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Standards Guide For Quality Neighborhoods

St. Lucie County
Code Enforcement
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www.stlucieco.gov



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A Message from the Code Enforcement Supervisor

Dear Citizens:

We are proud to have this opportunity to present our 1st edition of our "Standards Guide." Our goal is not only to perform fair and equitable enforcement of the codes, but also to educate citizens of the codes. We are constantly seeking a partnership approach with the community in our code enforcement efforts. Often, it has been a difficult task in maintaining the balance between the rights of individual property owners and the welfare of the general public when enforcing the codes.

We continue to refine the skills, practices, and professionalism of our code enforcement staff through continuing education, re-organization, and technological advances. Our goal is, and will continue to be, voluntary compliance of the codes before pursuing further enforcement action. Your Code Enforcement Officers are here to serve you. They will do it honestly and fairly keeping in mind they are charged with protecting your civil rights.

Your St. Lucie County Code Enforcement Officers are professional Board Certified members of the Florida Association of Code Enforcement (F.A.C.E.), having completed different levels of certification on Fundamentals of Code Enforcement, Administrative Aspects of Code Enforcement, and Legal Issues in Code Enforcement.

Our goal is always to educate, protect property values, and Maintain neighborhood pride.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Bunt
Code Enforcement Supervisor



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Common Code Violations

1-9-19 CCL – Junk, Trash, and Debris: Outside storage of items and materials are not permitted. All Items must be in a full enclosed structure.

1-9-19 CCL – Unserviceable Vehicles: Please repair or remove any unserviceable vehicles. Vehicles missing tags, engine parts, and body parts are considered unserviceable. Vehicle must be road worthy.

1-9-17 CCL – Junk, Trash, and Debris on County Right Of Way: Please remove all Junk, Trash, and Debris from the right of way. Such as: tree trimmings, wood, furniture, appliances. If these items are not picked up by the waste hauling company they are not placed properly.

1-9-32 (D) CCL – Public & Unsanitary Nuisance, Overgrowth: Excessive overgrowth of grass and weeds. Please mow and maintain the property. All grass and trees are to be maintained.

1-9-32 (D) CCL – Public & Unsanitary Nuisance, Dead Trees: Trees that are dead and decaying must be removed from any property.

1-15-22 CCL – Parking or Selling Vehicles on the Right of Way: Vehicles may not be parked or parked for sale on any Right of Way or grass medians.

1-17-1 CCL – Obstruction / Signs in the Right of Way: Please remove or take down items that obstruct County right of way.

8.00.03 (F) LDC – Outside Storage of Boats, Trailers, & RV's: Please move the [] Boat, [] RV, [] Trailer to the side or rear of the property. To be in the front, it needs to be on a paved surface and 5 feet from the property line. You are only allowed 2 per property. (See item list)

13.09.00 LDC – Property Maintenance: All structures must be kept in a workman like manner. Structures must be free from chipping, peeling, worn, and weathered paint, missing or dry-rot portions. Boards and Hurricane Shutters can only be put up in the event of a storm or if a structure is **not** occupied.

7.10.03 LDC – Number of Domestic Animals: No more then 3 Domestic animals are prohibited in a Residential zone. Dogs, Cats, etc. Non-Domestic pets are prohibited.

13.00.01 LDC (Article 306.0)– Overcrowding/Rooming House: No more then 2 unrelated people can reside in a single family home within a residential zone.

7.10.14 LDC / 1-20-42 CCL – Commercial / Heavy Vehicle in a Residential Zone: The commercial vehicle that is being parked or stored on the property must be removed.

These are a listing of the most common violations. There are many others that are not listed.

Noise Complaints:

Sec. 1-13.8-18. Sound level limitations:

No person shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit the operation of any sound source in such a manner as to create a sound level that exceeds the sound level limits set forth in Table 1 when measured at the real property line of the nearest receiving property, using the slow response setting unless otherwise noted. Such a sound source would constitute a noise disturbance.

