

Code Enforcement Section, Development Services Department

Message from our Assistant Director

This month's newsletter highlights two topics that we, as Code Officers, get quite a few questions on: fences and property owner responsibilities.

What is the homeowner responsible to maintain? This is a question often posed to our Code Officers and the article in this issue has helpful information will help to answer that question.

Fences. We use them to demarcate boundaries, for privacy, for safety. The city's code allows only certain materials and prohibits some, such as razor wire. Be sure to maintain your fence and be in compliance.

In our continued efforts to reach out to our community, we are going to begin hosting live chats in our Development Services Department Facebook page. For an hour, Code Officers will be on-hand to answer your questions. Our first chat is scheduled for Friday, Aug. 28, from 1 - 2 p.m. We sincerely hope this provides an

additional line of connection to best serve you.

Code Enforcement is here to serve our community. If you have any compliance issues, there are a few ways you can let us know:

- Call 311
- Download the free "311" app onto your smart phone
- Visit our website, click on "Online Code Enforcement Request" icon on right

Please continue to send your comments, ideas and suggestions to us at:

CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov

Best Regards,

Mike



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

Clarifying the Code

A question often asked refers to signs advertising new subdivisions. According to City Code, these signs must meet the following requirements: (1) can only have a total of 8 signs per subdivision, advertising only name of builder/developer, name of subdivision and directions to the development; (2) maximum 64 sq. ft. in area, and can't be neon or flashing type; (3)

signs have to be minimum 150 ft. from any other signs; (4) can be placed within 5 miles of the subdivision up to 3 years, as long as there is a sales office and less than 95% of new homes have been sold; (5) signs need to have the proper permits; and (6) must be installed by a licensed sign operator (City Code, Ch. 28, Sec. 148).

Contact Us

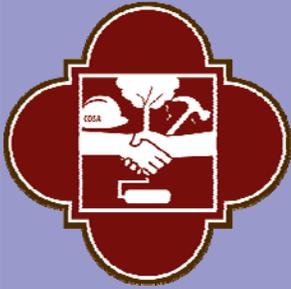
Cliff Morton Development & Business Services Center
1901 S. Alamo
San Antonio, Texas 78204

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"

Fences: What Is Regulated? - Dieudonne Jaosidy

What has changed? The San Antonio Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC) has been updated and the revised version of the code came into effect on May 1, 2015. Section 302.7.1, which regulates fences, has undergone two changes. The first is that all fences facing the street or adjacent to the public way need to be maintained in good repair and be structurally sound. This includes fences required by other federal, state, or local ordinance. Secondly, in addition to broken and fire damaged wooden slats, missing slats also need to be replaced.

Maintenance: What needs to be repaired?

If your fence displays any of the following conditions, make sure it's repaired in a timely manner: (1) leans by more than fifteen degrees; (2) has rotted, fire damaged, or broken wood support posts or cross members;



(3) has broken, fire damaged, or *missing* wood slats; (4) has broken, severely bent metal posts or torn, cut or ripped metal fencing materials; (5) fences with loose bricks, stones, rocks, mortars, masonry or similar materials. You can also remove the defective portion as long as the remaining portions are safe and in good repair.

We often receive calls regarding fences between two adjacent properties, whether located on the side or rear yard. So it's important to mention here that only fences that are facing street frontage of the premise or adjacent to a public way are regulated by the SAPMC. Issues pertaining to fences between two properties is a civil matter and is addressed by the property owners.

Heights: How high is too high?

We understand that the purpose of a fence is to provide a boundary, separation of areas, protection,



concealment, privacy, or to prevent unauthorized access. Nevertheless, its heights and the type of materials used for fencing are regulated in order to preserve the health, safety and welfare of the residents (Unified Development Code, Sec. 35-105 and City Code, Ch. 6). For instance, a clear vision area is to be provided to ensure the safety of motorists or travelers entering an intersection. In general, for both residential and commercial use, the maximum heights are three feet for solid (privacy) fence, four feet for chain link fence located in the front yard, and six feet for any fence used for the side or rear yard.

What type of materials can be used?

Remember, all fences must be constructed of wood, chain link, stone, rock, concrete block, masonry brick, brick, decorative wrought-iron, or other materials with similar durability. Therefore, the use of these types of materials is prohibited by our City Code: cast-off, secondhand, or other items not intended for constructing or maintaining fence; plywood of certain type, particle board, paper, plastic tarp, or similar material; barbed wire (except as allowed by Chapter 6), razor wire, and other similar material capable of inflicting physical injury; sheet, roll or corrugated metal.



If you think a fence isn't in compliance, call 311. We'll respond and investigate on a case-by-case basis to make sure locations presenting safety issues are addressed first. Last but not the least, just keep in mind, before you start building or expanding your fences, make sure that you obtain a building permit. To get your permit, you can stop by Development Services Department located at 1901 S. Alamo St.

To learn more about fences and other codes, you can visit: www.municode.com/library/tx/san_antonio

Dieudonne Jaosidy is the Senior Code Enforcement Officer assigned to West Central Field Unit. He has been with the City for 8 years, serving the residents of San Antonio.

