



Code Connection

Message from our Director

In this issue, we talk about the Compliance Assistance Fund, a program created to help those elderly and disabled residents with property maintenance violations they simply cannot afford to correct. Of course, certain requirements must be met in order to receive aid, but I'm happy to report on some of the most recent successes with this program.

Every day, our Code Enforcement Officers (CEO) are out and about the many neighborhoods of San Antonio ensuring residents live in safe, healthy communities. Having a career in code enforcement is rewarding. Read about what it takes to become a CEO and the different advancement opportunities you can have.

Those who are members of our Neighborhood Code Enforcement Task Force (NCETF) were very involved these past few months reviewing San Antonio's Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC). We are happy to report City Council approved the adoption of the 2018 International Code Council (ICC) building-related, property maintenance and fire codes. Major changes include the addition of requirements for Tiny Homes and national background criminal history checks for home builder and home improvement contractors.

Being in the forefront of implementing the latest codes resulted in DSD becoming the first in the State of Texas to receive a Business Code Effectiveness

Classification rating of 1 for commercial by the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) in November, 2016. ISO is an independent statistical, rating organization providing advisory insurance underwriting and rating information to insurers.

DSD, every three years, leads efforts to review and update 10 ICC Codes, so that San Antonio can enforce the most current national safety requirements and construction methods. The new codes will go into effect October 1, 2018.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any compliance issues 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

Best Regards,



Michael Shannon, PE, CBO
Director, Development Services

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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"

Compliance Assistance Fund (CAF) - Richard Zertuche

Ever wonder how money from fines assessed by the Administrative Hearing Officer (AHO) are distributed? Where does it go and how is it used? Let me explain how collected fines are put back into the community to assist those in need.

In October, 2012, City Council adopted the creation of the AHO (City Code, Sec. 20-104), who listen and adjudicate administrative cases brought forth by the Code Enforcement Division. This wasn't only a holistic change to the enforcement of city code where previously the only option was to file a criminal case (Class C misdemeanor), but also was one that expedited the process immensely.

- With this change, a section (City Code, Sec. 20-109) for the disposition of administrative penalties, costs and fees was also included. The way it works is simple. For each fine resulting from a property maintenance violation, \$20 is placed in the Compliance Assistance Fund (CAF), used to help the less fortunate citizens of the community.

So how does someone get selected or qualify to be eligible? Our Code Officers are trained to address all the violations on the property. This incorporates minimum housing standards, both on the grounds and structures. At time of inspection we're required to make an attempt in contacting the owners or occupants. A notice of violation is issued and information is gathered to determine if the resident is eligible for assistance.

The process begins with an application, in which certain parameters (such

as ownership and income), must be met. Once completed and returned with the needed documentation, it's reviewed by the area supervisor and forwarded to the DSD Manager for their evaluation. A re-inspection of the violation occurs and, if not corrected, an administrative hearing citation is issued the property owner. Before the owner appears at the hearing, the DSD Manager drafts a *letter of indigence* stating the facts of the case and why it's recommended for the CAF. The owner (or a representative) must attend the hearing and accept liability for the violation. A minimum fine of \$20 is imposed and the *letter of indigence* is signed and acknowledged by the court. It's important to note that there is a cap of \$5,000 per household for the CAF.

Now the Code Officer can contact approved contractors to meet on site, provide them with the scope of work and obtain a bid, which are channeled through the City's procurement process. Upon the selection of the contractor, a Purchase Order is created for the work to be provided. The Code Officer then meets with the property owner to advise them of the time table required to complete the work and any responsibilities they must meet before the work begins. An on-site meeting is also coordinated with the contractor for before and after photos of the work being performed. The work must meet the requirements set forth by the building code therefore permits must be obtained, the work inspected by a trade inspector and must be to the satisfaction of the code officer.

In the southeast sector, I'm happy to say we've assisted four citizens, of which three had plumbing issues and one needed to weather proof (exterior painting) their home.



1800 blk. of Clamp - an elderly couple with fixed income and

medical issues qualified for the CAF for home repairs and exterior paint, making their home code compliant.

100 blk. of Lorita - an elderly resident, bed ridden and on fixed income, had a severe plumbing issue. With help from the CAF, the plumbing was repaired and the home became compliant with the city's code.

1100 blk. of Sunglo - an elderly resident with fixed income had a broken sewer line. With the CAF, the line was repaired removing the health hazard and meeting code.

100 blk. of Langford - the resident was elderly, on a fixed income and disabled. The home had several interior problems and a plumbing issue, all of which were remedied thru the CAF.

All of these residents were grateful for the assistance. The CAF is working and provides another avenue of assistance for those in need. It is another way in which we partner with our community.

Richard Zertuche, Code Supervisor for the Southeast Field Unit, has been with the City since 1993 and is a U.S. Army Veteran.

and maintain a safer San Antonio”

Becoming a Code Enforcement Officer - Martin Ruiz

Code Enforcement Officers (CEO) are a group of dedicated professionals wanting to make a difference in their communities. We do this by ensuring safe homes and work environments, maintaining the housing stock and improving the quality of life of neighborhoods. CEOs inspect property maintenance violations, nuisance violations, zoning and permitting violations, and distressed properties.

