

Code Connection

Message from our Assistant Director

Have you ever wondered about the origin of building codes? If you're like most of us probably not.

Building codes can be traced back almost 4,000 years. The earliest and most complete is an ancient legal code created by Babylonian King Hammurabi, who reigned from 1792 to 1750 B.C.

Now fast forward to a young America. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson encouraged developing building codes establishing minimum standards to ensure the health and safety of the community. This is exactly what the Field Services Division is charged with - ensuring codes and standards are followed during construction, through our building inspectors, and maintaining these same codes and standards through our Code Enforcement (CE) Officers. In this issue we have included an article that gives a glimpse into what these officers do every day.

Our ultimate goal is always to achieve compliance. This year, for the first time, we have created a small fund offering some assistance to homeowners without the financial means to make the needed repairs and bring their home up to the City's code. There are a few eligibility requirements that must be met, as outlined in the article to follow.

Advertising for garage sales is a topic often raised by residents and neighborhoods. Where can I place my signs? How many? How soon? Do I need a permit?

Garage sales require a permit easily obtained by coming to the One-Stop (1901 S. Alamo), through our website or at a participating HEB store near you. San Antonio's code establishes the guidelines for proper placement, size, and quantity. To find out more, we have included a short article delineating what you need to know to advertise your garage sale.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any compliance issues. Here's how:

- Call 311
- Download the free "311" app onto your smart phone
- Visit our website at www.sanantonio.gov/ces and click on the "Report a Violation" icon on right

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

CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov

Best Regards,



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

Inside this issue:

Code Officer for a Day	2
Energy Safety Tips	2
New Fund Helping Homeowners	3
Advertising for Your Garage Sale	3
Did You Know?	4
Performance Measures	4
Graffiti Corner	4

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.

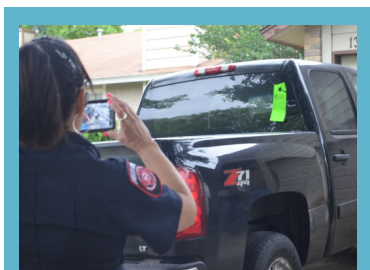
To report Code Compliance issues call:
311 or download City's "311" Phone App.

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

Code Officer for a Day - Albert Mora

San Antonio is one of the fastest growing major cities in the United States, with thousands of people moving to our city every year. Cities facing population growth must also deal with the challenge of providing city services. A group facing these challenges on a daily basis is our Code Enforcement Section.

The typical day for a Code Enforcement (CE) Officer begins by planning the inspection route and making



CE OFFICERS PHOTOGRAPH VIOLATIONS

- sure to prioritize the complaint calls with the greatest health and safety issues. These calls are mostly generated through the City’s “311” call center
- and automatically go to the CE Officer assigned to the area.

Officers research the property’s code violation history before conducting the

inspection. Once on site, they’ll check the alleged violation and look at any others within the area or in its vicinity. Almost 80% of the violations today are proactive, a change we made a couple of years ago to better serve the community.

All violations are carefully and clearly photographed. Based on the type of violation, or if the property is under an annual notice allowing the City to immediately address the violation,

the CE Officer will determine the best enforcement process – a written notice or a citation imposing a fine and appearance before an Administrative Hearing Officer.

The goal of a CE Officer is to achieve compliance by working closely with homeowners, other departments, vol-

unteers, neighborhood associations, City Council offices, and other agencies to resolve issues.

Reports for all the inspections done throughout the day are created, with the appropriate photographs, and filed. Often, CE Officers will attend neighborhood meetings in the evenings to provide updates on cases, answer questions from residents and talk about common violations.

CE Officers are responsible for maintaining a safer San Antonio through effective enforcement of property standards, while working to keep aging buildings, homes, and properties from deteriorating and becoming “eyesores” to the community. This is key to enhancing quality of life by helping sustain safe, healthy living conditions for residents of our great City, San Antonio.

Albert Mora has been a Code Enforcement Officer for ten years and the Code Training Officer for five.

Energy Safety Tips - CPS Energy

Next time you hire a contractor, remind them to:

- Inspect the job site for potential hazards before any work begins. Conditions easily change, so remind them to re-check the site frequently and communicate the information with the entire workforce. Any hazards should be identified and corrected before work begins.
- Have them check for overhead power lines, poles, and guy wires before they start working. If the

project area is near overhead lines, have them call CPS Energy at 210-353-2222 to have them disconnected.

- Whether performing major excavation or minor landscaping, contractors should safeguard themselves from hazards related to damaging underground pipelines. A simple, free call to 811 gets natural gas and electric utility lines on the job site delineated to help protect from



injury and costly property damage.

- Touching a power line can cause serious injury or death. Whether a line is “live” (or “hot”) cant’ be determined just by looking at it. Even if a downed line isn’t actively sparking, always assume it’s carrying electricity. Stay away from a downed wire and anything it’s touching.

For more safety information visit: <https://www.cpsenergy.com/en/about-us/energy-safety.html>

New Fund Helping Homeowners - Jennifer Garza/Alice Guajardo

The Compliance Assistance Fund (CAF) was created this year to assist qualified homeowners, without the financial means, to bring their home up to par with the city’s code.

The program is funded through our Administrative Hearing Officer (AHO) Program by taking \$20 from each finding of liability assessed from citations issued for property maintenance code violations. Assistance may range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on the repair needed. Offered in the form of a one-time grant per household, individuals or properties assisted will not be eligible again for a period of five (5) years.

