

Code Enforcement Section, Development Services Department

Message from our Assistant Director

October is National Code Compliance Month. As Code Officers, we are tasked with the overall health, safety and quality of life for neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Every community faces struggles with vacant buildings, trash, tall grass and weeds, graffiti, and inoperable vehicles. We are responsible for ensuring the residents of San Antonio follow the current city codes and ordinances. It is no easy task and one we could not do without your help. Building relationships and knowledge of our community is integral to a proactive and professional code enforcement. That is why partnering with you and our community is key to achieving our ultimate goal -- compliance.

Our first two Code Connect Live chats were a success! Participants submitted great questions that ranged from inoperable junk vehicles to front yard parking. Because of the big response, we're planning to hold them on the last Friday of every month from 1-2 p.m. "Like" us on Facebook and join in on the discussion. Look forward to hearing from all of you.

"Bandit signs" have become more widespread throughout all of San Antonio in recent years. These unpermitted signs placed on the city's right-of-way are a blight to our city and can be a safety hazard. You see them along heavily used streets, in front of businesses along highways and on light poles. They advertise anything from new homes to weight-loss

products. The article in this issue talks about how Code Enforcement addresses this problem, our partnership with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) and the process to correctly permit a sign.

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 at www.sanantonio.gov/ces and click on "Report a Violation" icon on right

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

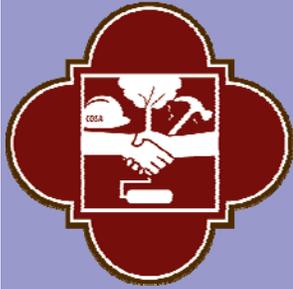
CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov

Best Regards,

Mike



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



Code Connection

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

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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What's the Deal with "Bandit Signs"? - Albert Mora

Signs are a great way for small business owners to advertise, but the truth is that most signs, or "Bandit Signs," are not properly permitted and incorrectly placed on the City's right-of-way.

What is a bandit sign? The definition per the city's code (Ch. 28 Sec. 28-6) is "any sign posted on a



utility pole, street sign or other street furniture or a sign posted in violation ... in the public right-of-way having six square feet or less of advertising area." This ex-

cludes signage owned or placed by the city, state, or a public utility (such as SAWS or CPS Energy). Section 28-153(a) goes

further and states that Bandit Signs are declared to be abandoned trash at the time of posting and may be removed and discarded without notice.

Development Services Department (DSD) and San Antonio Police Department are currently working together to target chronic Bandit Sign violators have filed cases in Municipal Court.

DSD sponsors a Bandit Sign Removal Program. With this program, more than 150,000 un-permitted Bandit Signs are removed every year in

"We pick up
more than
150,000
bandit signs
every year"

San Antonio.

DSD Code Interpretations available online provide guidance for Political and Home Owner Association (HOA) & Neighborhood Association (NA) signs. Political signs are allowed to remain up to 90 days after elections, while HOA and NA signs to advertise meetings are allowed to be displayed one week in advance and taken down within 48 hours after the meeting. Garage sale signs are limited to two signs on the premise, not to exceed 2X2 feet in size and placed no closer than five feet to the front side property line. All garage sale signs placed on the city's right-of-way, utility poles, streetlight standards or other public facilities are considered bandit signs and will be removed by the City. Contact DSD, Sign Inspections at (210) 207-1111 to get information on Temporary Weekend Sign permits and guidelines for days, times and proper placement of these signs. The Temporary Weekend Sign permits cost \$50.00 plus \$5.00 for each decal that is placed on the sign. Permits are valid for one year from purchase date.

If you see bandit signs in your neighborhood, report them by calling the City's 311 Call Center.

Albert Mora has been a Code Enforcement Officer for nine years and the Code Training Officer for four. He is dedicated to his job and enjoys training new code officers and educating the community.

October is National Code Compliance Month - Dale Russell

In 2005, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, President George W. Bush established October as National Code Compliance Month in acknowledgment of the importance and impact that code enforcement has on its communities.

Why Code Enforcement Officers?

Code enforcement (CE) officers are often asked to embody many roles within the context of their duties. In any given day, they may function as problem solvers, communicators, mediators, researchers, and educators, as well as performing a

variety of functions related to their role as public servants.

The most obvious function of code enforcement within communities is controlling the battle of blight. CE officers have a very visible role - their duties can have a major impact on the property values and image of the community. Buildings, homes, and properties will age over time and we, as CE Officers, support and enhance property values through effective enforcement of property standards, while working to keep aging buildings, homes, and properties from deteriorating.

October is National Code Compliance Month - Dale Russell (Cont.)

rating and becoming “eyesores.” All communities face struggles with vacant buildings, trash, tall grass and weeds, graffiti, and inoperable vehicles. Studies have shown that areas of blight and deteriorated properties may eventually see an increase in crime and a significant decrease in property values. We provide the first line of action in making sure that these issues are managed in a responsible and effective way.

Improving and maintaining safety is the primary way that CE officers positively impact our city.