To be hired in the code enforcement field, you must be a high school graduate (or have a GED certificate) and have a class C driver’s license. If selected you’ll begin your career as an investigator, but will need to take and pass a state licensing exam within 18 months and have one year of experience to become a CEO.

Preferred qualifications include experience in an enforcement field, a customer service field and able to work in stressful situations. Higher education and professional certifications from the International Code Council

(ICC) are desired. There is ample growth in this field with plenty of promotion opportunities, cross training and various certification incentives. A trainee would start as a Code Enforcement Investigator then progress to a Code Enforcement Officer and, from there, may promote to a Dangerous Premises Officer, Senior Code En-

forcement Officer, Code Enforcement Supervisor or even a Code Enforcement Manager. Trainees receive 100 hours of classroom training plus eight weeks of field training where they’re paired with a trained investigator.

The field is extremely rewarding with several functions within code enforcement including, but not limited to, field property maintenance and nuisance violations, dangerous premises inspections, zoning, land use and permitting violations, the Damage Assessment Team (DAT), the Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART), the proactive and sweeps Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET), the Zoning and Permitting Team, Boarding Homes, Mobile Living Parks, Multi-Tenant Inspection Team, Illegal Dumping and so much more. CEOs also participate in neighborhood events year round and are frequent fixtures in Neighborhood Association meetings and National Night Out.

Why is the job stressful you ask? There’s a saying in our field - “we’re not firefighters.” Everyone’s happy to

see the fire department, not so with Code Enforcement. If a CEO knocks on your door, it’s often related to a code violation where you may receive a notice of violation or even a citation. In extreme cases, an adverse action can take place where we need to obtain a warrant to enter a property. We may need to effect a cleaning, mowing, a

taking (of an inoperable vehicle) or even a demolition. CEOs are often threatened verbally and on the rare occasion, even with physical violence. What’s more, even though we’re state licensed CEOs with considerable authority and wear a uniform, we’re not armed. The people we come in contact with are often unhappy with our visit. We, however, conduct the inspections professionally and with dignity to the resident. We’ll help residents in need with a simple cleaning, mowing or trying to find an assistance program.

CEO’s present cases before the Building Standards Board, the Administrative Hearing Officer, testify in Municipal Court, swear oaths and prepare administrative warrants. We may also be called to District Court to testify on a code related case. We do this and so much more. Ours is a position of trust, a trust we hold sacred. But most importantly of all, we partner with our community to build and maintain a safer San Antonio.

Martin Ruiz is a DSD Manager with a Criminal Justice background and a vet-



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



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DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

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

Did You Know...

...Swimming pools need to be kept in a clean and sanitary condition, and in good repair (Sec. 303.1). If your pool is deeper than 24," it will need a 48" enclosure around it with a self latching gate (Sec. 303.2). Any stairs or ladders used to access the pool must be within the gated area. Have a privacy fence? Great, it can serve as the enclosure so long as the privacy fence has a self latching gate.



The SAPMC also prohibits the accumulation of stagnant water (SAPMC, Sec. 302.2). Properly treated, moving water is not suitable for mosquitoes. Service your pool regularly.

To see San Antonio's Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC), 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

"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*

"Mimi Camargo was very helpful and seemed to go out of her way to assist me. Very courteous in every way and I appreciate it very much." - *A. Mackey*

"Even though you can still see some of the black writing, it sure was done in a very satisfactory and timely manner. Thank you for all of your help (Graffiti Abatement Team)." - *H. Zuniga*

"The Office of the Graffiti Coordinator never fails to impress me with its efficiency and friendly customer service. They get the job done quickly and expertly." - *B. La Rosa*

"Contacted Lisa (Graffiti 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. Baker*

Performance Measures - Mar/Apr.2018

	MAY	JUN.	TOTAL	FY 2018 (FY = Oct. 2017 - Sept. 2018)
Cases initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	7,004	7,474	14,478	64,855
Cases initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	2,040	1,861	3,901	14,115
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	75%	78%	77%	79%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	2.3	2.7	2.5	1.8
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	97%	96%	97%	97%
Graffiti locations abated	4,738	3,761	8,499	38673
Graffiti response rate (Goal of 3 business days)	1	1	1	1

Graffiti Corner

In partnership with the San Antonio Police Department, Union Pacific, Texas Department of Transportation and Transportation & Capital Improvements, the Graffiti Abatement Program painted over the graffiti along two local railroad trestles. Easily viewed by drivers entering and leaving the downtown area, it was an area often mentioned by residents. This multi-agency effort resulted in a successful execution of this clean-up ahead of schedule.



We are asking if you see graffiti in progress, on any infrastructure, call 210-207-SAPD [7273]. Graffiti is a crime, hurts property values, drives away businesses, and sends a negative message about the community. Graffiti is everyone's business!