

Code Connection

Message from our Director

Here at DSD, we are always searching for ways of enhancing our partnership with all the residents of San Antonio. Not only how to partner, but how to better relay information in an easier, user-friendly way. One such tool is Contractor Connect, a database created to help homeowners do research on home builder and home improvement contractors. You will find more information on Contractor Connect and its categories inside this issue.

As we talk home maintenance, I want to touch on a couple of items. First is the Building Standards Board (BSB) and the role it plays in code enforcement. Our Officers are charged with the responsibility of maintaining the health, safety and quality of life for all San Antonians. Part of that is identifying buildings that aren't safe, secure and pose a danger to neighbors and the community as a whole. Dangerous buildings fall mainly into three categories: unoccupied and unsecured, distressed, or those that are an imminent threat.

The effectiveness of the BSB is that it's a "peer-to-peer" board. Its commissioners are not city employees, but active members of our community. True, they do have backgrounds in the professional management of single- and multi-family rental properties, engineering, architecture, archaeology or planning, but that only makes them more equipped to hear and make decisions on the cases brought before them. We

also include retirees and veterans. Our (and BSB's) ultimate goal is compliance, and decisions declaring properties dangerous or ordering demolition are not made lightly. We want to partner with the homeowners and help them acquire the needed permits to gain compliance so that the structure, ultimately, is safe for them and all in the neighborhood.

If you would like to become a member of BSB, there are some opportunities to apply. Check our article to find out how.

The second item is fraudulent contractors, something we have been hearing about more often in the past three years. It's actually one of the big reasons for creating Contractor Connect. We have compiled a list of a few things to keep an eye out for and protect yourselves in this issue.

If you see a code issue or graffiti in your neighborhood, please contact us through:

- "311"
- or download the new "SA311" 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"

Connecting Homeowners with Contractors - Staff

Now more than ever, technology is making it easier for homeowners to do the needed research when wanting to hire a contractor for the job they are planning. The City of San Antonio requires all contractors to register in order to obtain permits.

The Contractor Connect program went into

- effect on May 13, 2019. With
- the program now in full
- swing, residents can search for a registered home builder and home improvement con-



tractor based on the type of work (roofing, fences, foundations, etc.) needed for the project, and the preferred category-level of Registered Plus or Premier.

The new easy-to-use search tool is located on the Development Services Department (DSD) website, along with the program overview, an information bulletin and application, and a list of home builder and home improvement contractors whose licenses have been suspended or canceled for not complying with the city's building codes.

With the recent roll out of this program,

DSD continues to receive applications for home improvement and home builder contractors applying for the Registered Plus and Premier categories. The Contractor Connect online search tool will be updated as contractors are approved. Contractors are encouraged to apply

Currently, the City of San Antonio has nearly 2,000 registered contractors in good standing, all of whom are available for the registered category.

We are pleased to offer this invaluable resource and look forward to your support in maintaining a safer San Antonio.

What's the Building Standards Board - Staff

The Building Standards Board (BSB), a quasi-judicial citizen-based board effective as of Jan. 2012. The board includes 14 members, 10 of which are appointed by City Council, one by the Mayor and three at-large.

The BSB hears and rules on issues related to the San Antonio Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC), dangerous and dilapidated structures, appeals related to summary abatements (when the City abates a property without providing the owner prior notice, as allowed by State law and City Code), and appeals of SAPMC notices of violation.

This Board has resulted in quicker compliance by reducing the amount of time it takes for a case to be heard from an average of 88 days to 30, improved transparency, and enhanced the dynamic of the code enforcement process (citizen judges and a decriminalized process).

Cases are scheduled for the BSB when property owners don't comply with the SAPMC and City Code, within the allotted time, after notices of violation are issued. BSB's ultimate goal is compliance and ordering the demolition of a property is the option of last resort, and issued only when all other avenues have been

exhausted and repairing the property is no longer feasible.

We currently have eight vacancies: 1 Engineer, 1 Engineer, 1 Architect and 1 Contractor with experience in adaptive reuse of historic buildings, Veteran, Social Worker, 2 Health-care professionals

If you're interested in applying for any of these, please contact (210) 207-7253. For more information on the BSB, please call Judy Croom at (210) 207-5422 or at:

Judy.Croom@sanantonio.gov

The Buzz on Mosquitoes - Staff

With spring weather, mosquitoes season is also here. There are a few steps you can take to reduce the number of mosquitoes in your home and protect yourselves.

How Does Water Help Mosquitoes Breed?

Some mosquitoes are known as “container-breeders” because they lay eggs in and around standing water. Studies show that female mosquitoes prefer to lay eggs in water that collects or is stored in manmade containers, specifically on the walls of water-filled containers. Eggs stick to containers like glue and remain attached until they’re scrubbed off. The eggs can survive when they dry out—up to 8 months. When it rains or water covers the eggs, they hatch and become adults in about a week.

