.org">nrekemeyer@cityofames.org</a>     |

**Have a healthy, happy and successful 2020!**