

Know the Code

The City of Sand Springs' Code of Ordinances establishes the form and function of City Government. One of those functions is the oversight and protection of the health, safety and welfare of persons and property. Many of these protective duties are the responsibility of the City's Neighborhood Services Division, a division of the Sand Springs Fire Department.

Neighborhood Services staff receive and investigate complaints, then make a determination if a public nuisance, zoning, license, permit or other regulatory violation exists. When such violations are found, a variety of measures may be taken to assure correction.

Criminal, traffic and parking complaints, as well as most nuisances involving animals, are addressed by the Police Department (918) 246-8777 or Animal Control (918) 246-2543. Fire hazards are addressed by the Fire Marshal.

What Is Considered a Violation?

The City's Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, building and trade codes, and other regulations define the violations frequently addressed by the Neighborhood Services Division. As a general rule, violations must have an impact on the adjacent neighborhood or the community as a whole. The following violations reflect some of the most common complaints received:

High Weeds and/or Trash: Constitute a violation under Chapter 8.48 of the City Code. Property owners of record are responsible for preventing these nuisances.

"Weeds" include, but are not limited to, poison ivy, poison oak or poison sumac, and all vegetation that exceeds 12 inches in height (except healthy trees, shrubs or produce grown for human consumption), and vegetation that harbors rodents or vermin, conceals or invites deposits of trash, gives off unpleasant odors, constitutes a fire or traffic hazard, or is dead or diseased.

"Trash" includes refuse, litter, ashes, leaves debris, paper, combustible materials, rubbish, offal, waste or other matter, which is uncared for, discarded or abandoned.

Abandoned/Inoperative Vehicles: Constitute a violation under Chapter 8.20 of the City Code; and Section 2.12.C.1 of the Zoning Code (if parked in a residential district).

Under City Code, no person may, in open view, deposit, store, keep or permit to be kept upon any private or public property (including City streets) any unserviceable, inoperable, unlicensed, junked or abandoned vehicle for a period exceeding 168 hours (seven days). Under the Zoning Code, such vehicles cannot be kept in a front or exterior side yard at any time in a residentially zoned area.

Inoperative or unlicensed vehicles may only be kept in a completely enclosed building such as a garage, or in a business or lot properly zoned for such storage.

Unsecured or Dilapidated Structures: Constitute a violation under Chapter 15.36 of the City Code.

Any vacated buildings shall have all outer doors firmly locked and basement, cellar and first-story windows boarded or secured to prevent entry.

Structures that by their state of damage, decay or prolonged vacancy present a hazard to occupants or the public's health, safety or welfare may be considered dilapidated and subject to demolition and removal. Also, structures that must be boarded and secured by the City three times in a year may be deemed dilapidated.

Yard Cars and Recreational Vehicles: Located in residentially zoned areas must comply with regulations found in chapters 2 and 5 of the City's Zoning Code.

Vehicles shall be parked on all-weather surfaces constructed of asphalt or concrete that encompasses the entire width and length of the vehicle. Allowances may be made for previously existing paved surfaces other than asphalt or concrete. However, vehicle parking is generally prohibited on grass or dirt surfaces.

Recreational vehicles (boats, trailers, motor homes, etc.) must be parked or stored in side or rear yards where available. Screening fences are typically required and height restrictions frequently apply. Front yard parking of recreational vehicles on paved surfaces perpendicular to the street is permitted if other yards are inaccessible. Under no circumstance may sidewalks be blocked.

How Do I Make a Complaint?

Complaints can be made by telephone at any time by calling (918) 246-2574. If the telephone is not answered by an employee, or if it is after regular business hours, complaints can be made by following the telephone voicemail prompt. Callers may remain anonymous. Complaints can also be made on-line through the CivicPlus RequestTracker function on the webpage. They may also be made in person at the Fire Administration Office, 108 E. Broadway St. (next to City Hall).

Please include a specific address or accurate directions to the violation property when making a complaint.

What Happens After the Complaint?

Neighborhood Services staff promptly investigate all complaints within their jurisdiction. Other complaints are referred to the appropriate City agency or department.

If no violation exists, the complaint is filed as unfounded. Neighborhood Services staff, at its discretion, may notify the property owner that a complaint was received, but that the situation did not constitute a violation.