TABLE I
SOUND LEVEL LIMITS BY RECEIVING PROPERTY

TABLE INSET:

Receiving Property Category	Time	Sound Level Limit (dBA)
Residential	7:00 a.m.--10:00 p.m.	60
	10:00 p.m.--7:00 a.m.	55
Commercial	At all times	65
Industrial	At all times	70

(1) If the noise is an impulsive sound, the fast response setting that shall be used and the daytime (7:00 a.m.--10:00 p.m.) limits of Table 1 shall be increased by ten (10) dBA.

(2) In a multi-family dwelling, it shall be unlawful to create or permit to be created any noise that exceeds the daytime (7:00 a.m.--10:00 p.m.) limit of fifty (50) dBA and the nighttime (10:00 p.m.--7:00 a.m.) limit of forty (40) dBA as measured from a neighbor's dwelling.

(3) In a mixed use building, it shall be unlawful to create or permit to be created any noise that exceeds the daytime (7:00 a.m.--10:00 p.m.) limit of 55 dBA and the nighttime (10:00 p.m.--7:00 a.m.) limit of forty-five (45) dBA as measured within the residential use portion of the building.

(4) In addition to the limits of Table 1, for any sound source which impacts residential property, the maximum allowable sound level limits for the individual octave bands whose centers are 31.5, 63 and 125 Hertz shall not exceed sixty-five (65) dB.

Important Facts on Noise Complaints:

Code Enforcement is responsible for Noise Complaints where a business is effecting surrounding properties i.e. commercial zone effecting a residential zone. All noise tests are based on a 15 minute test, The readings are then averaged to produce a final dba reading. You can call for a noise complaint Mon. thru Fri. 8a.m. to 5 p.m. (772)462-1571 or on our On-Call number for weekends anytime (772)370-2545.

Code Enforcement is **not responsible** for domestic noise complaints, complaints of motor vehicles playing their stereos or having loud mufflers. These complaints are handled by the Sheriffs Department, you can call 911 to report these complaints as they are happening. In the case of barking dogs Animal Control will handle these matters, you can contact them at (772) 462-2136.

St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners Code Enforcement Program:

The Board of County Commissioners funds and operates a Code Enforcement Program for the unincorporated areas of St. Lucie County. St. Lucie County Code Enforcement is a division of the Code Compliance and Public Works Department. Staff in this section investigates complaints of alleged code violations regarding *Zoning, Overgrowth, Unserviceable Vehicles, Outside Storage, Property Maintenance, Noise, Public and Life Safety.*

The following services are provided:

Investigate code complaints as found in the Land Development and Code and Compiled Laws. Investigate immediate health and safety issues brought to our attention Assist citizens with compliance measures before resorting to fines and liens. Assist the public courteously and expeditiously. Refer other complaints to other government agencies for investigation.

The mission of Code Enforcement is to ensure and enhance the quality of life of county residents by requiring owners of property in non-compliance with county codes to come into compliance. The jurisdiction of St. Lucie County Code Enforcement extends **ONLY** to property located in the unincorporated areas of St. Lucie County. Please contact your city Code Enforcement for concerns on property located within the city limits of any municipality within St. Lucie County.

St. Lucie County Code Enforcement is located at the St. Lucie County Government Complex, 2300 Virginia Ave. Ft. Pierce, FL 32940, the phone number is: (772)462-1571 and fax (772) 462-5214.

If you have any questions about St. Lucie County Code Enforcement and the information in this booklet, you may contact the Code Enforcement Supervisor, Dennis A. Bunt (772) 462-1571.

Emergency Situations: If you wish to report a violation concerning noise, public nuisance, graffiti, commercial vehicles after hours or on weekends you may contact our on-call staff for a response **(772)370-2545**.

Routine Complaints: All complaints are processed in the order that they are received. However, complaints are prioritized according to their impact on the environment and public safety. The most significant impacts may be investigated first. Therefore, the accuracy and completeness of the information you provide. Please be as specific and complete as possible when filing your complaint.



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The Violation Process:

When citing a violator or property owner for a code violation, staff must follow the guidelines of Florida State Statute Chapter 162.

