

# CODE COMPLIANCE

A Citizens Guide to Code Enforcement

Your involvement and cooperation with the City is greatly appreciated and needed. Together we can improve the quality of life for all citizens of Clearwater.

We hope this booklet has assisted you in learning more about our City Codes. For additional information or assistance, please feel free to contact us.

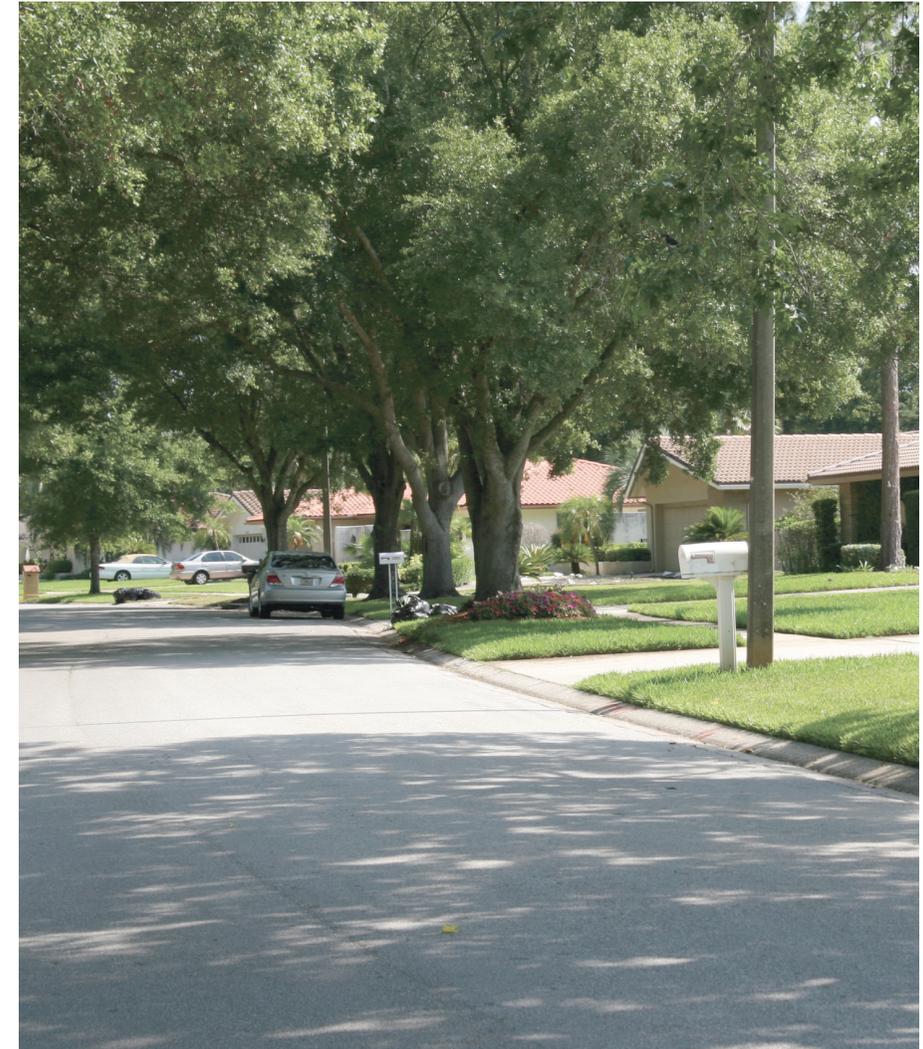
## CODE COMPLIANCE DIVISION

Municipal Services Building  
100 S. Myrtle Avenue, 33756-5520  
P.O. Box 4748  
Clearwater, FL 33758-4748

Phone: 727-562-4720  
Fax: 727-562-4735

Web: [www.myclearwater.com/gov/depts/devel\\_svc/CRT](http://www.myclearwater.com/gov/depts/devel_svc/CRT)

Monday-Friday: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



**Achieving Code Compliance through  
Education, Communication and Cooperation**



# City of Clearwater Code Compliance Division

An Introduction from the Planning and Development Director

The City of Clearwater's Code Compliance Division is responsible for the enforcement of established standards as set forth in the City's Code of Ordinances.

