

# INSPECTION & PUBLIC SERVICES

The City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods Inspection & Public Services seeks to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods by reducing blight and substandard living conditions.

## “Be a Neighbor, Not a Nuisance”

Inspection & Public Services encourages everyone to comply with the City ordinances. Please help eliminate nuisance conditions before they result in a violation. Make a difference in your neighborhood. “Be a Neighbor, Not a Nuisance.”

## Violations

This is a brief list of violations that could incur fines and how to resolve the violation. *To report a violation call 3-1-1, the City's Service Helpline.*

### Overgrown Lots

Overgrown weeds, shrubs, grass, and vegetation are fire and safety hazards. The property owner/occupant is responsible for maintaining weeds and grass at nine (9) inches or less and brush and shrubbery at seven (7) feet or less.

#### Fines:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: \$ 50 - \$1,000
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: \$100 - \$1,500
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Remove any weeds and shrubbery in excess of the legal limit. Also, remove any trash or rubbish accumulating on the property.



### Dangerous Buildings

Windows, doors and other openings on vacant buildings and structures must be kept locked and covered to prevent unauthorized entry. A property owner may be required to board up a building/structure if it becomes vacant and is not secured. Storage sheds and garages must also be secured.

**Fines:** \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Close and secure all windows, doors and other openings on vacant buildings and structures. Purchase a permit to repair or secure the building.



### Permitting Conditions That May Attract Rats

A property owner/occupant may not accumulate lumber, boxes, barrels or similar materials that may be used as a harborage for rats. Control of rat infestations is the responsibility of the occupant/owner.

**Fines:** \$100 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Remove garbage, rubbish, lumber, barrels or other materials that may be used

to harbor rats or other rodents. For commercial property, all materials stored on the lot must be 18 inches above the lot surface with a clear space underneath to prevent harborage of rats or rodents.

### Stagnant Water

Accumulation or collection of stagnant water may become a breeding place for mosquitoes and presents a health and safety risk.

#### Fines:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: \$ 50 - \$1,000
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: \$100 - \$1,500
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Eliminate any holes in the ground or remove containers, including tires that collect water and may promote mosquito breeding.



### Garbage, Rubbish, and Trash

It is the owner's /occupant's responsibility to keep the property free from any garbage, trash or rubbish. Junk, trash, litter and rubbish cannot be deposited or allowed to accumulate on a lot or street.

**EARLY PLACEMENT.** As the residential property owner or occupant, it is a violation to place heavy trash or any oversized items at the curb line prior to the Friday before the scheduled collection date.

#### Fines:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: \$ 50 - \$1,000
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: \$100 - \$1,500
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Remove all refuse and place it in an approved container. Dispose of all garbage according to Solid Waste Department guidelines and pickup schedules. Call 3-1-1 for pick up schedule and guidelines.

### Open Excavation

Unprotected holes, excavations and sharp protrusions from the ground pose health and safety risks.

**Fines:** \$250 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Fence or fill in open holes with approved fill material, such as sand or dirt. Securely seal or plug unused water wells and remove or fill unused septic tanks.

### Discharging Raw Sewage

It is the property owner's/occupant's responsibility to provide and maintain in good condition connections that discharge sewage from the building to public sewer systems or an approved septic system.

**Fines:** \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Correct any conditions that have created the discharge, whether it is on private property or on a public right-of-way, and sanitize the spill area.

### Junk Motor Vehicles



A junk vehicle is any vehicle that:

- Is wrecked, dismantled, or discarded.
- Is inoperable and remains inoperable for a continuous period of more than 30 days.

Any such vehicle must be screened by completely enclosing the vehicle in a building. Car covers, tarps, bamboo shades and other types of materials are not acceptable screening. See **Open and Visible Storage Materials**.

## Open and Visible Storage Materials

Property owners must not store materials out in the open. These materials include dead trees, tires, refuse, glass, building materials, appliances, inoperable boats and junk vehicles. Junk, trash, litter and rubbish cannot be deposited or allowed to accumulate on a lot street. This includes junked auto parts, appliances, furniture, building materials, tires, discarded paper, tree trimmings, cardboard, plastics, fallen tree limbs and other offensive or objectionable materials.

### Tires:

**Fines:** \$250 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Remove or properly store any tires.



### Boats/Trailers:

**Fines:** \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Remove any rubbish or garbage from the boat or trailer. Elevate the boat or trailer at least 6 inches from the lot surface. The boat must be stored so that water cannot accumulate in the boat. If the boat is on a trailer, the trailer must be operable.

### Appliances:

**Fines:** \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Remove and properly dispose of inoperable refrigerators, freezers, air conditioning units and other appliances.

### Dead Trees:

**Fines:** \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Remove and properly dispose of dead trees and tree limbs.

### Junk Motor Vehicles:

**Fines:** \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Remove, repair or properly store any such vehicle that cannot move under its own power, or is wrecked, dismantled, discarded or remains continuously inoperable for over 30 days.

### Broken Fences & Other Structures

It is the property owner's/occupant's responsibility to keep all fences and accessory structures, including detached garages and sheds, in structurally sound condition and in good repair.

**Fines:** \$200 - \$2,000

**To avoid fines:** Repair the fence or accessory structure and keep it in good repair.

### Abatement by the City of Houston

If the owner and/or occupant fail to comply in a timely manner with a request to correct a violation, a municipal court citation may be issued and/or the violation corrected at the owner's expense. A lien will be filed to recover the City's cost of abatement.

## Code Violations Fines & Compliance



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City of Houston

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