



Milwaukee landlord faces State charges for allegedly renting condemned property

Embargoed until 9/20/06 1:00 PM

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Using a tool that carries significantly higher penalties, the District Attorney's office issued criminal charges today against a Greendale man for allegedly renting out an apartment that was condemned by Milwaukee Building Inspectors. If convicted, the landlord could face up to a year in jail in addition to a \$5000 fine.

According to the complaint, the landlord, Mazin J. Hamdan, 6055 Teakwood Dr., Greendale, advertised to rent a property at 2946A N. Cramer St. Three prospective tenants entered into the lease without knowing that the City had previously condemned and placarded the apartment. Failure to disclose such facts is a violation of Wisconsin's Consumer Protection law and thus the action is subject to higher penalties as allowed under state law instead of a municipal fine.

The charges are the result of an investigation by Milwaukee Police and Department of Neighborhood Services' building inspectors. The complaint states that the tenants paid a \$1350 security deposit for a lease, which was supposed to begin June 1st 2006. The tenants were shown a number of properties and met the defendant to sign the lease for N. Cramer St at UW-Milwaukee in February. In the complaint the tenants said at no time before or after signing the lease did Hamdan disclose that the unit was placarded and uninhabitable.

Mr. Hamdan is scheduled to make an initial appearance at 9/20/06 1:00 PM in RM 221 of the Safety Building.

The Department of Neighborhood Services has a special "back-to-school" warning for students. Prospective renters are urged to check the City's web site to see if their landlord and their prospective property have any building code problems. The City warns that attics, basements and rooms with one exit are most likely illegal occupancies. No matter how many bedrooms, only three unrelated people can live in a residence without a rooming house license. Unscrupulous landlords will often rent to four or more people and when the situation is discovered, evict the students regardless of any lease, which often is never in writing. The City's web site to check out property information is:

www.city.milwaukee.gov.