



# City of Kentwood



## Residential Handbook

(A Handbook Containing General Regulations for Residential Property Owners)



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## Accessory Buildings (Garages, Sheds, etc.)

[\(Kentwood Zoning Ordinance Section 3.15\)](#)

A residential lot is allowed to have up to two (2) accessory buildings, which typically consists of a garage and a shed. A building permit is required for any accessory structure exceeding 120 square feet in area. Contact the Planning Department (616-554-707) with questions about the size, location, setback, and number of accessory buildings. For questions about the building permit application process and building codes, please contact the Inspections Department (616-5540700).

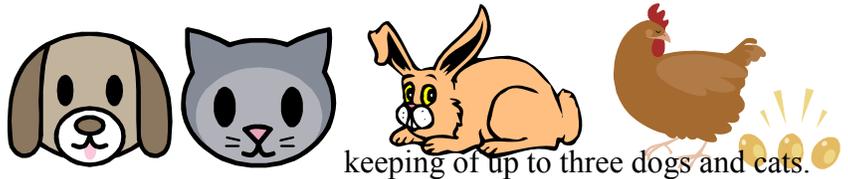


All accessory building must be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.

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## Animal Keeping

[\(Kentwood Zoning Ordinance Section 3.12\)](#)



The Kentwood Zoning Ordinance allows for

keeping of up to three dogs and cats.

The keeping of domestic animals, fowl or insects including but not limited to ducks, chickens, bees, goats or rabbits is allowed with Zoning Administrator review and approval. The request may be denied if the Zoning Administrator finds that the keeping of these animals would create a nuisance related to odor, noise, or any other nuisance

Large farm animals, including cows and pigs, are not permitted. Up to two (2) horses for personal use are allowed within certain areas of the City.

Please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707) if you would like to keep any of the permitted animals or if you have a complaint.



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## Block Parties

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 54 Article 6 Section 54-194\)](#)

Block parties are permitted with the review and approval of the City. An application for a block party and additional information can be obtained by contacting the City Clerk's Office (616-554-1010) or by clicking on the following link:

[Block Party Application](#)



## Conflicts with Neighbors

If you have a disagreement with your neighbor that cannot be worked out the Dispute Resolution Center of West Michigan can be contacted for assistance. The Dispute Resolution Center can help with disagreements over the location of a fence, property damage, tree issues, family disputes, and other issues. The Dispute Resolution Center can be contacted at:



Dispute Resolution Center of West Michigan  
678 Front Avenue, NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
(616-774-0121) or (800-873-7658)  
[\(website\)](#)

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## Commercial Vehicles

(Kentwood Zoning Ordinance Section 17.08.A)



It shall be unlawful for the owner, tenant or lessee of any lot, parcel or tract of land in a residential district or in the residential area of any other district, to permit or allow the open storage or parking, either day or night, thereon of heavy equipment, semi-tractors and/or semi-trailers or other commercial vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds. The owner, tenant or lessee of a farm may openly store the machinery and equipment used on his farm; and it is further provided that equipment necessary to be parked overnight on a lot, parcel or tract of land during construction work thereon is exempt from this restriction. The Zoning Administrator may issue up to a one week temporary special exception permit to park a semi-trailer in the parking lot of an institutional use located in a residential area.

For further information or to register a complaint please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707).

To file a complaint on line click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

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## Child's Playhouse and Play Equipment

Child's playhouses and play equipment are allowed in the rear yard provided the total gross floor area does not exceed one hundred (100) square feet. Playhouses cannot exceed fifteen (15) feet in height and must be placed so that there is a minimum of three (3) feet between the drip edge of the roof and the side and rear property lines.



For further information please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707).

## Exterior Building Maintenance



The City has adopted regulations to ensure that the exterior of structures are maintained in good repair, structurally sound and sanitary so as not to be a threat to the public health, safety or welfare. Some areas covered by these regulations are:

- 1) Exterior walls shall be free from holes, breaks, and loose or rotting materials and maintained weather proof and properly surface coated.
- 2) All exterior surfaces shall be maintained in good condition. Exterior wood surfaces, other than decay resistant woods, shall be protected from the elements and decay by painting or other protective treatment. Peeling, flaking and chipped paint shall be removed and surfaces repainted.
- 3) Every window and exterior door shall be maintained in good condition.
- 4) All foundations, decorative features (cornices, belt course etc.), stairways, decks, porches and balconies shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.



For further information or to file a complaint please contact the Code Enforcement Office (616-656-6574).

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

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## Fences

(Kentwood Zoning Ordinance Section 3.19)

Fences are allowed within residential areas provided they are erected in conformance with City regulations. A permit is required for any fence exceeding 30 inches in height.