- 1.) Make an inspection- be sure that a violation of code exists.
- 2.) Check the property address on the county tax roll, to find the listed property owner.
- 3.) Create a Notice of Violation this must include: listed owner, parcel ID#, violation and code section, corrective action, and "reasonable" time to correct the violation. As stated in chapter 162.
- 4.) After the time given for correction has expired set up a follow-up inspection. This time frame will vary based on the violation. The time for correction may also change based on correspondence with the owner or violator. So always make contact with your Code Officer.
- 5.) If the violation is not corrected then a Notice to Appear will be sent out. This notice is to schedule the case to appear before the Code Enforcement Board. The Code Enforcement Board meets every first Wednesday of the month. Notice to Appear must be sent certified mail, hand delivery, or posted at the location of the property a minimum of 10 days before the hearing.
- 6.) The Code Enforcement Board – is a panel of 7 citizens who are appointed by the commissioners to act as a quasi-judicial board. That is empowered to impose fines for violation of County Codes. Fines can be up to \$250 per day, with a maximum fine set by the board.
- 7.) If a case is found by the board to be in violation, the board will set a date for compliance and if the violation is not corrected a fine hearing will be set.
- 8.) Cases that appear at a fine hearing can receive a fine of \$250 per day, \$500 per day if the violation is a Repeat Violation, or a one time fine which is set by the board.
- 9.) After a fine has reached it's maximum amount, staff will wait 90 days before filing the fine with the Clerk of Court as a lien.
- 10.) Once the board has issued an order Code Enforcement does not have the power to change or alter the order. All extensions, reductions, etc. must be approved in front of the Code Enforcement Board.
- 11.) Properties that remain in violation after being fined and a lien recorded will be sent to the County Attorney for further legal action. This could result in a court injunction, court hearing, etc.

To learn more about Code Enforcement or the Code Enforcement Board you can attend a monthly meeting or watch it on SLCTV every first Wednesday of the Month.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q: What is a commercial vehicle?

A: A commercial vehicle is any vehicle that has a GVW (gross vehicle weight) of 10,000 lbs. or more, or a tax class of 40 to 44. Vehicles that have company names, numbers, etc. such as vans and pick-up trucks are not considered commercial vehicles. ***NOTE*** Commercial Vehicles can't be parked or stored in a residential zone. This includes tow trucks on rotation.

Q: What is an unserviceable vehicle?

A: An unserviceable vehicle is any vehicle that is not road worthy. If you do not have a tag or registration, missing parts, flat tires, smashed windshield, etc. your vehicle will be presumed unserviceable.

Q: Why is my stuff classified as Junk or Trash?

A: The code is entitled Junk, Trash, and Debris. The definitions of these terms are different from the common everyday meanings. You can request a copy of the definitions from your code enforcement officer.

Q: Does Code Enforcement accept anonymous code complaints?

A: Yes. The Board of County Commissioners has directed Code Enforcement to accept anonymous complaints. Complaints may be mailed, called in (772) 462-1571, faxed (772) 462-5214, or submitted from our web site, http://stlucieco.gov/public_works/code_enforcement.htm NOTE: Faxes and e-mail services often contain identifying information.

Q: Will Code Enforcement drive through my neighborhood and address all of the code violations on all of the properties in the neighborhood?

A: We are a "pro/re-active" division, which means – we respond to complaints but we will write violations as we see them. The biggest obstacle in writing all the violations in a neighborhood at one time is that the area is too large to be observed by the one officer assigned to that zone. Complaints to our office is the best way to ensure that we know of a violation.

Q: What should be done if a dog, cat, etc. is running loose?

A: Call Animal Control to report an animal at large. (772) 462-2136.

Q: What should be done if a neighbors' dog barks all the time and creates a nuisance?

A: Call Animal Control to report the disturbance (772) 462-2136.

Q: Complaints concerning permits, unlicensed contractors, or building?

A: These should be directed to Contractor Licensing (772) 462-1672

Q: What do I do if a violation is happening on the weekend?

A: You can always call the Code Enforcement "Hotline" (772)370-2545 and report a violation during weekend hour.

If you have any questions regarding codes or jurisdiction, please contact us at (772) 462-1571



What is the Neighborhood Team and What does it do? The Neighborhood Team is a program supported by the Board of County Commissioners that was formed to help citizens who are financially or physically unable to keep their property up to the standard of St. Lucie County Codes. The program was designed to remove blight from properties and help restore pride and value to neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Team Functions:

The Neighborhood Team recruits volunteers to help carry out work on properties such as; Exterior Maintenance, Excessive Overgrowth, and the removal of Junk, Trash, and Debris. It is the Neighborhood Teams purpose to help prevent code violations and keep neighborhoods free from blight.

