

# Code Connection

## Message from our Director

Last year's storms caused great damage in our area. They also made residents vulnerable to fraudulent contractors, or "storm chasers," that came from all over the country. Many fell victim to these scams, prompting a cooperative effort between Development Services (DSD) and the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) to initiate investigations that resulted in arrests.

The City of San Antonio requires all City and State licensed contractors be registered with DSD prior to issuing permits. Historically, only local SAPD background checks were required. As of April 1, 2018, an FBI National Background Check is compulsory for either a Home Improvement or Residential Building Contractor license to be issued. This is a new requirement increasing customer protection.

Speaking of protection, taking care of our trees is important to maintain the quality of life we have in this great city. Our City Arborist reminds us of steps we can take to preserve these crucial public resources and help in the fight against Oak Wilt.

Code Enforcement Officers make sure City codes and ordinances are followed, but this only applies to property maintenance and land use, dangerous structures, inoperable vehicles and other quality of life-related codes.

There are other agencies dealing with specific violations like blowing leaves into the street and, ultimately, the drainage system. Keep reading our newsletter articles to get the information you need on all these topics.

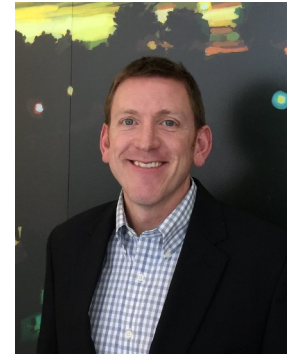
If you have any compliance issues, contact us through:

- "311"
- or download the free "311" app onto your smart phone

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

[CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov](mailto:CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov)

Best Regards,



Michael Shannon, PE, CBO  
Director, Development Services  
Department

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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.

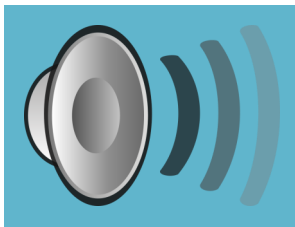
To report Code Compliance issues call 311 or download City's "311" Phone App.

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

## what we Can and Cannot Enforce - Gerald Roebuck

**C**ode Enforcement ensures the City’s property use and maintenance codes, inoperable vehicles, and other quality of life related codes are followed. However, we’re frequently asked to look at issues not under our purview, such as:

**Mold** isn’t regulated by any city or Texas law. Frequently, it’s a result of a plumbing leak, leaking air conditioning duct or a defective roof. The best way to address this is to find and repair the source of moisture. Once done, mold can usually be



- cleaned using household cleaners marketed for this. Be sure and follow all the safety precautions on the label of the product. For information on mold assessors and remediators, visit the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) website at

[www.tdlr.texas.gov/mld/mld.htm](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov/mld/mld.htm)

**Blowing leaves unto the street** is a frequent complaint and the City discourages this practice. Though mentioned in City code, its intention is to prohibit the bulk discharge of grass and leaves and doesn’t apply to incidental discharges created by lawn maintenance. Enforcement authority (Ch. 34 of City Code) is granted to the CEO/ President of the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) and/ or their designated qualified SAWS personnel. You can contact their complaint hotline at (210) 223-2290.

**Noise** nuisances are regulated by the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD). To report them, call the non-emergency number at (210) 207-7273.

**Graffiti** abatement of State highways, CPS Energy boxes, Union Pacific infra-

structure is done by other agencies. The DSD Graffiti Team partners with respective City, State and private agencies to get rid of this unsightly problem. For a comprehensive list and contact information, visit us at:

[www.sanantonio.gov/CES/Graffiti/Abatement](http://www.sanantonio.gov/CES/Graffiti/Abatement)

**Deed restrictions** are enforced by the mandatory neighborhood association in which your property is located. Usually exceeding City code, they’re private, contractual agreements between the subdivision developer, buyer and owners of real estate. If there isn’t an association, there’s usually an applicable City code to address health, safety and public nuisance violations.

