

Code Enforcement Section, Development Services Department

Message from our Assistant Director

With the warmer weather of spring finally here (and hopefully some much needed rain too), we begin to see a spike of high grasses and weeds violations. Remember, high grass and weeds over twelve (12) inches in height can create many health and safety hazards. It's also against the city's property maintenance code.

This past year, we've made some significant improvements along the way to better serve our community. One that's had a noteworthy impact is the creation of the Administrative Hearing Officer (AHO) program. This program allows us to significantly decrease the time it takes certain property maintenance violation cases to be heard by a judge and enables us to gain faster compliance. It's been innovative, fast and effective.

As May is National (Historic) Preservation Month, I'm pleased to report we've also been partnering with the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) to find improved methods to ensure compliance for historic buildings and, at the same time, maintaining their historic significance. Code Enforcement and OHP continue to develop

procedures so that structures designated historic by City Council action are safe, maintained and able to comply with the preservation requirements of the city's code. This balance is key to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of our citizens as well as the historic fabric of our City.

OHP continues to take a leading role in working with historic property owners to correct code violations or find buyers that will bring them up to code.

For any compliance issues, call the City's 311 Call Center or download the free "311" app onto your iPhone or Android. You can also send your comments, ideas and suggestions to our new email at:

CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov

Best regards,

Mike



Michael Shannon, PE, CBO
Assistant Director-Field Services
Code Enforcement & Building

Clarifying the Code

Code Interpretations (CI) clarify current city code in areas that, perhaps, the code itself is not specific enough. The most recent CI, "Gravel Requirements for Front & Side Yard Parking" (CI2014-003), answers the question as to whether gravel

parking is allowed in residences and how deep the gravel must be. Specifically, City Code allows homeowners to use gravel for front and side parking. This CI also clarifies the minimum depth requirement of three (3) inches.

Contact Us

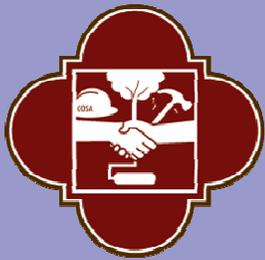
Cliff Morton Development & Business Services Center
1901 S. Alamo
San Antonio, Texas 78204

Hours: Monday – Friday
7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

To report Code Compliance issues call 311 or download City's "311" Phone App

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Code Connection

"Partnering with our Community to build and maintain a safer San Antonio"

Maintain Your Yard — by John Kelly

Allowing the vegetation on a property you own to exceed twelve (12) inches in height can become a health and safety concern and is a violation of City Code.

City Code (Sec. 14-61) states it's a violation whenever a lot or parcel contains weeds and/or brush that's: (1) over twelve (12) inches in height within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the curb line of adjacent streets; and, (2) where no curb exists, to the edge of the street or road surface, or within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a neighboring property line.

The San Antonio Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC) also has a section (Sec. 302.4) addressing high weeds. It says all exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds or plant growth in excess of twelve (12) inches in height. All noxious weeds shall be prohibited. Weeds include all grasses, annual plants and vegetation except trees or shrubs. This does not include cultivated flowers and gardens or native grasses, perennials and annual plants that are part of a landscape design.

If you are in violation, you will be issued a notice

allowing ten (10) days to comply with the City Code. Failure to do so can result in an administrative hearing citation with a fine ranging from \$300 to \$1,000. In the case of a vacant lot that doesn't comply with the notice, the City can mow the lot and bill the owner the cleanup cost plus an administrative fee.

Please note that there are two instances in which the City is not required to notify the owner before having a contractor cut the vegetation because of the increased hazard potential. The first is when the vacant lot is within 1000 feet of a school, or registered day care, and the vegetation is over forty-eight (48) inches in height. The second is if the owner had been notified within the past twelve (12) months and the violation has not been corrected.

John Kelly is the Supervisor for San Antonio's east-side section. He retired from the U.S. Air Force and has been in Code Enforcement for 15 years.

"Not mowing your yard can result in a minimum fine of \$300."

Partnering for Preservation

The month of May is National Preservation Month and Code Enforcement (CE) is partnering with the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) to find better ways to ensure that historic buildings throughout our community meet the City's Code and, at the same time, preserve their historic significance. Just as any other property, those designated historic also need to be maintained.

A "historic building" is one that has been officially recognized by the City of San Antonio, through City Council action, for their outstanding historical, cultural, architectural or archaeological significance.

CE and OHP will continue to work together to develop processes and procedures that will help these historic properties conform to City Code, without compromising the historic significance of

these structures. It is a delicate balance, but one that is key to our continued commitment of safeguarding the health and safety of our city.

Both departments are committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of code enforcement and historic preservation of these properties. OHP will continue to take the lead in getting the compliance, as well as acquiring the resources and/or interested buyers for the property.



