



Code Connection

Message from our Assistant Director

I'm so proud of what our Code Enforcement Section has accomplished in FY 2016. We not only hit our performance targets, but exceeded them by far. The goals established are simple. We want to achieve quicker compliance, increase our proactive efforts in the community, improve customer services, increase staff accountability and do targeted enforcement in needed areas. Our Code Enforcement Section handled more than 97,000 cases - that's 12,000 more than the previous fiscal year - and conducted a little more than 295,000 inspections. Better yet, we achieved a compliance rate of 95% within 45 days. Our Code Officers have a proactive rate of 80%, meaning only 20% of the cases we addressed were generated by customer complaints, and our initial response to Tier 1 and Tier 2 cases is averaging 1.7 days.

We've also changed the way we address graffiti. Today, 90% of what we abate is proactive. In FY 2016, our Graffiti Abatement Team abated 59,587 sites, an increase of 65%. We also introduced "Grow Over Graffiti," a new and innovative way to fight tagging.

In response to community input, we increased weekend enforcement and focused on garage sales and front yard parking, resulting in an increase of 59% and 8% respectively. We also collected 116,469 bandit signs throughout San Antonio. Continuing our partnership with residents, we have continued the quarterly meetings with the Neighbor-

hood Code Enforcement Task Force. Here, neighborhood leaders meet with us quarterly to point out general concerns and discuss solutions that are innovative and efficient.

Lastly, we expanded our social media presence by adding Nextdoor to our existing Development Services Department (DSD) Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. It has been a successful and busy year.

The holidays are upon us. We at Code Enforcement want to wish you and your family a happy and safe holiday season.

As always, 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

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

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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."

Tenant vs. Owner Responsibilities - David Simpson

By law, property owners have the responsibility to make a rental residence habitable. Although tenants don't actually own their rental properties, they do have tenancy rights similar, in some ways, to those of the owners. The San Antonio Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC) applies to all existing structures within the city limits. It defines the minimum requirements and standards, and outlines the responsibility of owners, operators and occupants.

In the SAPMC an “owner” is defined as “any person, agent, operator, firm or corporation having a legal or equitable interest in the property; or recorded in the official records of the state, county or municipality as holding title to the property.” Conversely, a “tenant” is “any person, corporation, partnership or group, whether or not the legal owner of record, occupying a building or portion thereof as a unit.”

So what's the owner responsible for?

- Keeping the premise sanitary (clean, without rubbish or garbage) and in safe condition, per the city's code, before leasing the property. (Sec. 301.2)
- Maintenance of the shared public areas and exterior of the property if it's a duplex or apartment complex. (Sec. 301.2)
- Ensuring the home is rodent and pest-free before leasing it. In the case of duplexes or apartment complexes, it falls on the owner to

maintain the public or shared areas free of pests. Whenever the infestation is caused by defects in the structure (like holes in the walls), the owner shall be responsible for the pest elimination. (Sec. 309.2)

- Ensuring the home is free of garbage and rubbish, both inside and outside. Note that once the property is leased, this becomes a shared responsibility. If the tenant fails to clean up the garbage and rubbish, the owner can be held accountable. (Sec. 308)



Supplying an approved, leak proof, covered, outside garbage container for the home or individual units (in duplexes or apartments). (Sec. 308)

- Lighting. Every habitable space is required to have at least one window (of approved size) facing directly to the outdoors. Common halls and stairways are to be lit at all times with at least a 60-watt standard incandescent bulbs following the requirements of the SAPMC for square footage and distance. (Sec. 402)
- Proper ventilation by ensuring windows can be opened. In areas without windows, a re-circulating mechanical ventilation system needs to be installed. (Sec. 401.3)
- Ensuring the home follows code requirements for occupancy limitations, encompassing room sizes, ceiling heights, etc. (Sec. 404)

How about the tenants, what are their responsibilities?

- Once the tenants move in, they're responsible for the upkeep of the home – keeping it clean, sanitary and in safe condition both inside and outside. This includes maintaining the lawn, and disposing of all rubbish and trash in a clean and hygienic way by placing it in approved containers. (Sec. 305.1 & 302.1)
- Maintaining the home or unit rodent and pest-free. If an infestation occurs in an apartment complex because the tenant has failed to maintain a pest-free environment, both the occupant and owner are responsible for the extermination. (Sec. 309.3, 309.4, & 309.5)

Property owners are, in a nutshell, responsible for everything related to the structure itself like roof, floors, walls, adequate heat, hot water, and safe electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems. Tenants on the other hand have, at the top of the list, the responsibility to keep things clean and sanitary.

David Simpson has worked for the City since 2003 and is the Supervisor for the North Sector. He has over two decades of combined experience working in the building and construction industry.

Know of an Absentee Property Owner? - Norma Silva Cantu

We often get calls after mailing the Absentee Property Owner (APO) notifications. What defines an APO? It's simple, just ask:

- Do you own a home in the City of San Antonio?
- Do you live outside of Bexar County?
- Has your property received two or more code violations in the last 12 months?

