

# ST. PETERSBURG UP TO CODE

## Information for Responsible Property Owners

As we age, many of us will take steps to maintain our good health. The neighborhoods and structures in St. Petersburg likewise require maintenance to stay in good health as they age. Individual structures and neighborhoods that are not maintained not only deteriorate, they cost citizens more money. Property values may fall, and poor maintenance is often associated with higher rates of vandalism and crime. Individual property owners can be the most important partners in the effort to maintain healthy neighborhoods. Unfortunately, many people are not responsible owners. That is why citizens band together to ask government to create minimum standards for housing, yards, parking, etc. These standards protect surrounding property owners and tenants, who might otherwise suffer substandard conditions.

This information has been developed to explain some of St. Petersburg's minimum housing and neighborhood standards. Look at the Property Check List below and use it to evaluate your own property. Also included are descriptions of the ten most common code violations. Thank you for being a responsible property owner.

### ✓ Property Check List

For further information, please contact the Codes Compliance Assistance Department at 727-893-7373.

#### STRUCTURES

Repair **rotted wood, broken or missing boards, siding, or shingles** and make all exterior parts **weather tight, rodent proof**. Exteriors must be **resistant to water** and be covered with paint, siding, or brick that is in good condition.

##### Inspect:

- exterior walls
- roof parts including rafters, soffit, fascia
- roof covering
- railings on stairs, elevated landings and porches
- fences (should be in good repair and legal height)

**Keep housing safe, sanitary, in good repair and sound condition.**

##### Inspect both interior and exterior:

- walls, ceilings, floors
- plumbing pipes and fixtures
- windows and screens

##### Make sure that:

- address numbers are permanently attached to the house and clearly visible from the street and alley. When new numbers are installed, they must be at least 4 inches high.
- garbage is properly disposed of
- insects and rodents are exterminated
- there are no areas where stagnant water collects and breeds mosquitos

#### YARD MAINTENANCE

- Mow the lawn** so that grass is 10 inches or less in height
- Edge** or remove growth from sidewalks, curb lines, gutters
- Properly trim hedges** located within 5 feet of the property line, refer to the code for height limits
- Trees over the sidewalks must be trimmed up to a height of 8 feet
- Trees over the street must be trimmed to a height of 14 feet above the street surface
- Provide ground cover**, such as grass, for all areas where sand or soil is exposed
- Trim vegetation at traffic and sidewalk intersections in the area between 3 feet and 8 feet high to allow motorists and pedestrians safe visibility (consult the code for details)

#### STORAGE

- Store furniture, building materials, junk, disabled or untagged automobiles, refrigerators, freezers and auto parts **inside of a legally constructed, fully enclosed structure**
- Store lumber or fire wood in the rear yard on open racks elevated to 18 inches above the ground
- No parking of domestic equipment (boat and trailer, utility trailer, camper, recreational vehicle) is permitted on the street or the city right-of-way. Some storage may be permitted in private yards under special conditions. Check with your area codes investigator or see reverse side for details

#### PAVING/PARKING

- Driveways, steps, sidewalks and other **paved areas must be in good repair** and free of debris
- Vehicles and motorcycles** in front yards must be parked on a legally recognized and approved parking surface
- Commercial vehicles and equipment may never be parked or stored anywhere** in a residential area except one commercially lettered standard pick-up truck or van of less than 20 feet long and less than 7 feet high may be permitted

#### BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

- Garage sales** may be conducted, up to three a year and no more than one in any 90 day period
- Home occupations** (any business conducted from your home) must be properly licensed and must meet strict criteria. No traffic or outside display may occur and the occupation must be clearly secondary to the use of the property as a home
- Any other business activity in a residential area is not permitted

#### RENTAL PROPERTY

Rental property owners must have:

- If two units or more, a **Certificate of Occupancy and Occupational License**
- In certain areas, a **Certificate of Inspection**
- A **Designated Legal Premises Agent** form filed with Codes Compliance Assistance

### IF YOU RECEIVE A NOTICE OF VIOLATION . . .

Find out how to correct the problem and do so promptly. You can ask for additional time if you are making progress to correct the violations. Some problems are serious and correction must not be delayed. There may be assistance available to low-income homeowners in the form of low interest loans or volunteer labor. Please contact your Codes Investigator or area Neighborhood Planner for suggestions. Remember to get proper permits that may be required for some repairs.

If you are unwilling to take prompt action to correct the problems, there are several possible consequences. The City can arrange for a lot to be mowed or for a vacant, open structure to be boarded. The cost is then billed to you. If legal action becomes necessary, you will be served a notice and must appear before the Code Enforcement Board and Special Magistrate or before a judge in the Pinellas County Court. You must explain your case, and ultimately correct the violations in order to avoid fines and liens.