**Gerald Roebuck** is a Supervisor with more than 33 years of experience in the field of municipal code enforcement.

## Tree Pruning Tips - Mark C Bird, City Arborist

**B**ecause trees are an important public resource that enhance the quality of life, add value to properties and reduce energy costs and pollutants, it’s important to hire a City of San Antonio Licensed Tree Maintenance Contractor to prune them. They have been properly trained and know our City’s regulations and requirements.

Oak Wilt is a deadly fungal disease that infects and disables the water-conducting system in oak trees. All Oaks are susceptible to this disease, but some species more than others. With no known cure, methods to control and treatments are expensive and

not guaranteed. Here are some tips to help prevent Oak Wilt in your neighborhood:

- **Minimize pruning oak trees between Feb. 1 and Jul. 1.** This is when the Oak Wilt fungus is most active.
- **Best time to prune trees is either in the middle of the summer**, when temperatures are the hottest, **or in late fall/early winter months** when temperatures can be the coldest.
- **Paint all cuts and wounds** on oak trees within 30 minutes.
- **Remove Red Oaks identified with Oak Wilt.**
- Know where your firewood comes from. **Don’t transport unseasoned fire-**

**wood from diseased Red Oaks.**

If you suspect Oak Wilt in your neighborhood, contact the Texas Forest Service at (210) 494-1742. For additional recommendations and information, visit the TFS Texas Oak Wilt.Org website at:

[www.texasoakwilt.org/oakwilt/oak-wilt-management/](http://www.texasoakwilt.org/oakwilt/oak-wilt-management/)

Eight Step Program to Oak Wilt Management at

[www.plantdiseasehandbook.tamu.edu/landscaping/eight-step-program-to-oak-wilt-management/](http://www.plantdiseasehandbook.tamu.edu/landscaping/eight-step-program-to-oak-wilt-management/)

**Mark C Bird** is San Antonio’s City Arborist.

## National Background Checks for Contractors - Phil Laney

Homeowners often say “my home is my castle.” But even if our homes don’t have towers and a moat, homeowners still want to feel protected, like when hiring a contractor.

The Development Services Department (DSD) requires all home builder and home improvement contractors to be registered with the City of San Antonio. Several criteria must be met, and only registered contractors can acquire the needed permits for their projects.

As of April 1, contractors must now pass a national background check through the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) prior to the issuance or renewal of these license types. The FBI background check reviews an individual’s criminal history at the local, state, and federal levels. The previous requirement was limited to information in local San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) records, which didn’t include information on other locations in Texas or in the U.S. The FBI national background check will be required when Home

Builder and Home Improvement contractors are applying for their initial license or renewing their license.

DSD is instituting this new customer protection initiative in response to

unscrupulous and fraudulent contractors that have abused the trust afforded to them. Unfortunately, an increasing number of incidents have been documented in recent years where individuals licensed by DSD proceeded to commit crimes. These bad actors represent a very small percentage of the licensed contractors. We hope these additional steps will deter unscrupulous actors.

If certain violations are present on the background check, a contractor’s license could be administratively cancelled or suspended. In addition, these violations may result in the Building Official (DSD Director) denying a first-time initial registration.

The addition of the national background check requirements ensures that we, as a department, are doing

our part to prevent undue risks to customers receiving home building and remodeling services in their homes. The vast majority of licensed contractors are committed to providing their customers

– our San Antonio residents – with the highest level of service and product delivery. For those few bad actors, these new requirements may deter fu-

ture crimes against our residents.

Information on how to obtain a national background check can be found at



[www.sanantonio.gov/DSD/Contractor](http://www.sanantonio.gov/DSD/Contractor), under the “Building.” You can also call us at (210) 207-1111.

**Phil Laney** is a Sr. Special Projects Manager over the Code Enforcement Special Units. He has been with the City of San Antonio for 7 years.