The Neighborhood Team will take referrals from Code Enforcement, Road & Bridge, Sheriff Deputies, neighbors, or citizens who realize that they may need help. An Neighborhood Team representative will contact you and go over the program and requirements. Once an application has been submitted and approved the Neighborhood Team will set up a date to take care of the problems. They can also help you if you have already been cited by Code Enforcement by contacting them and explaining that you are now a project of the Neighborhood Team. This will allow for an extension to be given. Remember it is never too late.

Neighborhood Team Contacts:

You can find out how to volunteer for the Neighborhood Team by contacting Mark Godwin at **(772) 462-1418**

If you would like to be considered for Neighborhood Team Assistance or would just like information on the Neighborhood Team Program please contact the N-Team Hotline at **(772) 370-2545**.

Don't forget that you can contact Community Services for information on additional programs offered by St. Lucie County such as SHIP and INTACT. (772) 462-1777



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GRAFFITI: THAT WRITING ON THE WALL

It has been called the "Newspaper of the Streets." What exactly do those cryptic, seemingly unintelligible scribbles mean? Graffiti can be divided into two types: graffiti done by taggers and graffiti done by street gangs.

Even though taggers and street gangs both use graffiti as an illegal form of communication, their intent is different. Taggers see graffiti as an art form, a game, or a friendly contest. Street gangs use graffiti to mark areas they frequent and to issue threats to their enemies.

The Taggers

Taggers are generally less violent than traditional street gangs. Tagger graffiti differs from street gang graffiti in that it is generally more intricate and more "artistic" than the graffiti a street gang would do. The lettering may be entwined and turned upside down or sideways to the point of looking more like a maze than letters. The graffiti that they paint on walls usually is done in several colors and might include caricatures of animals or humans. Taggers would call this type of graffiti a "piece," presumably short for "masterpiece." This kind of piece is usually designed ahead of time, and may have been sketched out in a notebook beforehand. Underground magazines and newsletters publish tagger pieces. A worldwide network exists to keep taggers in touch with each other. Many taggers believe what they are doing is street art and is not a crime.

Another activity taggers are involved in is "tagging," putting their moniker or "tag," in as many places as they can. Taggers engage in contests with other groups, trying to outdo each other in terms of the number of "tags" put up, the difficulty of the artwork, or the difficulty of the location of the tag.



Taggers gain visible recognition from their writing on walls. The more visible a wall is, the more desirable it is to taggers. Freeway overpass signs, water towers, and billboards can quickly build a tagger's reputation. They call it "tagging the heavens."

Taggers will sometimes use sticky-backed labels (like the name tags that are often handed out at training seminars). The tagger will write his moniker on 10 to 20 labels and then as he walks through an area he'll just peel off the backing and put the label on any surface he passes. Some typical tagger monikers are "Nope," "Dime," "Bug," "Smok," "Toke," and "Rek."

Parents who believe that their child is involved in tagging should look for spray paint cans, a collection of aerosol spray tips, wide-tip markers, glass etching tools, surgical gloves, nametag stickers, and photographs or self-made videos of graffiti. Sketches of graffiti, practice sheets containing a moniker, or school notebooks with doodles that resemble graffiti may indicate tagging activity. Paint or marker dye on the hands or extra-large, hooded coats with large cargo-type pockets often indicates an involvement in tagging.

Street Gang Graffiti

Street gang members put up graffiti to increase their visibility, threaten rivals, and to intimidate residents in the area. It is usually much more primitive and sometimes more easily read than graffiti done by taggers. Gang graffiti may show alliances between gangs, mark the scene of a crime, or commemorate the death of a beloved "homie" (with slogans such as "In memory of" or "RIP").

It usually includes the gang name and possibly a list of the monikers of several members in the gang or perhaps a threat aimed at a rival group (with slogans such as "187" or "CK" or "BK"). One area had graffiti that included "187" as a header, and beneath it a list of all of the rival gang names. Monikers that are typical in street gangs are "Smiley," "Flaco," "Scrappy," "Payaso," "Goofy," "P dog," or "T-Locc." Telephone area code prefixes are sometimes included.