For further information please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707) or click on the following link: [Fence Standards for Residential Properties](#)

Click on the following link for an application: [Fence Permit Application](#)

Fences must be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.



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## Flagpoles



Flagpoles are allowed provided they do not exceed the maximum building height permitted by ordinance. If you are considering erecting a flagpole, please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707)

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## Home Based Business

(Kentwood Zoning Ordinance Section 3.18)



The City encourage residents to establish home based businesses within the City and has established a process for their review and approval. Contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707) if you are thinking about establishing a home based business or click on one of the following links for additional information or an application:

[Home Based Business Application](#)

[Home Based Business Description & Services](#)

## Household Garbage, Trash, and Litter

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 46 Article 1 Section 46-1\)](#)

One or more refuse containers with tightly fitted covers shall be used for the disposal of household refuse. The containers shall be kept in a reasonably clean condition and shall be rodent proof. All residential garbage containers must be stored inside a structure or at the rear or side of a building. No refuse container shall be filled beyond its capacity. Containers shall be placed out for proper collection of refuse no earlier than 6:00 p.m. on the day prior to the regularly scheduled collection day and removed as soon as practicable on the same day.



The accumulation of junk, scrap, debris, garbage, rubbish, industrial refuse, litter of any kind, waste materials, construction waste, waste products, excess dirt or soil, or any other dangerous or unsightly materials on a property is prohibited.

For further information or to file a complaint please contact the Code Enforcement Office (616-656-6574).

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

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## Inoperable and Unlicensed Vehicles

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 34 Article 3\)](#)

All vehicles parked outside of a building must be licensed, operable, and capable of lawfully and safely being operated on city streets.



For further information or to file a complaint please contact the Code Enforcement Office (616-656-6574).

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

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## Landscaping

(Kentwood Zoning Ordinance Section 19.03)

Seeding or sodding is the minimum acceptable landscaping of any lot or parcel of land within the City. Gravel, wood chips, stone or other non-vegetative materials cannot be substituted for grass; this does not exclude the allowance for limited decorative use of such materials.

The area between the street paving or curb line and the property line or sidewalk, with the exception of driveways and walkways, shall be used exclusively and maintained as landscaped area with grass, trees and other plants and materials as approved by the City.

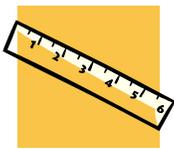


For further information or to register a complaint please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707).

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

## Lawn Mowing (Weeds, Grasses or Undergrowth)

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 34 Article 2 Section 34-31\)](#)



Except in some specific circumstances, lots must be maintained to prevent weeds, grasses or undergrowth higher than six (6) inches. The only exceptions are:



- Portions of undeveloped property behind a wooded tree line.
- Portions of un-subdivided lands more than 25 feet from a public sidewalk, walkway, driveway, street or other public way.
- Portions of undeveloped lots in a subdivision less than 60 percent developed, and lying more than 25 feet from a public sidewalk, walkway, driveway, street or other public way.

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## Leaf Recycling



At designated times during the year leaves may be deposited at a designated site at the Department of Public Works (5068 Breton Avenue). Branches, grass clippings, dead plants etc. cannot be deposited. When depositing leaves, please make sure to remove all containers such as boxes and bags.



For questions about dates and hours of operation please contact the Department of Public Works (616-554-0817)

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## Mailboxes & Other Objects in the Public Right-of-Way

Any vegetation, earthwork or object, including but not limited to, rocks, fences or basketball setups within a street right-of-way are not permitted except for the following:



- Mailboxes if posts are either a 4" x 4" wood post or a three (3) pound per foot (maximum) metal post.
- Public and private utilities, by permit only from the City.
- Trees, by permit only from the City. Planting may be done only in the exact location indicated in the permit.
- Wood or stone driveway curbing, six inches or less in height, but not within five (5) feet of the edge of pavement. It is the responsibility of the property owner to restore wood or stone curbing if it is disturbed during normal maintenance of the street.

For questions or to register a complaint please contact either the Department of Public Works (616-554-0817) or the Engineering Department (616-554-0737).

## Obstruction of Sidewalks & Clear Vision Corners

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 34 Article 2 Section 34-31\)](#) & (Zoning Ordinance Section 3.06)

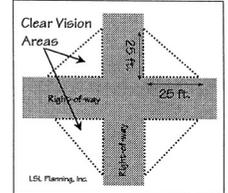
Trees, shrubs, bushes, weeds or other plant growth cannot obstruct a sidewalk, walkway, driveway, street or other public way.



For further information or to file a complaint please contact the Code Enforcement Office (616-656-6574).