Code Compliance Inspectors respond to both anonymous and citizen named complaints, as well as complaints from other City departments and jurisdictions. They will perform routine "sweeps" or patrols of each subdivision within the City to locate violations. This initiative is designed to be fair, consistent and impartial in its efforts. The initiative will not be used as a "selective enforcement" tool or be biased against any one citizen, group or business.

If a violation is verified, the inspector will attempt to contact the property owner or tenant. If no response is made in regard to this first notification, a Notice of Violation will be mailed via Certified Mail, giving the responsible party a reasonable amount of time to comply.

For those violators who do not comply, inspectors have the option of taking a case to the City's Municipal Code Enforcement Board or through the Pinellas County Court System. Our goal is to achieve problem resolution through education, communication and cooperation. If this collaborative effort fails, we take further action, which may lead to fines and liens against the violators or their properties.

We enforce codes that help ensure a safe and pleasant environment and maintain the highest value for your property investment. Areas that become blighted with boarded up/abandoned buildings, debris, overgrowth and graffiti are more susceptible to crime than areas that remain free of code violations – One's environment is paramount to one's behavior. We actively enforce these regulations to ensure that your neighborhood remains a safe, healthy and economically viable place to live.

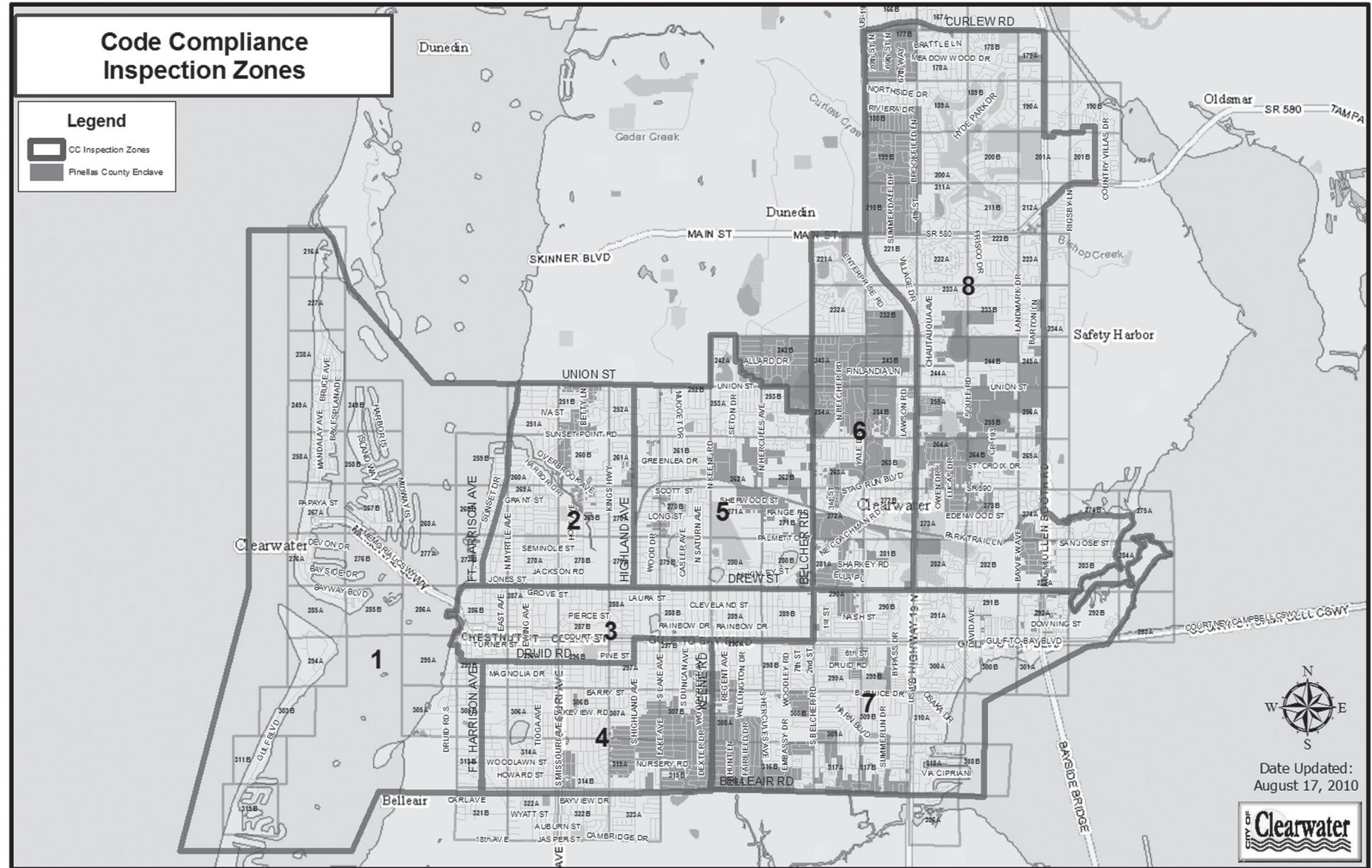
Some of the more common code violations which directly affect our neighborhoods are listed in this brochure.