### DSD Academy

- Happens every third Saturday of the month, 9 to 11 a.m. in our building
- It’s another way to connect with our staff and get the information you need about the City’s codes, ordinances and processes.
- It’s free!
- For more information, visit our webpage at:

[www.sanantonio.gov/DSD/Resources](http://www.sanantonio.gov/DSD/Resources)





**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT**

Cliff Morton Development & Business  
Services Center  
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**We're on the web!**  
[www.sanantonio.gov/ces](http://www.sanantonio.gov/ces)

## Did You Know...

A peddler's license is required by City Code if you want to sell on the City's right-of-way (City Code, Sec. 16-232). Licenses are non-transferable and valid for 1 year. Fees for the license vary:

- Foot Peddler - \$120.00
- Truck Peddler - \$180.00
- Canvasser - \$60.00

Examples include selling flowers (cemeteries, Mother's Day, Valentines Day) and for t-shirt vendors.

For more information on the requirements, visit the City's Finance Department website at [sanantonio.gov/finance](http://sanantonio.gov/finance)

To see San Antonio's Property Maintenance Code, visit [sanantonio.gov/dsd/codes](http://sanantonio.gov/dsd/codes) . For all of San Antonio's Codes, go to: [www.municode.com/library/TX/San\\_Antonio](http://www.municode.com/library/TX/San_Antonio)

## Performance Measures - Mar/Apr.2018

|   | MAR.  | APR.  | TOTAL  | FY 2018<br>(FY = Oct. 2017 - Sept. 2018) |
|---|-------|-------|--------|--|
| Cases initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)        | 8,759 | 7,080 | 15,839 | 50,377                                   |
| Cases initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive) | 1,651 | 1,978 | 3,629  | 10,214                                   |
| Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)                     | 81%   | 76%   | 78%    | 80%                                      |
| Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)      | 1.3   | 1.2   | 1.2    | 1...3                                    |
| Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)     | 1.5   | 1.9   | 1.7    | 1.6                                      |
| Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)                       | 98%   | 98%   | 98%    | 97%                                      |
| Graffiti locations abated                           | 5,067 | 4,131 | 9,198  | 30,174                                   |
| Graffiti response rate (Goal of 3 business days)    | 1     | 1     | 1      | 1  |

### What You're Saying

"(Code Enforcement Officer) Brittany Kjos has consistently been of great help with her knowledge of the many city codes. Very professional, courteous, friendly. Returns calls promptly. (Code enforcement Supervisor) Denise Hastings has responded when I have had question or searching for information on different code violations. She has been professional, friendly, helpful." - Resident

"(Code Enforcement) Officer Raul Avila was exceptionally courteous & professional. He listened to me and treated me with a very professional attitude. I really appreciate the interaction with him. He is a great representative for the city. Thank You." - F. Rodriguez

"Thanks so much. You all are so good about helping us and I really appreciate it." - King William Association

"GREAT! I am so happy to have such responsive staff working for the people!" - B. Naylor, Council District 9

"Contacted Lisa McKenzie (Graffiti Program Coordinator) about volunteering for Graffiti Abatement. Lisa helped to organize our volunteer event for May 1, 2018. She was quick to respond and provide all the information we needed to make our volunteer event a success. The city staff on duty at the Graffiti site were wonderful! Steven Medrano and Frank Perez and staff." - M. Barker, United Airlines

## Graffiti Corner

Looking to spice up a class reunion? Want to make your birthday memorable? Looking for team building opportunities?

We're looking for groups of people who have a shared desire to beautify our community, by picking up a roller and wiping out unsightly graffiti! Log on to [sanantonio.galaxydigital.com/user/register/](http://sanantonio.galaxydigital.com/user/register/) to create a user profile, or contact us directly at:

[Lisa.Mckenzie@sanantonio.gov](mailto:Lisa.Mckenzie@sanantonio.gov) or call 210-207-5430 for more information.



A shout out to our friends at CPS Energy's Community Engagement-Customer Response Unit (CRU) who finished up a project along Mission Road, World Heritage Route.