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Boston cracks down on landlords, issues nearly 3,000 fines

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT | SEPTEMBER 08, 2012

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Boston city inspectors issued about 2,800 fines for sanitary code violations, more than 100 abatement orders, and 20 fines for housing code infractions during college students' busy move-in period.

In addition, the city scheduled condemnation hearings for three properties as officials cracked down on landlords during Labor Day weekend.

Despite the high numbers, city officials said the figures appear to be lower than in prior years.

"There are always things we can improve, but folks in the community and even the landlords said they feel like this year's move-in went better than in past years," said Bryan Glascock, acting commissioner for the city's Inspectional Services Department.

He said a large number of landlords this year brought dumpsters to their property and hired private services to help clean up refuse that otherwise might be abandoned in hallways, on stoops, or curbside.

Universities also did more this year to clean up messes left by those moving during the hectic Sept. 1 rental turnover period, officials said.

“Years ago, we’d have tons and tons of trash up and down the streets,” department spokeswoman Lisa Timberlake said.

“It seems our outreach efforts are working.”

Still, officials wrote tens of thousands of dollars in code violation tickets between Friday, Aug. 31, and Monday, Sept. 3.

About two-thirds of the trash and sanitary code citations and about half of the housing citations were issued in the student-heavy neighborhoods of Allston and Brighton, according to figures provided by the municipal inspection department.

Inspectors visited hundreds of rental properties, sometimes acting on complaints.

In addition to dispensing fines, inspectors handed out about 2,500 brochures detailing housing, health and safety, rodent control, city services, traffic, and parking rules, Timberlake said.

She said the city would soon mail out to about 350 landlords notices detailing the city’s rental property ordinance, which includes a mandate that property owners arrange to have a unit inspected within 45 days after a turnover in occupancy.

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