Our success depends on you, the citizens. To increase your awareness and understanding of City Codes, please read the information contained in this Any comments, concerns or questions you have will be most appreciated and welcome.

Thank you for your support and interest in monitoring and maintaining the quality of life within our community, as set by the City's Code of Ordinances. Together we make a positive difference.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Delk, A.I.C.P.  
Planning and Development Department Director



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## How do I report a possible violation?

### There are two available options to report a violation:

C-TRACS - The City of Clearwater has a web-based application known as C-TRACS to report possible code violations via the Internet. To access this reporting system, go to [www.myclearwater.com](http://www.myclearwater.com) and select HOME. Click on the C-TRACS box on the screen to proceed. Complete and submit the C-TRACS form, and note your C-TRACS and PIN numbers which allow you to track the progress of your complaint/inquiry.

**Code Compliance Division** - Contact the Code Compliance Division at 562-4720, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Be prepared to give the street address and a brief description of the potential violation.

### **Abandoned (Inoperative) Vehicles - Section 3-1503.B.6 / Florida Statutes 316.215 – 316.2954 (what constitutes an operable vehicle)**

All vehicles must be mechanically operable and display current registration or must be kept in a garage. Operable means that the vehicle runs and all tires are inflated.



### **Address Numbering – Section 28.82**

For public safety reasons, all developed properties must have their address numbers clearly visible from the streets that they face. Numbers must be Arabic numerals (script and numbers on the curb do not meet code requirements). Residential properties must have numbers at least three inches in height; nonresidential properties must have numbers at least six inches in height.

### **Animals – Sections 8.31 – 8.35**

Family pets must be on the owner's property or shall not be allowed to wander on the streets or on the property of another. Owners must clean up after their animals on public property and on private property of others. Animals found wandering at large away from their owner's property shall be impounded. Animals on public beaches are prohibited. City Code empowers police officers to handle ALL animal complaints including barking dogs, animals running at large, etc. To report a violation involving animals, please call the Police Department at 562-4242.



### **Business Tax Receipts - Sections 29.30.1.3 & 7**

Any person who maintains a permanent or temporary business location or branch office within the city shall obtain a city business tax receipt for each location. If the business maintains multiple locations within the city, a separate business tax receipt is required for each.

Any person who does not maintain a permanent business location or branch office within the city but who desires to transact business within the city shall register the business tax receipt with the city manager of the municipality or other governmental subdivision in which they maintain a permanent business location, or if no business tax receipt is required by the other municipality, a registration of the business shall be required, unless otherwise provided by the Code of Ordinances.

For more information on how to apply for a business tax receipt, call our Planning & Development Department at 562-4567 or visit the website at [www.myclclearwater.com](http://www.myclclearwater.com). If you suspect that someone is operating an unauthorized/unlicensed business, call the Code Compliance Division at 562-4720 and an inspector will investigate.

### **Canvas Carports – Section 3-201.B.9**

Canvas or other similar materials shall not be allowed as a permitted material for any accessory structure.

### **Debris – Sections 3-1503.B.5 and 7**

To keep the City free from blight, no accumulation of debris is allowed on a property, including rear and side yards as follows:

- Any accumulation of weeds, debris, trash, garden trash, junk, untended growth of vegetation, undergrowth of dead or living vegetation, hazardous swimming pools, hazardous trees upon any private property or on any public property without authorization to the extent and manner that such property contains or is likely to contain rodents, reptiles, or other vermin, or furnishes a breeding place for flies, mosquitoes, or weed-destroying insects, or otherwise threatens the public health, safety or welfare.
- The placement of trash, debris and other items on public property without authorization is prohibited.