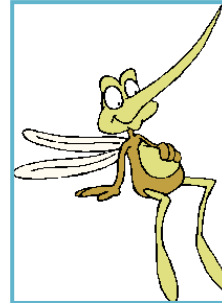
Reduce Mosquitoes At Home

Here are a couple of steps you can take to prevent mosquitoes from living and breeding around your home:

Remove standing water

Keep mosquitoes from laying eggs inside and outside of your home. Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out containers that hold water, such as: vases, pet water bowls, flowerpot saucers, discarded tires, buckets, pool covers, birdbaths, trash cans and rain barrels.

Doing this can help reduce the number of mosquitoes around areas where people live.



Follow safe water storage tips

If water must be stored, tightly cover storage containers to prevent mosquitoes from getting inside and laying eggs.

Improve sanitation

When water is contaminated with organic matter (for example, animal waste, grasses, and leaves), the chances that mosquito larvae will survive may increase because contaminated matter provides food for larvae to eat. Sanitation departments and wastewater treatment plants remove organic wastes and treat water with chlorine or other disinfectants. These activities may decrease mosquito populations and, simultaneously, prevent diarrheal diseases.

Beware of Contractor Fraud - Staff

Fraudulent, unqualified contractors or “storm chasers,” come from all over the country looking for vulnerable consumers. With resources, materials and contractors limited due to recent storms, homeowners might try and seek a quick and easier road. Here are some things you can do to protect yourself:

- Be leery of contractors coming to your door or those in unmarked vehicles.
- Get multiple bids and ensure they are members of an association, such as Roofing Contractors Association of Texas.
- Research, research, research.

Check the Better Business Bureau, your insurer or agent, and internet.

- Check if the contractor is registered with the City of San Antonio
- It’s a red flag if the contractor asks for payment up front or offers to cut a deal if you pull the needed permits. Never pay the total cost of the project upfront.

To find out if a contractor is registered, call us at (210) 207-1111 or visit our website at sanantonio.gov/dsd and click on “Contractor Registration & Licensing.” Permits are not issued to unregistered contractors.



DSD Academy

- Happens every third Saturday of the month, 9 to 11 a.m. at 1901 S. Alamo.
- 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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Services Center
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Did You Know...

It's a common trend this time of year - home maintenance projects. Before you begin, here's some things to keep in mind:

- Your roof contractor is required to obtain permit to re-cover or fully replace your roof.
- A drip edge is now required on all roofs per City Code
- You'll need a permit to repair your siding and windows.



Why is it necessary to get a permit?

- To safeguard the safety of your family and ensure your project follows the City's building codes.
- To make sure your home roof contractor is registered and licensed with the City of San Antonio, properly gets City building permits and has passed the required criminal background check.
- It's the law. Work without the proper permit can result in citations to the contractor and/or homeowner ranging from \$300 to \$1,000.

Performance Measures - Mar./Apr. 2019

	MAR.	APR.	TOTAL	FY 2019 (FY = Oct. 2018 - Sept. 2019)
Cases initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	9,225	7,636	16,861	46,487
Cases initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	2,375	2,334	4,709	11,122
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	77%	75%	76%	78%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.5
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	1.5	2.3	1.9	2.1
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	97%	95%	96%	95%
Graffiti locations abated	5,526	4,846	10,372	34,804
Graffiti response rate (Goal of 3 business days)	1	1	1	1

What You're Saying

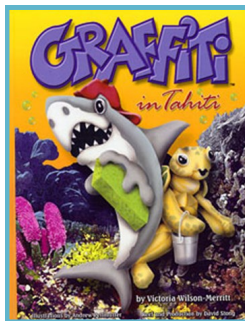
"Ms. (Lori) Campos (Graffiti Abatement Program) attended a Volunteer Resource Fair along with another member. They were very professional in the display of their presentation. They were very engaging with our students in promoting their volunteer opportunities. I enjoyed their display and the information they provided! - G. Valdez, CISSA

"After we called 311 to initiate the request (for graffiti cleanup), someone was promptly sent. Everything went smoothly and quickly." - Resident

"I did not know this (graffiti abatement) program was available to us. So glad we were approached. I will definitely speak highly of it." - Resident

"Great job color matching (in abating graffiti). Very responsive, and didn't take long to come out." - Resident

Graffiti Corner



Need something to do with the kids this summer? Check out a copy of *Graffiti in Tahiti* at your local City Library Branch.

Targeting grades 1- 4, *Graffiti in Tahiti* reaches out to children before peer pressure to produce graffiti occurs. Research at Philadelphia schools show that as children get older, their tolerance and support of graffiti increases (PhilaPride, 1997). *Graffiti in Tahiti* encourages children of all ages to become part of the solution by participating in community service.

Graffiti is often a "gateway crime" leading to more advanced criminal activity. Youth participation is reportedly increasing at a rate of 15% annually. Although still perceived to be an urban problem, 55% of the youths creating graffiti are in suburban and rural areas.

Volunteer with your family to cleanup graffiti! To join Volunteers and be notified of volunteer opportunities, call (210) 207-5430 or email Lisa.McKenzie@sanantonio.gov