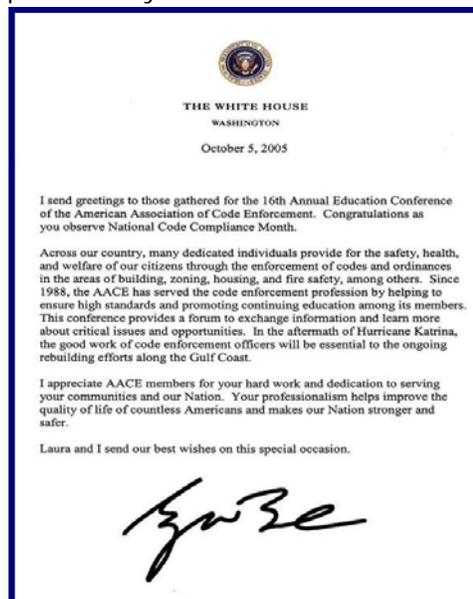
Ordinances and codes are enacted for the good of the entire community. They take into consideration the safety and well-being of the public by establishing fire codes, building codes, and general property standards. Enforcement of these ordinances are essential to a good quality of life.

In recent years, we’ve been challenged to find ways to manage properties, and the various code and ordinance violations that may be connected, to the growing number of vacancies. Substantial time and effort is spent in establishing current ownership of these vacant properties to be able to initiate and ensure compliance. Effective code enforcement initiatives seek to achieve voluntary compliance as a means of avoiding other punitive methods of enforcement, while still accomplishing what is best for the community’s health and safety.

Code Enforcement in the Community

Code enforcement is more proactive than ever before. This approach involves addressing issues by notice, abatement, or referral to the court before they become complaints. In San Antonio, we are tasked with achieving a proactive rate of 50% or more. It’s estimated that this fiscal year, 75% of our cases were generated through our being proactive in identifying and addressing code violations throughout the community before the public

identifies the violation. Code enforcement is a highly visible position and officers interact with a variety of different people and agencies. As CE Officers, we regularly deal with various county and state agencies such as health departments, child and family services, and highway departments. We also work closely with various city departments such as fire, police, building, planning and zoning, and legal, as well as having interaction, at times, directly with the legislative, board, or commission members. We also interrelate with various members and resources within the community, such as senior service organizations, economic development commissions, mortgage companies, businesses, and residents. It’s not uncommon that code enforcement interaction is a resident’s first association with the municipality. The professionalism and approach of the CE officer could shape community notion of local government and municipal experience. Building relationships and knowledge of the community is so integral to the proactive and professional code enforcement approach.



Code Enforcement Professionals

Code enforcement officers have a very intricate, challenging, and demanding role. It’s a job that is constantly evolving and changing. CE Officers provide communities with intrinsic and tangible benefits which can profoundly impact and enhance the quality of life, health and safety of the residents.

Dale Russell is not a native of San Antonio but he got here as fast as he could. He has lived here since 2005 and began his career in Code Enforcement then. Since 2012, Dale has served as the Code Enforcement Supervisor for the Southeast Sector. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice at University of Texas – Pan American in Edinburg, Texas.

Did You Know...

It's that time of the year to check your heater and make sure it can maintain the temperature of not less than 60°F in all habitable rooms as required by code (SAPMC, Sec. 602.3). 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 — July/August 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.

	JUL.	AUG.	TOTAL	FY 2015 (FY = Oct. 2014 - Sept. 2015)
Cases initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	5,444	5,178	10,622	51,526
Cases initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	1,918	1,369	3,287	14,442
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	74%	79%	77%	79%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.5
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	2.0	1.6	1.8	1.7
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	96%	95%	96%	95%
Graffiti locations abated	5,195	4,941	10,136	25,008
Square footage of Graffiti Abated (Goal of 3.6 million)	397,853	430,695	828,548	3,183,185

Graffiti Corner

Spot It. Report It. Remove It.

This is the message that the Graffiti Program is conveying to San Antonians this fall. A new ad encouraging citizens to take action is featured in 14 VIA Metropolitan Transit buses. Graffiti is everybody's problem, but together we can make a difference! If you see graffiti, report it by:

- Calling 311
- using the free 311 mobile app
- www.sanantonio.gov/311
- or (210) 207-BUFF (2833)



In partnership with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), graffiti in action can be reported to 207-SAPD.

If you, or you know of a group that wants to volunteer, please call 210-207-BUFF or email lisa.mckenzie@sanantonio.gov; volunteer workshops are held the last Thursday and Saturday of each month.

Cliff Morton Development & Business Services Center
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We're on the web!

www.sanantonio.gov/ces

What You're Saying

"My comments are with respect to my attendance at TAG Meetings at the Police Department (Safety Building). Lisa McKenzie (Graffiti sets up informative meetings, gets emails to us at least one day in advance. She is courteous and positive at the meetings. The exact date doesn't apply to my response because I've attended several meetings on several different dates." - Resident

"Code Enforcement Officer Brittany Kjos showed a concern and interest in helping fix multiple sites where we had code compliance problems." - G. Schotts

"I would like to thank Lisa McKenzie and Frank Perez for providing superb service for removing gang graffiti from my mother's neighborhood. It was a concern for me after our next door neighbor's house was shot at. This was a serious matter and they took care of it very professionally and efficiently. And, for that, I would like to commend them for their service and helping make my mother's street just a little bit more safer. The City of San Antonio should be proud to have them and to be serving our city. So, thank you Lisa and Frank." - City of Austin Resident