### **Fences**

Fences require a building permit, which can be obtained from the Planning & Development Department. For questions, call 562-4567. The staff will address lot lines as well as height and material regulations. Bring along your property survey and information on the type of fencing you are requesting. In addition, fences must be maintained in a structurally sound and attractive manner.



### **Design Requirements – Section 3-803.A**

Fences and walls placed within a required setback area shall be oriented so that the side of the fence or wall, facing or viewable from a street right-of-way or an adjoining property, is the finished side, with all support posts and stringers facing inward toward the property upon which the fence or wall is located.

### **Maintenance of Fences and Walls – Section 3-808.A.6**

All fence or wall surfaces shall be painted, stained, treated or otherwise maintained so as to present a uniform appearance; however, this section is not intended to prohibit the maintenance of fences in which a deteriorated section of the fence is replaced with new material which will take some time to “age” or “weather” to replicate the appearance of the original fence.

### **Garage Sales – Section 3-2103.A**

Garage, yard or estate sales may be held no more than two times within one year per property. The duration of each sale cannot exceed three days. Garage, yard or estate sales are restricted to residentially zoned properties.

### **Graffiti – Section 3-1503.B.14 and 3-1504**

Graffiti is monitored and tracked by the Code Compliance Division, Solid Waste Department, Parks and Recreation Department and Police Department. Graffiti may be more than simple vandalism; it may be related to gang activity. All occurrences of graffiti should be reported. This form of blight, if left unchecked, may generate additional violations. In order to keep the City of Clearwater a clean and safe place to live, prompt removal is required. Assistance is available for those properties targeted with graffiti. Call the Code Compliance Division at 562-4720 for information.



### **Grass and Overgrowth – Section 3-1503.B.7 & 8**

Grass, weeds and undergrowth must be maintained 12 inches high or less and must not extend more than four inches over the sidewalk, curb, and edge of the pavement. Rights-of-way and sidewalks shall be clear of refuse and vegetation, and a height clearance of less than eight feet from the pavement surface shall be maintained, unless an exception has been granted by the Urban Forester for protected trees.

### **Housing – Section 3-1502.A**

All residential properties must be in compliance with the State of Florida’s Minimum Standard Housing Code (hot/cold water, heating, sanitary facilities, etc). Several agencies are available to assist those persons whose properties may not be up to code. For more information, contact the Building Construction Inspectors at 562-4567.

### **Landscaping – Section 3-1502.H**

Any portion of a lot not covered by a building or structure shall be landscaped with grass or other appropriate ground cover and shall be maintained in a neat and healthy condition. A detailed handout regarding groundcover options and maintenance is available. Call 562-4720 and we will provide you a copy.



### **Motorized Vehicles and Electric Mobility Devices – Florida State Statutes 316.2068, 316.2074 and 316-208**

The use of motorized vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, mopeds, and electric personal assistance mobility devices, are regulated by Florida State Statutes. Some vehicles described may require a license and registration in order to operate on the public streets. If you have questions, or you observe violations and wish to report them, call the Clearwater Police Department at 562-4242.

### **News Racks – Section 3-10**

The City has restrictions regarding the location and number of news racks upon street rights-of-way and public property. Call the Code Compliance Division at 562-4720 if you have questions regarding news racks.

### **Noise – Section 3-1508.B**

Excessive noise can be a serious problem for residents and may be declared a public nuisance. Excessive noise is defined as that which can be heard 100 feet from the source such as yelling, radios, sound trucks, exhaust, animals, or any emission of noise that may be loud and raucous in nature. To report noise violations, call the Clearwater Police Department at 562-4242.



### **Outdoor Storage – Section 3-1503.B.6**

The outdoor storage of all or part of any dismantled, partially dismantled, inoperative or discarded vehicle, recreational vehicle, machinery, appliance, farm equipment, aircraft, construction equipment, boat, personal watercraft, trailer, truck, motorcycle, bicycle, or scrap metal, on any public or private property, or of any abandoned vehicle, recreational vehicle, farm equipment, aircraft, boat, personal watercraft, trailer, truck, or motorcycle on any private property, within the city limits is prohibited.