If a violation is determined to exist, several measures may be taken depending upon severity. If the violation is minor and corrective actions can be completed easily, the property owner may only receive a verbal notification. A "Courtesy Notice – Code Violation" door hanger may also be left. This is not a citation or legal notice, but rather an informal notice explaining the problem and seeking correction – usually within a week's time.

A more serious or continuing violation may result in issuance of a Municipal Court citation with a maximum fine of \$500. Each day the violation continues may constitute a separate offense. A separate civil action to abate the violation may also ensue.

Where an inoperative vehicle constitutes a violation, a "Tow Notice" may be placed on the vehicle necessitating its removal or proper storage within 168 hours (seven days). Vehicles remaining after that time will be assigned to the Police Department for towing and impoundment.

The Abatement Process

Fortunately, most code violations are resolved quickly. However, some situations require abatement by the City or its assigned private contractor. Cases involving inoperative vehicles may require the vehicle's removal by towing.

In abatement cases, the property owner of record is notified of the public nuisance violation. If corrections are not made within 10 days from the date of the notice, the City may assign a contractor to abate public nuisance conditions on the property. During that period, the owner may request, in writing, an administrative hearing before the City Manager, or his designee, to show cause why the violation should not be considered a public nuisance and abated. If the hearing officer determines a public nuisance exists, the owner has an additional 10 days to appeal the matter, in writing, to the City Council for a hearing.

After abatement work is completed, a billing is prepared for all related costs – including a \$200.00 administrative fee (\$400 for dilapidated building abatements). If the property owner fails to pay the bill within timeframes established by City ordinance and State law, the costs will be assessed as a lien co-equal with the property's taxes. The property owner may appeal, in writing, the cost amount to the City Manager and to the City Council within 10 days of the billing.

The City may pursue other civil remedies as necessary to assure correction. Also, abatements and criminal cases may be pursued simultaneously if circumstances warrant.

In cases where inoperative vehicles are towed, they may be reclaimed by contacting the Police Department and following its impound policies. If the vehicle is unclaimed after a time period set by State law, it may be sold at auction. Moving an inoperative vehicle about or removal of the Tow Notice will not void the notice or towing processes.

Repeat Violations

If a property receives a Public Nuisance Abatement Notice, the City may summarily abate any similar violation occurring within a six-month period without further notice to the property owner. This can occur even if the property owner corrects the initial violation.

Where Do I Get the Code?

The City of Sand Springs Code of Ordinances and Zoning Code are available on-line at the City's website. Hard copies are available for review in the City Clerk's office.

The Key is Communication!

When a public nuisance or other code violation exists, Neighborhood Services staff is generally willing to work with responsible parties to achieve correction. Communication is essential! Remember, code compliance is a vital part of a safe, healthy and prosperous community!

Helpful Telephone Numbers

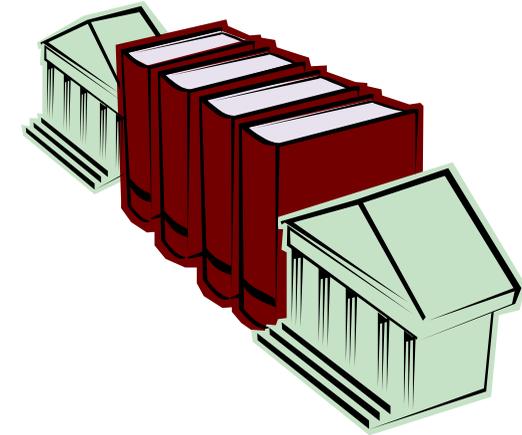
Police, Fire, Medical Emergencies Dial 911

Planning and Zoning	(918) 246-2577
Neighborhood Services	(918) 246-2572
Animal Control	(918) 246-2543
Fire Administration	(918) 246-2548
Utility Services	(918) 246-2527
Utility Complaints	(918) 246-2588
Other City Offices	(918) 246-2500



www.sandspringsok.org

KNOW THE CODE



Sand Springs Fire Department Neighborhood Services Division

**Fire Administration Building – 108 E. Broadway St.
P.O. Box 338
Sand Springs, OK 74063**

**Phone: (918) 246-2572
FAX: (918) 245-1460**

Updated March 2013