

# CODE CONNECTION

NEWS & TIPS FROM THE MULTIPLE HOUSING PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 2015



Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

## Save lives: Properly maintain your decks and balconies

It happened in the City of Berkeley earlier this year: A balcony collapsed due to rotting wood, leading to the tragic deaths and injuries of several international students. This sad story points to the vital importance of proper balcony and deck construction and maintenance. Here's a checklist to help you regularly monitor the need for repairs:



*Seeping moisture is the enemy of both wood and steel in effectively maintaining balconies and decks.*

1. Look for cracks in surfaces where water might seep into the framing.
2. Look for signs of termite damage.
3. Look for any tilting or leaning; this is an indicator of a serious problem.
4. Look for deterioration, particularly at joints. Timber usually rots first where two pieces join together. Probe the area with a screwdriver: decaying timber will feel soft under the pressure.
5. Look for compression of posts, beams or joists.
6. Check the base of posts and brackets and bolts for rot or rust.
7. Ensure posts are securely anchored to the foundation in concrete or attached to concrete footings using proprietary metal brackets. It is not enough to just bolt them to the paving.
8. Make sure that water cannot pool at the base of a post or wall support.
9. Handrails and balustrades should not be loose, corroded, or rotted.
10. Flaking or missing chunks of concrete or wood could point to a serious problem.

In addition to monitoring balconies and decks, consider establishing rules with your tenants regarding the placement and movement of heavy items on balconies and decks. Placing or moving large plant-filled pots and heavy tables can affect stability and water-proofing.

If you suspect a problem with your balcony or deck, immediately prohibit access to the space, and contact a structural engineer or architect. Don't delay – lives could hang in the balance. \*

*More tips on page 2 >*

### NEW!

Receive our code compliance news and tips for multi-unit properties by subscribing to *Code Connection*.

**To subscribe: Send an email to [CodeConnection@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:CodeConnection@sanjoseca.gov)**

Just provide your email address and you'll receive our bi-monthly newsletter starting in 2016.

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS

408-535-3850	Abandoned Vehicles
800-414-2002	Adult Protective Services
408-578-7297	Animal Care & Services
408-535-7055	Business Tax
408-535-3555	Building Permits
408-342-3500	Apartment Assn Tri-County
408-299-2071	Child Abuse Hotline
408-535-7770	Code Enforcement Phone
408-292-6924	Code Enforcement Fax
800-321-2752	Contractor's License Board
408-947-7867	Crime Stoppers
408-535-7750	Fire Prevention
408-793-6901	Free Tow Program
408-535-3500	Garbage And Recycling
866-249-0543	Graffiti Complaints
408-975-4440	Housing Rehabilitation
408-299-7300	Household Hazardous Waste
408-998-5200	Legal Aid of SC County
800-743-5000	Pacific Gas & Electric Co.
408-535-3555	Planning Permits
800-222-1222	Poison Control
408-918-4770	SC County Vector Control
408-792-2327	SC County Mediation Services
408-794-1901	Streets & Sidewalks
408-794-1900	Sewers
408-794-1903	Street Light Repair
408-277-4452	Towing Permits
408-794-1901	Tree Trimming & Removal

## You got the permit, the work is done ... now get a timely final inspection

*Don't let your Multiple Housing tier status change due to delayed inspection*

Two of the most common permit needs at multi-unit properties are replacement of furnaces and water heaters. And the best way to obtain the permit for these replacements is at [sjpermits.org](http://sjpermits.org). The benefits to this online system include:

- saves time
- no plans required for online permits
- lowest permit fee (\$40 less than other permit methods)
- includes cost of one inspection
- allows scheduling the inspection online
- creates a permanent online record of your permits



If your permit project is required because of a code inspection, be sure to get the final permit inspection done in the timeframe required by your Code Inspector. Failure to make corrections in a timely manner can affect your status in the Multiple Housing Tier System. Furthermore, your property insurance won't apply to improvements that have not completed the stage of final inspection. For these many reasons, be sure to get your final inspection done in a timely manner. \*

## PACE can help you finance energy and water efficiency improvements

*Four PACE providers are authorized to provide financing services to property owners in San José. See which one offers you the best options.*

By attaching financing to your property tax bill, Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs allow property owners to finance a wide variety of energy- and water-efficiency upgrades, including solar installations, attic insulation, energy efficient windows, water-on-demand water heaters, grey water systems, drought tolerant landscaping, and hundreds more types of improvements.

With PACE, property owners can defer upfront costs while lowering energy bills, typically providing a net financial gain. The upgrade investment amortizes on your property tax bill; if you sell the property, the remaining debt transfers to the new owner. The debt can also be paid off at the time of sale. This means even short-term property owners can realize the benefit of an upgrade and possibly make their property more attractive for a sale.

The whole community and local economy benefit, too: these upgrades improve local air quality, extend our water supply, and spur the economy and local job activity. Check out these four PACE providers for more information:

- **HERO:** visit [www.heroprogram.com/sanjose](http://www.heroprogram.com/sanjose).
- **Renewable Funding:** visit [www.CaliforniaFIRST.org](http://www.CaliforniaFIRST.org)
- **Ygrene:** visit [www.ygrenetworks.com](http://www.ygrenetworks.com)
- **Figtree Financing:** visit [www.figtreefinancing.com](http://www.figtreefinancing.com)

Also note: Any exterior changes to a multi-family building require prior approval from the Planning Division. \*



## IT'S EASY

Save time, save \$40  
get your permit online  
[www.sjpermits.org](http://www.sjpermits.org)

**Online permits for multi-family properties include:**

**BUILDING-STRUCTURAL projects**  
Re-Roof

**ELECTRICAL projects**  
Appliance – New/Replacement  
Interior Lights – New/Replacement  
Receptacles/Switches – New/Replacement  
Service Change up to 600 amps

**MECHANICAL projects**  
Appliance – New/Replacement  
Decorative Fireplace Appliance  
Exhaust Fan  
Furnace Replacement  
Gas Line Extension  
Gas Retest

**PLUMBING projects**  
Backflow/Vacuum Breaker  
Fixture – New/Replacement  
Gas Line Extension  
Gas Retest  
Gas Valve (Earthquake)  
Property Line Cleanout  
Sewer Replacement  
Soft Water Treatment Equipment  
Water Heater Replacement  
Water Service Change

**How to use**  
[www.sjpermits.org](http://www.sjpermits.org)

**1. First register at [sjpermits.org](http://sjpermits.org).**

Be prepared to provide:

- property address
  - email address
  - credit card for payment
- Contractors must provide:
- state license number
  - City of San José business license number

**2. Once you log in,** the system will guide you as you select the desired permit.

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