This provision shall not apply to any vehicle, recreational vehicle, machinery, farm equipment, aircraft, construction equipment, boat, personal watercraft, trailer, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle which is located on the premises of a lawfully established storage yard or which is on the premises of a lawfully established vehicle service establishment and is in the process of repair or maintenance by that establishment.

### **Parking Lots – Section 3-1502.K.4**

Parking lot surfaces shall be maintained so that they are clear of litter, trash, debris, equipment, weeds, dead vegetation and refuse. Cracked or heaved parking lot surfaces shall be promptly repaired.

### **Parking Restrictions in Residential Areas – Section 3-1407.A.1.a-e**

**Restrictions** - For the dual purpose of preserving attractive residential areas within the city and promoting safe, unimpeded traffic circulation throughout such neighborhoods, the following parking restrictions shall apply except as provided in paragraph B of this section (See Exceptions - Parking restrictions in residential areas on the next page of this booklet).

**Within street right-of-way:** The following vehicles shall not be parked or stored on any public right-of-way in a residential zoning district or on any right-of-way contiguous to a residentially zoned property:

- Any boat or boat trailer;
- Any hauling trailer;
- Any recreational vehicle;
- Any commercial vehicle;
- Any race car, dune buggy, farm equipment, go kart, ATV, or other similar vehicle not designated for street operation.



### **Between principal structure and right-of-way – Section 3-1407.A.2.a-f**

The following vehicles shall not be parked or stored, in whole or in part, in a front setback and/or forward of the building line of the principal structure and any right-of-way in a residential zoning district up to a maximum of two frontages:

- Boats in excess of 20 feet;
- Any boat trailer in excess of 25 feet total length or in excess of five feet longer than any boat occupying the trailer;
- Hauling trailers;
- Recreational vehicles, travel trailers, motor homes and camping trailers;
- Any commercial vehicle which measures in excess of 20 feet in total chassis and body length, seven feet in total width or seven feet in total height, including appurtenances, equipment and cargo;
- Any race car, dune buggy, farm equipment, go kart, ATV, or other similar vehicle not designed for street operation.

### **Parking In the Side or Rear Setback – Section 3-1407.A.3.a-e**

The following vehicles may be parked or stored, in whole or in part, in a side or rear setback behind the front building line of the principal structure in a residential zoning district, provided such vehicles are screened with a six-foot-high solid fence, wall or hedge:

- Boats in excess of 20 feet;
- Boat trailers in excess of 25 feet;
- Hauling trailers;
- Recreational vehicles, travel trailers, motor homes and camping trailers;
- Any race car, dune buggy, farm equipment, go kart, ATV, or other similar vehicle not designated for street operation.

**Large Vehicles – Section 3-1407.A.4.a-b**

The following vehicles shall not be parked or stored in any residential zoning districts:

- Commercial vehicles measuring in excess of 20 feet in total body length, seven feet in total width, or seven feet in total height, including appurtenances, equipment and cargo are prohibited, and
- Semi-tractor trailers, trucks or cabs or any garbage trucks, pump-out trucks, chemical trucks, gasoline trucks, fuel oil trucks or similar vehicles designed to transport wastes or hazardous or noxious materials are also prohibited.

**Exception to prohibition of parking on unpaved areas on single family and duplex residential property - Section 3-1407.A.4**

One designated parking space may be located on the grass in a required front setback adjacent to and parallel to the driveway located on the property. Access to such designated parking space shall be by way of the property’s driveway. If the designated parking space can be maintained as a grassy area and is either reported by neighboring residents as a detrimental property or is designated by any code inspector as in violation of this provision, such designated parking area shall be filled in, by the property owner, with pavers, concrete, turf block or asphalt. Materials not permitted include crushed shell, mulch, millings or similar material.



**Exceptions - Parking Restrictions in Residential Areas - Section 3-1407.B.1, 2 & 3**

The temporary exceptions are as follows:

- Commercial vehicles, during the actual performance of a service at the premises where the vehicle is parked;
- Loading, unloading, or cleaning of vehicles, but not including semitrailer trucks or cabs, provided such activity is fully completed within 24 hours and provided such activity does not occur at the same location more than two times per month;
- Emergency vehicles.

