



# County of Hamilton

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## BUILDING PERMITS

Dusty Rhodes, Hamilton County Auditor

One Hamilton County property owner will be receiving a big surprise this summer.

In listing his home for sale, he described it as having been “totally renovated in 2012 including electric and plumbing”. The work was apparently done without building permits. This evaded both the required inspections in his community and prevented our office from receiving notification of the work to include in our valuation assessments.

The surprise will be a bill for back property taxes based on the renovations which should have been factored into his value. By state law we are able to go back five years to recapture evaded or omitted property taxes.

The incentive to avoid required building permits is the cost of the inspection, the possible cost of making certain the work meets specifications and the possibility of hiding the work from our office for our reappraisal work.

Besides breaking the law, it can be costly and dangerous.

It is very risky to do renovating without proper permits and inspections. Besides the obvious fire possibilities with electrical work and the water damage that could come from improperly installed plumbing, the structural integrity of a building can be at risk from uninspected and unapproved renovations.

Building Departments forward copies of their building permits to our office. These are helpful to us in setting values during the state-mandated reappraisals. When owners do substantial renovation work, avoid required permits and inspection and try to hide

their improvements from our office, sooner or later, they will be discovered. The bill for “omitted taxes” could be substantial.

For their own protection, prospective homebuyers should make certain any renovations by the seller were property permitted and inspected. Always ask to see detailed descriptions of the work and the permits and inspections.

Property owners risk their families safety and their property’s structural integrity as well as their pocketbooks when they ignore building permit requirements.

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