



# HOW LEON COUNTY ENFORCES ITS CODES

## LEON COUNTY CODE COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

The Department of Development Support and Environmental Management initiated a program for Code Compliance. The objective of the program is to promote, protect, and improve the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens by resolving citizen complaints and enforcing the County's codes. It is achieved through the collective efforts of citizens and inspection personnel assigned to the Department of Development Support and Environmental Management, and in special cases the Leon County Code Enforcement Board.

## OUR ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES:

Threats to public health and safety of dangerous, and/or unsecured buildings, hazardous pools, ponds, and/or excavations neglected, and/or environmental, zoning, and junk and litter.

## The CODES enforced are:

- Public Nuisances: Junk and Litter and Lot Mowing
- Building and Nuisance Abatement
- Zoning Code and Land Development Regulations
- Environmental
- Minimum Housing
- Abandoned Property Registration
- Refueling Assistance for Persons with Disabilities
- Signs on Right-of-Way

## HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT:

Complaints may be filed in person, US mail, Fax or by phone during normal business hours (8a.m. - 5p.m.). Also, you can submit the complaint via the County's on-line Citizens Connect System or by email to [CodeCompliance@LeonCountyFL.gov](mailto:CodeCompliance@LeonCountyFL.gov)

Simply follow these three (3) easy steps to register a complaint:

- Tell us what you see. Clearly identify the specific type of complaint or nuisance. (Ex. Trash/debris, junk vehicles, etc.)
- **Give your name, address, and phone number.** This will be part of the Public Record. *Pursuant to Section 6-30(a)(2) of the Leon County Code of Laws and Section 162.06(1)(b), Florida Statutes, Complainants generally cannot remain ANONYMOUS. Frivolous or unfounded complaints will not be processed or investigated.*
- Know the **ADDRESS** and/or the owner of the property you are reporting. If the address is unknown, *specific* details of the location of the property is required. This will help identify the property and speed up the investigation.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU FILE A COMPLAINT?

It is policy that the Code Compliance Program attempt to resolve citizen complaints to the satisfaction of those concerned, while providing a quick and effective process to abate violations of the code. Every effort will be made to achieve a voluntary compliance concept.

Whenever enforcement action is deemed necessary, appropriate measures will be taken as allowed by law. All complaints are processed as quickly as possible (generally within 48 – 72 hours). However, "life threatening" or "public hazard" type complaints receive priority. Processing time limits may vary depending upon applicable ordinances and other restrictions of the law. All complaints, regardless of nature, are validated by a County code enforcement inspector.

## HOW IT WORKS

- Complaint is received and becomes Public Record. *In Accordance with Florida Statutes, anonymous complaints can not be accepted.*
- Staff verifies the property owner and the address of the property.
- The complaint is routed to the appropriate division for an initial inspection (generally within 48 – 72 hours). When the complaint is for Junk, *Per County Code, a 15-day follow-up inspection is conducted to verify the status of property.*
- An Enforcement Inspector verifies if a code violation exists and reports it back to the Code Compliance staff. All Inspections are conducted from the County's Right-of-Way (ROW). Staff cannot Trespass onto private property.
- If the complaint is VALID, an official “**NOTICE OF VIOLATION**” letter is sent to the owner of the property via certified mail, with a return receipt. This letter gives a minimum time frame from the date of receipt for the owner to come into compliance. If the complaint is not valid, it is logged as *Invalid*. An owner can request an extension of time to comply. If deemed necessary, an extension may be granted to the property owner. The goal is to obtain voluntary compliance.
- If the owner makes no contact with staff, no attempt to fix the violation and the “**NOTICE OF VIOLATION**” letter is ignored, the property will be posted, OR the property owner will be served by the Sheriff's Department. If compliance is not achieved by this time, the case will be referred to the **Code Enforcement Board** for resolution.

## WHAT IS THE CODE ENFORCEMENT BOARD?

(The authority for the code enforcement process is in Chapter 162 of the Florida Statutes.)

The Code Enforcement Board (CEB) is a quasi-judicial body -- meaning “like court” -- which hears and adjudicates cases involving code violations as identified and prosecuted by various county agencies. There are seven (7) members on the CEB. They are all residents of Leon County who volunteer without compensation. Each member is appointed by a County Commissioner and serves a three-year term.

If an owner is found in violation, the CEB establishes a time frame in which the violations must be corrected, and a penalty for failure to correct the violation. Florida Statute authorizes the CEB to impose a penalty of up to \$250 per day, per violation, and up to \$500 per day, per violation for *repeat* violations. In addition, the CEB may authorize placing a lien on a property and initiate foreclosure proceedings on non-homestead properties.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

Often the best way to solve a problem is to become part of the solution. You can help make Leon County a cleaner, safer community by sponsoring a neighborhood community event. Become active in your neighborhood or homeowners' association. If you do not have one, think about organizing one.

Sometimes people violate County codes because they do not realize what they are doing is not acceptable, or that it is a code violation. Most people want to comply with the laws of the community where they live, but some do not. Reporting violations is important to the overall quality of life in our community.

## THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Please take a close look at what the department is doing in the community. We want your suggestions on how we can improve our service to you. If we are doing something right, we want to know. Please feel free to contact our Code Compliance Program at the address listed below to provide any feedback.

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