### **Portable Storage Units – Section 3-2103**

A portable storage unit may be placed for no more than four days and no more than four times per year on residentially zoned property. On nonresidential property, portable storage units may be placed for 30 days, not more than four times a year or for the duration of an active construction permit. The unit may not be larger than eight feet high, eight feet wide and 16 feet long. A maximum of two signs, no more than 12 square feet in area each, may be located on parallel sides on a portable storage unit.

### **Property Maintenance Requirements - Exterior Surfaces / Door and Window Openings / Roofs – Section 3-1502.B, C & D**

All building walls shall be maintained in a secure and attractive manner. All defective structural and decorative elements of any building wall shall be repaired or replaced in a workmanlike manner to match as closely as possible the original materials and construction. Exterior surfaces shall be free of mildew, rust, loose material including peeling paint. Patching, painting or resurfacing shall be accomplished to match the existing or adjacent surfaces as to materials, color, bond and joining. All exterior surfaces other than decay-resistant wood and other weather-durable finishes shall be protected from the elements by paint or other protective covering applied and maintained according to manufacturer's specifications and otherwise treated in a consistent manner.

All windows and doors shall be secured in a tight fitting and weatherproof manner and have sashes of proper size and design.

Roofs shall be maintained in a clean, mildew-free condition and kept free of trash, loose shingles, debris or any other substances including grass or weeds which are not permanent parts of the buildings or functional elements of their mechanical or electrical systems.

### **Exterior Storage and Display for Residential Properties – Section 3-1502.G-1-5**

- As provided in Section 3-913 of this Development Code, outdoor storage is prohibited. For the purposes of this section, carports are subject to the outdoor storage provisions.
- Equipment, materials or furnishings not designed for use outdoors, such as automobile parts and tires, building materials, and interior furniture, may not be stored outdoors.
- Construction materials, unless such materials are related to an active building permit related to the property on which the materials are located, shall not be stored outdoors on a residentially zoned property.
- Bulk items intended for pick up by the city may not be placed at the curb more than 24 hours prior to the scheduled pick up.
- Any motor vehicle that is lawfully parked and is covered in a manner to protect the motor vehicle shall allow at least the bottom six inches of each tire to be



visible. The required license plate shall be clearly visible from the right-of-way or the license plate number shall be printed legibly on the cover with characters not less than two inches in height so that it is clearly visible from the right-of-way. Covers shall not be faded and shall be in good condition, without tears, rips or holes.

### **Rental Property**

A Business Tax Receipt is required for all rental property.

### **Residential Rental Property – Sections 3-2301 & 3-2302**

A Business Tax Receipt is required for rentals of detached dwellings, dwelling units, and accessory dwellings, as such terms are defined in Community Development Code Section 8-102.

### **Commercial Rental Property – Section 29.24 as defined in the Code of Ordinances**

A Business Tax Receipt is required for rental of commercial properties. Please call the City's Planning & Development Department at 562-4567 for information on approvals if allowed (includes resort dwelling rentals).

### **Signage**

#### **Business Opening Signs – Section 3-1805.C.1**

One temporary grand opening sign is permitted for 30 days after the issuance of a Business Tax Receipt. The maximum area for such sign is 12 square feet.

#### **Garage Sale Signs – Section 3-1805.H**

The maximum area of garage sale signs is four square feet per sign. There may be one sign on site and two directional signs only on the sale dates. Signs must be placed on private property and may not be placed in city rights-of-way (i.e. utility poles, sidewalks, bridges, etc.).



#### **Sign Permit – Section 4-1002**

In most cases, a sign may not be located, placed, erected, constructed, altered or extended without first obtaining a sign permit. Applications for sign permits are available online or in the city's Planning & Development Department.

#### **Prohibited Signs – Section 3-1803**

The following forms of signage/advertising are prohibited: balloons, cold air inflatables, human signs, streamers, strings of pennants, portable signs, roof and above-roof signs, vehicle and trailer signs. Any exceptions allowed are in Section 3-1805.V.

