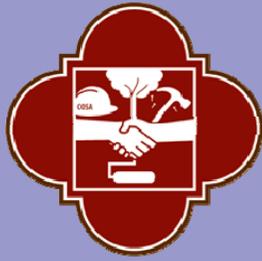


Code Enforcement Section, Development Services Department

Message from our Assistant Director



Code Connection

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

Zoning and illegal dumping are probably one of the most common, yet misunderstood code violations. The City of San Antonio has zoning regulations to help us grow and shape our community in a safe and orderly manner. Here in Code Enforcement (CE), we have a team that solely focuses in ensuring that our City's provisions for the use of property, shape, bulk and locations of buildings are followed in order to preserve property values, maintain our quality of life and make sure that our communities are functional and safe.

Anytime you place brush, furniture, clippings on the curb in front of your home, or on vacant lots, is considered “illegal dumping” unless your neighborhood has been scheduled for a bulky item collection by the City's Solid Waste Department.

One, if not the main, reason for *Code Connection* is to keep the community abreast of what we are doing. In lieu of that, I wanted to take this opportunity to mention a couple of things we have been tackling these past few months: (1) the upgrade of our CE case management system and (2) gearing up for the process to update the Property Maintenance (SAPMC) Code.

In this upcoming fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1, we will begin the process of upgrading our database system, one that has been in place for several years. This upgrade will increase our effectiveness, efficiency and improve our level of cus-

tomers service.

We are also getting ready to update the City's Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC). It is something we do every three years in order to reflect the latest changes in the International building, plumbing and residential codes. As we advance in this process, we will be seeking input from the community. Stay connected for more information.

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
Inspections

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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Why Do We Need Zoning? — by Gerald Roebuck

Zoning regulations are designed to promote orderly development in our City, and to minimize adverse impacts to community development and quality of life created by incompatible land uses. It also protects the health and safety of our residents. The zoning classifications are generally grouped into three broad categories: Residential (both single- and multi-family), Office/Commercial and Industrial zones. Having the proper zoning ensures the appropriate use of your property and helps avoid costly fines. For example, operating a prohibited business in a residential zoning district can lead to an increase in traffic, noise, odors and excessive lighting and signage. These issues can result in an undesirable change in the residential character of a neighborhood and, therefore, are closely regulated by City code.

Why Should I Apply for a Zoning Change?

Not having the proper zoning for your property can also result in costly fines. The Administrative Hearing Officer (AHO) started hearing cases for working without permit and zoning violations at the beginning of 2014. Fines can range from \$20 to \$300 for the first violation, \$250 to \$500 for the second violation and \$500 to \$1,000 for the third violation. Since January of 2014, 141 administrative hearing citations have resulted in the assessment of more than \$25,000 in fines. These violations can also be presented in Municipal Court.

What's the process to obtain a zoning change?

Property owners requesting a change in zoning for their property must complete an *Application for Change of Zoning*, and submit it to the Zoning Section (1901 S. Alamo). Planners in the Zoning Section will then review it to make sure it's complete and all additional required documents are provided.

You're encouraged to speak with a Planner prior to completing and submitting a zoning change application. This can help you determine the zoning required for a proposed use, associated fees, possible timelines and other additional requirements that may arise during the application process.

Why Should I Apply for a Permit?

Permits should be obtained prior to starting a

building project so that the City can make sure it complies with the building safety codes.

Most construction and remodeling work requires a permit (even if you're doing the work) with the exception of minor repairs such as painting, wallpapering, carpeting and tiling. Electrical, heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), and most plumbing work requires that a licensed trade professional do the actual work in addition to obtaining a permit. They are also required for: re-roofing, fences (including repair or replacement of over 25% of existing fences), carports, room additions, demolition, repairs affecting the structural components of a building (walls, foundations and roof system to include replacement of windows and doors), replacement or alteration of public sidewalks, curbs and driveway approaches, storage sheds over one story or over 120 square feet in size and most decks, new installation or major alteration of plumbing, HVAC or electrical systems. All new structures exceeding 120 square feet also require a permit.

The permit costs vary depending on the type of work and scope of the project. Not getting one can result in penalty fees equal to the amount of the permit, plus the normal cost of the permit. This is also in addition to any fine(s) assessed as a result of an Administrative Hearing Citation.

What Zoning and Permit violations does the AHO hear?

Just a few examples of cases that come before the hearing officer are violations involving construction without a required permit, occupying a commercial or industrial building without a certificate of occupancy, unauthorized businesses in residential districts, building setback and design regulations, multi-family use of a property zoned for single-family dwellings and obstructing the view of an intersection.