The Subway at 1911 Nogalitos was nearly demolished by the owner. After learning about available grants and tax incentives for historic preservation, he decided to rehabilitate the building.

The "411" on the AHO Program — by Michael Uresti, J.D.

Code Enforcement along with the San Antonio Municipal Courts created the Administrative Hearing Officer (AHO) Program in 2013 in order to address certain property maintenance code violation and zoning cases faster. The AHO conducts administrative hearings at Municipal Court and imposes penalties for violations of certain ordinances.

If you have received a 10-day notice for violating the San Antonio Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC) because of outside placement (any item not usually used, stored or made to be outdoors and that is left outside for more than 24 hours), high weeds or accumulation of rubbish and have not corrected the violation within the time allotted, a citation will be issued and your case will be heard by an AHO (SAPMC, Sec. 302.1, 302.4 and 308.1 respectively).

Leaving brush outdoors outside of the City's brush pick up cycle and/or overflowing dumpsters will result in an automatic citation. (City Code, Ch. 14,

Sec. 41 and 47). Violators, if found liable, can face a *maximum* penalty up to \$1000.

AHO civil citations can typically be heard within 2 weeks and in as little as 10 days. The program has been so successful that it has recently been expanded to include zoning and permitting violations. Since cases are heard much faster than the standard 88 to 120 day turnaround for criminal cases, compliance is achieved quicker.

This program gives the community and Code Enforcement another tool to help keep the City of San Antonio clean and get faster compliance.

Michael Uresti, J.D. has been working for Code Enforcement for seven years and has been instrumental in helping to get this program off the ground. He is dedicated to his job and graduated from Saint Mary's Law School in 2012.

Performance Measures — March/April 2014

We want you to know what we are doing! Our main goals are to be more proactive and to gain quicker compliance. These performance measures track our level and effectiveness of our service for Tier I and II issues. *Tier I* includes key health and safety issues, such as high weeds, trash, unsecure structures, visual obstructions. *Tier II* encompasses building maintenance and zoning.

| | MAR./APR. | FY 2014 TO DATE (FY=Oct. 2013 to Sept. 2014) |
|---|-----------|---|
| Inspections initiated by Code Officers (Proactive) | 8,289 | 21,518 |
| Inspections initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive) | 2,095 | 5,124 |
| Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%) | 80% | 81% |
| Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days) | 1.2 | 1.4 |
| Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days) | 1.4 | 1.7 |
| Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%) | 96% | 94% |
| Graffiti locations abated | 2,754 | 6891 |
| Square footage of Graffiti Abated (Goal of 4 million) | 611,937 | 1,380,289 |

"Partnering with our Community to build and maintain a safer San Antonio"

Did You Know...

All fences facing the street or next to a public way are required to be properly maintained. You are in violation of the City's Code if your fence (or a section) is: (1) leaning more than 15 degrees; (2) has rotted, fire damaged or broken wood supports or cross members; (3) has broken or fire damaged wooden slats; (4) has broken or severely bent metal posts or torn, cut or ripped metal fencing; (5) has loose bricks, stones, rocks, mortar, masonry or similar materials. (2011 Property Maintenance Code, Sec. 302.7.1)

To see the City's Property Maintenance Code, log on to:

sanantonio.gov/dsd/codes.asp

For all of San Antonio's Codes, go to: www.municode.com/library/TX/San_Antonio

Top 5 Violations — March/April 2014

| VIOLATIONS RESOLVED | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Trash, debris, overgrown grass | 5,427 |
| Bandit signs | 3,591 |
| Graffiti | 2,754 |
| Inoperable (Junk) vehicles | 1,328 |
| Outside Placement | 717 |

Before and After



Trash and debris is removed off Nolan St.

Graffiti Corner



Has your property, or one in your neighborhood, been vandalized by graffiti? Requesting assistance is easier than ever because the Right of Entry (ROE) form is now available online at: www.sanantonio.gov/ces/crime.aspx

Please fill out this form and submit. This form allows City staff to remove graffiti free of charge, once we've been notified, for up to one year.

You can call us to report graffiti through the City's 311 Call Center. There is also a new "311" app that is free to download onto your iPhone or Android.

If you would like to volunteer to keep our city beautiful, you can go online to: www.sanantonio.gov/commpa/Volunteer.aspx



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We're on the web!

www.sanantonio.gov/ces

What You're Saying

"I want to personally thank Garry Martinez (Neighborhood Enforcement Team-NET), who went above and beyond, worked hard, had a smile on his face and advised us to ensure our projects were carried out professionally and with great customer care." - San Antonio Housing Authority.

"I just wanted to tell you guys what an awesome job you did removing graffiti at the Family Dollar store located at 5938 Old Pearsal Rd. Again thank you for all you do." - Property Care