### **Signs in the Right-of-Way – Section 3-1803.L**

Signs cannot be placed on publicly owned land or easements or inside street rights-of-way. This includes signs on utility poles, sidewalks, bridges, medians, etc. Signs placed in these locations are in violation of federal law, state law and local ordinances. Penalties may range from monetary fines to criminal arrest. Such signs may be removed and disposed of/destroyed by any city employee without prior notice to the violator.

Note: this includes political and garage sale signs if placed in violation of this ordinance.

### **Window Signs – Section 3-1805.Q**

Window signs are allowed in nonresidential districts. Maximum area of these signs is 25% of the total area of the window where the signage is placed, up to eight square feet per window, with a total maximum cumulative area of 24 square feet.

### **Sign Maintenance – Section 3-1502.I**

Signs must be maintained in good condition, free of mildew, rust, and loose material, including peeling or fading paint or materials.

### **Political Signs – Section 3-1805.N.1**

One temporary yard sign shall be allowed for each political candidate or issue for each frontage per parcel of land. Such signs shall be erected no sooner than 60 days prior to the election for which they are intended, and shall be removed within seven days after the election for which they were intended. The total sign face area of each sign shall not exceed six square feet in area on parcels of land designated or used for residential purposes and 32 square feet of total sign face area on parcels of land designated or used for nonresidential purposes.

If you have questions regarding sign regulations, call the Code Compliance Division Sign Inspector at 562-4726.

### **Trash Collection – Section 1502.G.4**

Trash collection follows a set schedule. This may be viewed at the City of Clearwater's Internet site [www.myclclearwater.com](http://www.myclclearwater.com), then go to City Departments and select Solid Waste Department. Bulk items intended for pick-up by the city may not be placed at the curb more than 24 hours prior to the scheduled pick-up.

### **Trees**

Permits may be required for removal of trees. Call the City's Planning & Development Department at 562-4567 for information on approvals before removing any trees.

### **Tree Trimming**

By City ordinance, owners of residential properties may place tree trimmings by the curb for collection, provided the homeowners perform the tree removal themselves. Grass clippings, leaves and other related debris may not be blown into the street and/or down the sewer drain.

Note: Landscape and tree contractors must remove all tree trimmings and associated debris from the site and are not permitted to leave debris for collection.

For questions, or to report violations, call the city's Solid Waste Department at 562-4920.

### **Unsafe structures – Section 3-1502.A**



Unsafe structures are buildings which are unsanitary, decayed, deteriorated, or dilapidated, a fire hazard, or remain in an unsecured condition. The city's Construction Inspectors will evaluate the matter, and if required, declare the building to be unsafe. To report unsafe non-secure structures or properties contact the Planning & Development Department at 562-4567.

### **Vehicle Repair – Section 3-916.C**

In residential zoning districts, no repair of any vehicle is permitted unless such repair is both confined within a completely enclosed building and limited to vehicle service involving vehicles owned by the person who resides at that residence. Under no circumstance shall such repair be conducted as a commercial activity in residential zoning districts.

### **Water Restrictions – Section 32.153**

Water restrictions are subject to frequent changes depending on drought conditions. You can refer to the City's website for the most current water rules or call: 562-4720 for further assistance. Log on to [www.myclearwater.com](http://www.myclearwater.com), go to Quick Links and then select watering restrictions from the drop down menu.

## City of Clearwater Contact Numbers

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Building Permits.....         | 562-4567 |
| Economic Development.....     | 562-4220 |
| Engineering.....              | 562-4750 |
| Environmental.....            | 562-4745 |
| Fire Administration.....      | 562-4334 |
| Landscaping.....              | 562-4746 |
| Parks & Recreation.....       | 562-4800 |
| Planning.....                 | 562-4567 |
| Police Non-Emergency.....     | 562-4242 |
| Public Services.....          | 562-4950 |
| Office of Aging.....          | 793-2339 |
| Solid Waste.....              | 562-4920 |
| Trees-City Property.....      | 562-4950 |
| Trees - Private Property..... | 562-4746 |
| Traffic Engineering.....      | 562-4750 |
| Utilities.....                | 562-4960 |
| Zoning.....                   | 562-4567 |

### In case of Emergency-Dial 911

Your involvement and cooperation with the City is greatly appreciated and needed. Together we can improve the quality of life for all citizens of Clearwater.

We hope this booklet has assisted you in learning more about the City Codes. For additional information or assistance, feel free to contact us.

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