Street gang graffiti may be done in old English-style letters, balloon (or block) letters, or simple, single-stroke letters. Many of the Hispanic gangs will include Spanish phrases such as "Loco" (Crazy), or "Rifa" ("We control") or "Rifamos" ("We are best"). Cross-outs of individual letters or of rival gang names are common. Individual letters are crossed-out when that letter is in a rival gang's name. For example, a Blood set may cross out all the Cs in any graffiti they put up.

Street gang graffiti may contain derogatory references toward rival gangs. Blood sets may refer to Crip sets as "Crabs" and Crip sets may use "Slobs" in their graffiti as an insult to Blood sets. Gang graffiti that includes "187" indicates a threat to kill. "187" is the California penal code for homicide, and, used in street graffiti, tells rival gangs that those who painted the graffiti intend to kill them.

The number "13" is used often in street graffiti, mostly among Hispanic gangs. The "13" may be represented as "XIII," "X3," "13," or with the word "trece." There are various explanations for the use of the number "13." The thirteenth letter of the alphabet is "M" and one explanation says that "M" refers to the Mexican Mafia; another says it stands for Mexico, the homeland; and another says that it refers to a street in Mexico that starts with the letter "M"--the street where the first gang was started.



WHAT CAN I DO?

ALWAYS paint over graffiti immediately or call an agency, which will paint it free for you. Research done in California shows that areas that are immediately painted over are much less likely to be "hit" again. Graffiti that is left up becomes a status symbol. Many communities have "adopt-a-wall" programs or programs that encourage volunteers to assist in cleaning off or painting over graffiti. Graffiti hot lines, for reporting graffiti, are available in many areas.

NEVER confront or challenge someone who is tagging a wall. Street gang members are very often armed and may assault a challenger even if they are not. Remember, even taggers may be armed. If possible, obtain an accurate description of the individuals, graffiti, vehicle, and license plate number. Video tapes of graffiti activities are also useful. All information should be passed on to your local law enforcement agency to investigate.

If you find graffiti in public places please notify one of the following agencies in which the graffiti was found:

SLC Graffiti Hotline	370-2545
St. Lucie County	
Code Enforcement	462-1571
Sheriffs Dept.	462-7300
Fort Pierce	
Code Enforcement	460-2200
Police	461-3820

Contact Information List:

St. Lucie County Contact Numbers			
Code Enforcement	772-462-1571	Abuse Registry	800-962-2873
All Emergencies	911	American Red Cross	772-461-3950
Sheriff Department Administration switchboard	772-462-7300	Center for Criminal Justice Training (Indian River Community College)	772-464-7676
Building & Permitting	772-462-1553	Consumer Complaints Division	800-435-7352
Contractor Licensing	772-462-1672	Driver License Office	772-468-3957
Zoning	772-462-1553	Emergency Management (Disaster Preparedness)	772-461-5201
Public Works	772-462-1707	Federal Bureau of Investigation	772-461-6142
Crimestoppers	800-273-8477	Florida Department of Law Enforcement	772-468-5692
Crime Prevention Unit	772-871-5303	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	800-432-2046
Animal Control	772-462-2136	Florida Highway Patrol	772-468-3967
St. Lucie County Health Department	772-462-3800	Florida Marine Patrol	561-624-6935
St. Lucie County School Board	772-429-3600	Fort Pierce Police Department	772-461-3820
Patrol Operations Division	772-462-3320	Motor Vehicle Registration	772-462-1653
Records Unit	772-462-3299	Port St. Lucie Police Department	772-871-5000
School Resource Deputy Unit	772-462-3264	Probation and Parole	772-468-3933
Special Investigations Unit	772-462-3300	St. Lucie County Administration Offices	772-462-1100
Traffic Unit	772-462-3297	St. Lucie County Fire District Headquarters	772-462-8300
Victim Assistance	772-462-3230	Treasure Coast Safety Council	772-461-1424
Veterans Services	772-462-1726	State Attorney (19th Judicial Circuit Court)	772-465-3000