If the answer is “yes” to all these questions, property owners, based on data from the Bexar County Appraisal District, (BCAD) will begin receiving a letter to comply with the APO Registration ordinance, approved by City Council on Sept. 19, 2013.

Someone who owns a one- or two-family (a duplex) dwelling and resides outside of Bexar County, or has a P.O.

Box on file with the BCAD, is considered to be an APO. To be identified for registration, the Development Services Department (DSD) uses a rolling one-year window to find properties having two or

more code violations within the past 12 months. Once identified, these properties must register for a minimum of two years and pay a \$50 annual registration fee. In addition, contact information for a local property manager who can act as an agent on behalf of the property owner, must be provided by the APO so future violations are addressed faster and more

efficiently. You don't have to hire a management company; you can identify a trusted friend, relative or even tenant as your local contact. If properties continue to have violations, then annual registration continues to apply.

What are the most common code violations I should be aware of to avoid this requirement?

The most common is overgrown grass/weeds on property. Grass that is over 12 inches is in violation. Other common violations include junk vehicles, front yard parking, brush or bulky items in the Right of Way (when City Collection is not scheduled), and unsecured vacant structures. Be proactive and protect your investment by keeping the yard cut and clean and don't store items in your yard not intended to be outside (i.e. sofas, mattresses, debris).

Before this ordinance was approved, APOs were found to be:

- 30% more likely to have a code violation, and
- 70% more likely to have a lien placed on the property due to non-compliance and non-payment of abatement costs covered by the City.

Since implementation of this program, more than 1,200 properties have been identified and 400 properties have been registered by APOs along with their first-year fee. In 2016, 25 properties “graduated” and are no longer required to register because the properties were maintained free of code viola-

tions for two years.

We have started evaluating whether this ordinance is making a difference in our community. For about 100 properties registered in 2014, there was a notable reduction six months after registration from 2.3 to 0.7 code violations.

Based on information from stakeholders and community leaders, we're looking at making some improvements to reach more APOs by using certified mail for select properties and knocking on doors to survey the tenants. We're also redesigning the website for easier access and to allow property owners to register online with a credit card.

Norma Silva-Cantu joined the City in 1997 and came to Code Enforcement in 2013 as a Management Analyst. She supervises the Performance Management and Operational Support Section.



Become the voice for your neighborhood!

- We're looking for more volunteers to work with us in developing effective solutions and strategies to those issues that matter the most in your neighborhood.
- The Neighborhood Code Enforcement Task Force (NCETF) is comprised of multiple representatives from each Council District.
- Call your City Council Office to become a member!



**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...

...illegal dumping is just that - *illegal!*

Placing brush, tree clippings and bulky items at your curb is "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. (City Code, Ch. 14, Sec. 14-47)

To find out dates for bulky item collection, brush collection and other services available through Solid Waste, visit their website and sanantonio.gov/swmd.

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".

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

"On occasion our church does get tagged with graffiti. We are so happy the city offers services to paint over the mess ... we appreciate you! Thank you." - *Pastor Chris*

"Code Officer Guereca, demonstrated professionalism and offered information on the concerns I had regarding my business zoning and other items. He's very knowledgeable in the policies and procedures of DSD." - *D. Villarreal*

"Officer Nicolas Lopez was very professional, thoroughly explained and addressed all of my questions and concerns, and with what he wasn't completely sure of, he took the time to walk me to the department that would help me accomplish the task that was set before me. In my opinion, he is definitely an asset to DSD, as I witnessed his knowledge and professionalism first hand." - *Resident*

"Officer Michael Uresti has gone above and beyond MULTIPLE TIMES to help me and my neighbors with various Code Enforcement issues in our neighborhood. He's knowledgeable, professional and has responded to EVERY email promptly and courteously. He certainly has helped our community tremendously and we're EXTREMELY grateful for his tireless efforts and persistence for the past twelve months." - *Resident*

Performance Measures - Sept./Oct. 2016

	SEPT.	FY 2016 TOTAL	OCT.	FY 2017 (FY = Oct. 2016 - Sept. 2017)
Cases initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	8,830	72,491	6,929	6,929
Cases initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	2,393	17,833	1,696	1,696
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	77%	80%	80%	80%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.5
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	5.8	2.2	2.29	2.29
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	96%	96%	96.4%	96.4%
Graffiti locations abated	4,872	59,607	3,279	3,279
Square footage of Graffiti Abated (Goal of 3.6 million)	377,626	4,399,525	314,336	314,336

Graffiti Corner

Graffiti hurts San Antonio!

It was cleaned up at fifty thousand sites last year...at a cost of more than \$1 million. It's not just youth who tag, it's adults too.

Be an extra set of eyes and ears in our community. If you see it happening call 207- SAPD, or report existing graffiti by using the City's "311" free app.