It is You or Us? - Fernando Muñoz

It's a good question. As Code Officers, we are charged with enforcing city code but, in some cases, there's a misunderstanding as to what the homeowner is responsible for and what the city's responsible for maintaining. While the city generally maintains public streets, natural creek ways and drainage channels, the homeowner is responsible for maintaining their property, all the way



from the alley to the front curb line. This partnership helps keep our neighborhoods beautiful. Here are the ones we most often encounter:

Alleyways

One of the most common misconceptions is that the alleyway behind a home's fence belongs to the city. While it is dedicated for public use, it's still a homeowner's responsibility to maintain their half of the alley. Each homeowner must mow the alley to its center and keep it free of debris and other obstructions. Adjacent neighbors are responsible for maintaining the other half of the alley (City Code Ch. 14-61, San Antonio Property Maintenance Code Sec. 302.1).

Sidewalks and Curbs

How about the sidewalk and curb area right in front of your home? This area is considered city right-of-way, used for public passage and for the installation of curbs, sidewalks and utilities.



However, it's the responsibility of the adjacent homeowner to keep the right-of-way free of obstructions including any type of debris, grass and weeds, and other



plants that impede the passage of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This includes weeds growing out

of the sidewalk or curb, that are along the street pavement. In addition, the correction of major cracks and unlevel surfaces along the sidewalk is also the responsibility of the property owner (City Code Ch. 29-11a).

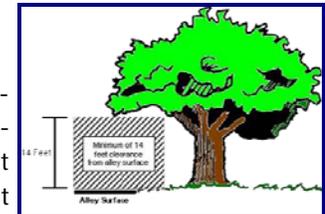


Easements

An easement is the portion of a property reserved for use by a person or agency other than the legal owner. Generally, a city receives easements from property owners and developers for sidewalks, utilities, and other public rights-of-way. It's the responsibility of property owners to maintain an easement free of debris, trash, rubbish. Structures may not encroach on an easement. Easements must be kept accessible to utilities and city services.

Low hanging tree limbs

Homeowners are responsible for maintaining tree limb height clearance of at least fourteen (14) feet high



over alley bed by fifteen (15) feet wide for vehicles to enter. The alley bed must be reasonably free of debris and passable to vehicles. (City code Ch. 14-61). Low overhanging tree limbs need to be trimmed to 8 feet above the sidewalk. Don't try to trim tree limbs that are growing onto power lines. It's dangerous and you could be electrocuted. If you find yourself in this situation, call City Public Service at 210-353-2222 to report the situation.

Fernando Muñoz is the Code Enforcement Supervisor for the Northeast sector and also a member of the Development Services Damage Assessment Team. Mr. Munoz has been a dedicated city employee for over 20 years.

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

Did You Know...

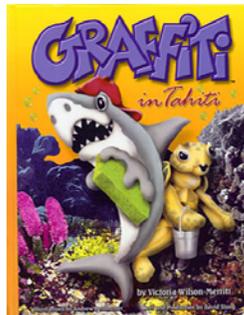
Effective Jan. 1, 2016, homes using an alleyway longer than 10 lots in length to access a rear garage, carport or driveway will be required to have address numbers in the rear of the property along the alley (Sec. 304.3). To see San Antonio's Property Maintenance Code, visit sanantonio.gov/dsd/codes.asp. For all of San Antonio's Codes, go to: www.municode.com/library/TX/San_Antonio

Performance Measures — May/June 2015

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.

	MAY	JUN.	TOTAL	FY 2015 (FY = Oct. 2014 - Sept. 2015)
Cases initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	5,160	6,076	11,236	40,904
Cases initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	1,762	2,103	3,865	7,290
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	75%	71%	73%	79%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.7
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	94%	94%	94%	94%
Graffiti locations abated	2,550	3,402	5,952	14,872
Square footage of Graffiti Abated (Goal of 3.6 million)	189,014	292,520	481,534	2,354,637

Graffiti Corner



Need something to do with the kids this summer? Check out a copy of *Graffiti in Tahiti* at your local City Library Branch.

Targeting grades 1- 4, *Graffiti in Tahiti* reaches out to children before peer pressure to produce graffiti occurs. Research at Philadelphia schools show that as children get older, their tolerance and support of graffiti increases (PhilaPride, 1997). *Graffiti in Tahiti* encourages children of all ages to become part of the solution by participating in community service.

Graffiti is often a "gateway crime" leading to more advanced criminal activity. Youth participation is reportedly increasing at a rate of 15% annually. Although still perceived to be an urban problem, 55% of the youths creating graffiti are in suburban and rural areas.

Keep kids busy by painting over graffiti this summer, call (210) 207-5430 or email Lisa.McKenzie@sanantonio.gov to join SA Volunteers and be notified of volunteer opportunities!



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We're on the web!

www.sanantonio.gov/ces

What You're Saying

"Mr. Uresti was extremely helpful in regards to my questions and concerns about my salvage yard. He promptly contacted me with answers." - *Salvage Yard Owner*

"I'm a senior citizen and on a limited income. I appreciate all the help the City of San Antonio provides (to remove graffiti)." - *Resident*

"Code Enforcement Supervisor A. Guajardo and her staff provide excellent service to the Memorial Heights NA. They respond to our needs and our neighborhood has greatly improved in regards to issues/concerns such as junked vehicles, overgrown vacant lots, graffiti, brush on the right of way, etc.. In addition, they attend our neighborhood meeting and take note of members' concerns/issues." - *R.D. Garcia*



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT