



City of Mount Pleasant, Michigan
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



October 13, 2010

SUBJECT: Public Health and Safety

Dear City of Mt. Pleasant Rental Property Owner:

While performing housing licensing inspections, Mt. Pleasant Department of Public Safety representatives have witnessed an increasing trend of indoor marijuana growing operations. This may be attributed to the enactment of the *Michigan Medical Marijuana Act of 2008*. Indoor marijuana growing operations can result in fire and housing code violations, alteration and/or damage to structural elements especially in residential structures, potential legal issues for property owners, as well as prospective long-term damage to structures from moisture resulting in mold and mildew damage.

HAZARDS

Improperly managed interior marijuana growing operations present certain hazards and possible structural damage to buildings. The following are various items you may wish to monitor:

Fire

Marijuana growing operations inside of a building may induce fire hazards, such as:

- Exposed live wires
- Excessive wiring
- Uncovered breaker boxes
- Numerous extension cords
- Wires exposed to water
- High intensity lighting
- Exhaust fans that can accelerate the spread of fire

Atmospheric

Carbon dioxide is often artificially introduced to the indoor growing area to assist with plant growth. One of the greatest hazards can be an oxygen deficient atmosphere. Any atmosphere that has an oxygen concentration below 19.5 percent or above 23.5 percent is dangerous. Ozone generators are commonly used to reduce or eliminate the odor of an indoor grow, ozone is a known chemical carcinogen.

Electrical

Light ballasts used to run high-intensity grow lights can maintain a charge for up to 15 minutes after being unplugged. Functioning grow houses can utilize up to ten times the power of a standard residence. The growers may attempt to bypass the normal distribution of power and steal additional power for their operations. These illegal power taps are not generally accomplished by licensed electricians and pose significant hazards. Illegal hydroponic growing may combine two incompatibles: water and electricity.

Environmental

Due to high humidity, mold is a standard byproduct that grows in the same area as the product. The growth of fungus and mold has the potential to damage insulation, walls and ceilings. Mold presents a very unique health threat in that without respiratory protection, exposure can cause allergic reactions, sinus and respiratory distress—even death in the most extreme cases.

Structural

Homes used for indoor marijuana growing operations may be altered. These alterations are implemented to produce the maximum growing environment for the plants.

Hazardous Materials

Sites may utilize flammable and volatile solvents. These can include acetones, camp fuel and isopropyl alcohol. Also, fungicides and pesticides may be used. These hazardous materials are generally stored and disposed of improperly including being poured down drains and sewers.

INDICATORS OF GROW OPERATIONS

Condensation

Humidity levels may be up to 100 percent, which would cause large amounts of precipitation on windows.

Lights

High intensity lamps are often used in the indoor growing operation. High intensity light can be seen around doors or windows, which may be covered. Houses may appear much brighter than surrounding houses.

Covered windows

Windows may be covered in black plastic, heavy curtains or drapes that will be closed tight and pressed against the windows. These coverings reduce the ability of light to escape and to prevent natural light from disrupting the artificial light cycles.

Open windows

Windows slightly or fully open during winter months (attempting to reduce the temperature in the house) could be a sign there is excessive heat in the home due to high intensity lighting.

Excess air conditioning units

Multiple air conditioning units in a dwelling is another indicator that occupants are attempting to cool the interior as a result of excessive heat from the high intensity lighting.

We hope that you find this information useful when preparing your lease contracts. Feel free to contact our agency should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Anthony B. Gomez-Mesquita

Anthony B. Gomez-Mesquita
Director of Public Safety

Gregory L. Walterhouse

Gregory L. Walterhouse
Fire Chief