



California Association of Code Enforcement Officers
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Are You “Code Compliant?”

Tips from the California Association of Code Enforcement Officers on Avoiding the Most Common Code Violations

SACRAMENTO, CA — Whether you’re a homeowner or renter, understanding and complying with local housing codes can be a daunting undertaking. Code enforcement officers throughout California are gearing up for National Code Compliance Month by working within their communities this October to educate residents on how they can stay “code compliant.”

“With the current glut of foreclosures and abandoned properties, code enforcement officers are appealing to residents to do their part and keep property values from further decline,” said Dirk Voss, president of the California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (CACEO). Although code enforcement officers handle a variety of calls, there are many violations that occur time after time in California. With cutbacks in budgets, code enforcement officers’ resources are depleting, and their ability to respond to calls in a timely manner is sometimes compromised. That’s where California residents can help by following these guidelines to ensure they stay “code compliant.”

- **Building Permits** – Before you make improvements on your property or convert or remodel a structure, check with your local building department to obtain information and required building and zoning permits. Some jurisdictions even require a permit for replacing a water heater, and state regulations require seismic strapping of all water heaters when a building is sold.
- **Hoarding** occurs when the clutter in people’s homes impair their basic living activities. Compulsive hoarding can cause fires, pest infestations and other health and safety hazards. To evaluate a hoarding situation and develop an effective plan to address those involved, solicit assistance from social services or adult protective services.
- **Graffiti** – Report graffiti immediately to your local code enforcement department. They can provide information to private property owners on how to remove graffiti or arrange for the responsible public agency to remove it from public property.
- **Trash, Debris and Outdoor Storage** – Trash and debris on your property can invite criminal activity, graffiti and illegal dumping and can contribute to infestations of insects and rodents. Remove trash and debris and store all property in an approved manner. Check with your local zoning department to ensure you are complying with all regulations especially when storing or parking boats or commercial and recreational vehicles in a residential area. Store inoperable vehicles in an enclosed building out of public view or remove them from your property. Participate in agency-sponsored trash/garbage removal programs that usually occur once a year.

- **Yard and Lot Maintenance** – Trim overgrown grass and vegetation and mulch or remove the grass and clippings from your property. Trim or cut down trees that pose a danger of falling or obstruct the vision of motorists.
- **Vacant, Unsecured Substandard Structures** – Vacant structures can become targets for vandals, criminal activities and a general nuisance for adjacent property owners. Contact your local code enforcement and building departments for the proper procedures to secure the property and keep it secured.
- **Business Operations** – Most businesses are not allowed to operate in residential areas. Contact your local code enforcement and planning departments before you start a business to ensure you comply with all regulations.
- **Signs** – Contact your local code enforcement and planning departments to obtain the requirements for size, location and types of temporary and permanent signs allowed within your jurisdiction.
- **Swimming Pools** – Maintain your swimming pool with proper chemical treatments and cleaning or drain the water to prevent mosquitoes from breeding and potentially spreading West Nile Virus. Report abandoned and unclean pools to your local code enforcement department.
- **Mold and Mildew** – Mold and mildew can cause serious health risks. For tips on removing and preventing mold, contact your local health department or visit the California Department of Public Health’s Web site at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/IAQ/Pages/IndoorMold.aspx>.

“By working together,” said Voss, “residents and code enforcement officers can make sure California lives up to its nickname of the “Golden State!”

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CACEO exists to promote and advance the profession of code enforcement while serving and supporting its members by offering comprehensive education and certification, providing legislative advocacy on issues of importance to the code enforcement profession, and facilitating a network for an exchange of information and technology. For more information, visit www.caceo.us.