There is an internal review process in place and a few eligibility requirements, including:

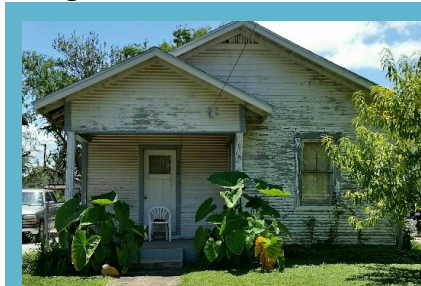
- Meeting the FY 2015 income guidelines, established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- The property must be within San Antonio City Limits
- Must be owner occupied

Once the internal review process is completed, the case is heard before the AHO for a final decision.

Four properties were selected this year: two needing roof replacement, one without adequate weather protec-

tion throughout the exterior walls, and one with electrical and plumbing issues. All homeowners lack the finances to

make these much needed repairs to their homes. We plan to continue the CAF this next fiscal year, as much as the fund can handle. Being able to help homeowners bring their homes into compliance is another way we’re partnering with our community.



IN NEED OF WEATHERIZATION, THE HOMEOWNER WILL NOW BE ABLE TO HAVE THEIR HOME PAINTED

Jennifer Garza and Alice Guajardo are both Code Enforcement Supervisors for the Southwest Field Unit and Westside Field Units respectively.

Advertising Your Garage Sale - Staff

Thinking of having a garage sale? You’ll need the proper permit and to follow the City’s code provisions. Permits can be obtained at participating HEB stores, online or by coming to see us at 1901 S. Alamo St.



How to advertise for a garage sale? Here are the requirements:

- Only two signs no bigger than 4 sq. ft., placed no closer than 5 ft. to the front or side, and must be on the property where the garage sale is taking place or they’ll be considered illegal.
- Signs on the City’s right-of-way are illegal and considered aban-

doned. They can be picked up and discarded by any citizen or the City.

- Place them two days before the sale and remove them by the expiration date on your permit.
- Signs on utility poles, street or traffic signs are considered a misdemeanor, punishable through Municipal Court.

There are no refunds. If the date you choose is rained out, a replacement permit can be issued as long as you ask for it within a week from the initial permit’s date of issuance. You’ll have 30 days to use it; however, only one replacement permit will be issued per calendar year, per address.



Become part of the Building Standards Board (BSB)

- We’re accepting applications for the following vacancies: 1 Architects (one with experience in adaptive reuse of historic buildings), 1 Engineer (with experience in adaptive reuse of historic buildings), 1 General Contractor (with experience in adaptive reuse of historic buildings), 2 Health Care Professionals, 1 Architect.
- The BSB is a citizen-based board comprised of 14 Council appointed members that can issue civil penalties for failure to comply with the San Antonio Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC).
- For an application, visit <https://webapps2.sanantonio.gov/BoardComm/Vacancies.aspx>
- For assistance with the application, please contact the City’s Boards & Commissions Coordinator at 207-7253.



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

Cliff Morton Development & Business
Services Center
1901 S. Alamo

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We're on the web!
www.sanantonio.gov/ces

Did You Know...



It's against City Code to have a collection of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, unless you follow treatment methods listed in the code (Ch. 15, Sec. 15-555).

To prevent mosquitoes from living and breeding around your home remove all standing water. Once a week empty, turnover, cover or throw out containers that hold water like pet bowls, flowerpot saucers, buckets, birdbaths, trash cans, vases, discarded tires, pool and hot tub covers and rain barrels.

To see San Antonio's Property Maintenance Code, visit sanantonio.gov/dsd/codes.

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

What You're Saying

"Thank you to the City's Code Enforcement Section for taking action and addressing the chronic issue of dumping on a private vacant lot. The clean up is a big improvement." - *M. Carriales, Resident*

"Code Enforcement Officer Cynthia Soto is an awesome official and I highly recommend her for all future public venues. She is a phenomenal speaker and connects with the public, residents and business owners. This is from a resident who was with Prospect Hill Neighborhood Watch, Citizen on Patrol." - *R. Schultz*

"This letter from Pastor D. Thomas and members of the Westridge Park First Baptist Church is a sincere "thank you" to your Officer Gabriel Cavazos. Mr. Cavazos assisted our Church with a notice of violation with our out-of-season brush pick up. His professionalism, assistance and cooperation were greatly appreciated. He consistently worked with us, allowing us adequate time to have this task completed.

On behalf of myself, the deacons, officers and members of Westridge Park First Baptist Church again we say thank you Mr. Cavazos for your assistance with our violation on our lot clearance off SW 42nd Street." - *Pastor D. Thomas*

Performance Measures - Jul./Aug. 2016

	JUL.	AUG.	TOTAL	FY 2016 (FY = Oct. 2015 - Sept. 2016)
Cases initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	5,855	8,069	13,924	63,331
Cases initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	1,485	2,219	3,704	15,440
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	78%	77%	78%	80%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	1.9	2.2	2.1	1.9
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	96%	96%	96%	96%
Graffiti locations abated	5,360	4,872	10,232	55,466
Square footage of Graffiti Abated (Goal of 3.6 million)	431,169	373,504	804,673	4,056,799

Graffiti Corner

The summer of 2016, went to the dogs!

More than 1,400 youth and adults signed up to help in the graffiti investigation "Graffiti: Catastrophe at the Dog Park." Using a fun and creative storyboard, participants had to determine who vandalized the dog park with graffiti and litter.

This is one of the efforts to show kids the negative impacts of graffiti in their neighborhoods and discourage participation in graffiti as they get older.

We can adapt this activity, and others alike, to any elementary school setting. Call us to schedule a presentation for your school by calling (210) 207-5430 or sending an email to Li-sa.McKenzie@sanantonio.gov.