The above items are a general example and there may be exceptions or additional code requirements involved. If you have any questions contact our office at (210) 207-1111 before starting your project.

Gerald Roebuck is a Code Enforcement Supervisor. He supervises a team of five officers dedicated to the task of enforcing zoning code violations and violations involving working without a permit.

Illegal Dumping — Martin Ruiz

Illegal dumping is a big problem in Texas, and San Antonio is no stranger to it. But did you know that placing brush, tree clippings and bulky items at your curb is considered “illegal dumping”? This is called an “out of cycle” violation because it’s done outside of the City’s scheduled dates for brush or bulky items pickup. Code Enforcement (CE) works closely with Solid Waste to enforce out of cycle violators. The only time it’s acceptable to put material out on your curb is either when you are in a Solid Waste collection cycle and you’ve received a hanger on your property identifying a specific brush or bulky item cycle or, when you call “311” to request an out of cycle collection. It’s an offense for a person owning or managing a property to place any type of refuse on the property including easements, alleys and right-of-ways. (City Code, Ch.14, Sec. 14-47)

On a larger scale, illegal dumping occurs all over

the city from vacant lots to unoccupied buildings, under bridges and isolated roads. Dumping on a property that isn’t yours is a criminal violation and can range from a class C misdemeanor to a state jail felony. Remember, the property owner is ultimately responsible for the upkeep of their property regardless of how it was littered.

“A criminal case can be filed for illegal dumping and can result in fines up to \$2,000.”

For an out of cycle violation, CE issues a citation without a warning, and a referral to a Municipal Court hearing officer where a penalty can range up to \$1000; for egregious offenders, a criminal case may be filed where an enhanced class C misdemeanor can range up to \$2000. If you witness illegal dumping at a suspicious location, report it to the San Antonio Police at 207-7484. To report an out of cycle violation, please call “311”.

Martin Ruiz oversees 91 code officers. He’s been with the city 15 years, has background in Criminal Justice and is a United States Air Force veteran.

Performance Measures — July/August 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.

	JUL./AUG.	FY 2014 TO DATE <i>(FY=Oct. 2013 to Sept. 2014)</i>
Inspections initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	11,098	42,114
Inspections initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	3,359	11,681
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	77%	79%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.6	1.4
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	2.0	1.7
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	94%	95%
Graffiti locations abated	3,372	14,120
Square footage of Graffiti Abated (Goal of 4 million)	722,604	2,752,382

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

Did You Know...

...each residence is allowed only one (1) garage sale every three (3) months between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Food items cannot be sold, unless you have purchased the required permit from the City's Metropolitan Health District. (Unified Development Code, Ch. 16, Sec. 16-298, 395 and 307)

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

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We're on the web!

www.sanantonio.gov/ces

What You're Saying

"As a constituent/resident of District 5, I attended the Graffiti Program Volunteer Training on Saturday, August 9, 2014. The training was very informative/beneficial. In addition, I was provided with supplies in order to abate the graffiti on directional signs. In essence, I would strongly encourage ALL residents to attend this informative workshop because it is definitely not a waste of time—very beneficial/valuable." - Resident

"I would like to take thank Officer Gloria Gutierrez for her concern and efforts on inspecting my apartment/complex. Most of the issues are being addressed and I am confident that eventually all will be accomplished. Without her help, I couldn't have done it alone. She even found other issues of which I was not even aware. I'm appreciative to know that San Antonio has good code officers like her. Thank you so much! PS: (thanks for contacting the Health Department concerning the pool at the complex..I understand that it's been dirty for years..I take pride in my community, where I live and how I live...)Thank YOU!! - Resident

Top 5 Violations — July/August 2014

VIOLATIONS RESOLVED	TOTAL
Property Maintenance	4,858
Graffiti	3,372
Bandit Signs	2,036
Alley Inspections	1,634
Vacant Lots (trash, debris, overgrown grass)	1,575

Before and After



Illegal dumping in front of vacant residence on City's northwest side

Graffiti Corner

Community Volunteers Needed! Whether you want to pick up a paint brush, a phone or log-on to your computer, you can wipeout graffiti in one stroke! A **free**, 1.5 hour volunteer workshop will be held at 110 Callaghan Road (City facility), your choice of date:

- Saturday, October 4, 2014 at 10:00am
- Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 10:00am
- Saturday, November 1, 2014 at 10:00am
- Thursday, November 13, 2014 at 10:00am

A few of the topics to be covered include:

- The "3 E's" of Graffiti.
- Who's responsibility is it [graffiti]?
- Can I get free paint and supplies?
- There's an App for that!
- Easy to use online volunteer management software to track volunteer hours