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

No plantings or structures shall be established or maintained on any corner lot or along any driveway that will likely result in obstructing the view of a vehicle driver approaching the intersection or entering or exiting the driveway. On corner lots, the clear vision area is a triangular area formed by the street property lines and a line connecting them at points twenty-five (25) feet from the intersection street lines (not the pavement edge).



This does not prohibit the maintaining of shrubbery less than thirty (30) inches in height in this area.

Tree branches shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet above the adjoining street level within the clearance corner.

For further information or to file a complaint please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707)

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

## Open Burning

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 22 Article 4 Section 307\)](#)

Use of an approved enclosed appliance for a recreational fire may be allowable if all the following restrictions are met:



- The appliance shall be a purchased appliance, not homemade.
- The appliance shall be listed or certified by an acceptable listing agency for this purpose.
- There shall be a garden hose or fire extinguisher near the appliance and ready for use.

- The appliance shall not be located on any combustible surface.
- The appliance shall be fully enclosed with screens in place, lid on, etc.
- There shall always be an adult present while the appliance is in use.
- There shall be only fire wood burned in the appliance. No yard waste, trash, paper, leaves or any other combustibles are permitted.
- The appliance shall be a safe distance from any structure, vehicle, fence, etc.
- The fire shall be fully extinguished after use and no fire shall be left unattended.



If the above criteria are not met, a complaint is received about the use of the appliance or the appliance is not being used safely, the fire will need to be extinguished.

For further information or to file a complaint contact the Fire Department (616-554-0804)

## Parking of Vehicles

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 66 Article 3 Division 2\)](#)



In residential districts or on property used for residential purposes, parking in the front yard (or street side yard of a corner lot) is restricted to either an improved driveway or garage.

An improved driveway means a private road, drive or parking area designed for ingress and egress, parking or turning movements, which road, drive or parking area is uniformly surfaced with concrete, asphalt, brick or macadam gravel not less than four inches thick in compacted depth.

Property owners may install an additional parking lane adjacent to the driveway with Zoning Administrator approval.

No person shall park, stop, or leave a vehicle standing in the space between the edge of the paved roadway and the sidewalk (or in the absence of a sidewalk, the edge of the public right-of-way) except in an emergency or when necessary to comply with the direction of a police officer or traffic control device.



To file a complaint please contact the Code Enforcement Office (616-656-6574).

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

For information on adding an additional parking lane please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707).

## Porches, Gazebos, and Similar Structures



Porches, gazebos, decks and similar structures may be erected upon review and approval of the Building Inspections Department. Unenclosed porches, steps, patios, decks or similar construction may not project into a required front yard or rear yard setback for a distance to exceed ten (10) feet. Enclosed porches, patios etc. are required to meet all setback requirements of the main building. Detached structures such as gazebos must be located in the rear yard.



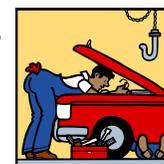
For information on constructing a porch, gazebo or similar structure please contact the Building Inspections Department (616-554-0700)



## Repair of Vehicles

(Zoning Ordinance Section 3.13)

The owner or occupant of a home may perform mechanical work on an owner-operated vehicle but the work must be performed entirely within an enclosed building. Parts or vehicles not in a legally operative condition must be stored indoors.



Mechanical work on trucks or race cars, stock or otherwise, owned by the occupant of a dwelling or on any vehicles not owned by an occupant of the premises is prohibited in residential zones.

For further information or to register a complaint please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707)

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

## Recreational Vehicles, Recreational Equipment and Utility Trailers

### [\(City Ordinance Chapter 86 Article 4\)](#)

No utility trailer, recreational vehicle and/or recreational equipment shall be stored, parked or placed within the front yard setback area in residential zones, except temporarily for loading and unloading or for normal upkeep or cleaning with the following exceptions:



- A recreational vehicle and/or recreational equipment which is officially designated as handicapped in accordance with state law and is used as the regular means of transportation by, or for, a disabled person may be parked within the setback area.
- The Zoning Administrator, upon request by the property owner, may issue a two (2) week temporary special exception permit where the applicant wishes to repair his recreational vehicle and/or recreational equipment on his own premises. Only one such permit may be granted in any six (6) month period.
- During the fall when the City leaf recycling center is open to residents, the City will refrain from the enforcement of the open top utility trailer parking restrictions to allow for the collection and disposal of leaves.



All utility trailers, recreational vehicles or recreational equipment should be stored in the rear yard, if it is not feasible to use the rear yard for such storage, such vehicles and equipment may be stored in side yards provided that the vehicle or equipment is placed as far to the rear of the side yard as is practicable and placed as far from the adjoining lot lines as practicable. In the case of corner lots such vehicles or equipment shall be placed to the rear of both established setback lines.



Storage of unlicensed and/or inoperable recreational vehicles, recreational equipment or utility trailers is prohibited. The owner of the vehicle must also be the legal tenant or owner of the property.



Items such as detachable camper tops shall not be stored in any residential zone, except in a completely enclosed building.



Recreational vehicles and/or equipment shall not be occupied for living purposes, nor shall any such vehicle or equipment have fixed connections to electricity, water, gas or a sanitary sewer. A permit for sleeping accommodations only, not to exceed two weeks, may be obtained from the Zoning Administrator

For further information or to file a complaint please contact the Code Enforcement Office (616-656-6574).

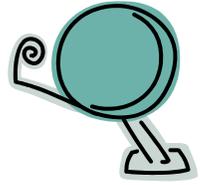
To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

To inquire about a temporary permit for either front yard parking or sleeping accommodations, please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707)

## Satellite Dish Antennas

[\(Zoning Ordinance Section 3.17\)](#)

In residential districts, satellite dish antennas or other similar devices one (1) meter or less in diameter may be attached to a roof structure provided they are installed according to manufacturer's requirements and building codes.



For more information or for information regarding satellite dish antennas or other similar devices exceeding one (1) meter in diameter please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707)

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## Selling of Vehicles

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 66 Article 3 Division 1 Section 66-63\)](#) & (Zoning Ordinance Section 3.13)

Selling of vehicles is prohibited unless they are owned by the current resident or property owner. Such display is limited to a maximum of one (1) vehicle for a period of not more than thirty (30) consecutive days within a six (6) month period. Placement of such vehicles is restricted to paved drive areas.



For further information or to file a complaint please contact the Code Enforcement Office (616-656-6574) or Planning Department (616-554-0707).

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

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## Signs

Temporary signs of six (6) square feet or less, such as those advertising garage sales, yard sales, and real estate signs, must be kept upon the lot that is for sale or where the activity is taking place. These signs may not be placed upon telephone poles or in the public right-of-way.



For more information or to file a complaint please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707)

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

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## Skateboard Pipes and Ramps

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 54 Article 4\)](#)



Skateboard ramps and pipes are allowed within the City with the approval of the City Commission and the review and approval of the Building Official.

For more information or to register a complaint contact the Inspection Department (616-554-0700)



## Snow Removal

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 34 Article 2 Section 34-31\)](#) & [\(City Ordinance Chapter 54 Article 3\)](#)

Owners or occupants of property on which a sidewalk abuts are responsible for keeping the sidewalk (as well as fire hydrants) clear from snow, ice or other obstruction that results in impairing or impeding travel on the sidewalk. Any accumulation of two or more inches of snow shall be considered sufficient to impair or impede free passage. Such accumulation must be removed to a minimum width of five-feet within twenty-four (24) hours of cessation of snowfall or with seventy-two (72) hours so snow removal efforts by the City where snow is deposited onto the sidewalk. The ball at the end of a cul-de-sac street in a residential district is exempt from the snow clearing requirements.



Snow may not be piled/placed on a sidewalk, traveled portion of the street or any other area that may impede vision of motorists or pedestrians. Snow may not be deposited on another person's property unless permission has been received from the owner of that property.



For further information or to file a complaint please contact the Code Enforcement Office (616-656-6574).

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

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## Sound Amplifiers & Other Loud Noises

[\(City Ordinance Chapter 38 Article 5 Division 2\)](#)



No person shall permit or allow any loud noise (electrical, mechanical, human or animal in origin) to be emitted from any place occupied or controlled by him so as to unnecessarily disturb, without reasonable cause, the quiet, comfort or repose of any person.

No person shall create any loud noise so as to unnecessarily disturb, without reasonable cause, the quiet, comfort or repose of any person between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., except as allowed by permit issued by the City.



The use of any loudspeaker, sound amplifier or other electrical or mechanical device intended to increase the volume of sound, without having obtained a permit from the Chief of Police, upon consultation with the Community Development Director, is unlawful.

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## Swimming Pool & Hot Tubs

Zoning Ordinance Section 3.11)



Swimming pools, hot tubs, and similar structures may be installed on a residential lot provided that they meet all applicable building and zoning codes.

A building permit for a swimming pool or hot tub is required, with the exception of prefabricated above ground or in ground pools that are less than 50 square feet and less than 24 inches deep.



For additional information please contact the Inspections Department (616-554-0700)

## Yard Sales/Garage Sales

The Zoning Ordinance permits a garage/basement/yard sale to operate no more than four (4) days during one (1) three (3) month period. A garage/basement/yard sale operating in excess of the four (4) days is considered a commercial use and not permitted in a residential district.



For more information or to file a complaint please contact the Planning Department (616-554-0707)

To file a complaint online click on the following link: [Online Complaint Form](#)

