

# Community Response Team

A Citizen's Guide to  
Code Enforcement



“Achieving Code Compliance  
through Education, Communication  
and Cooperation.”

# Clearwater Community Response Team

## An Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Community Response Team! We've come a long way since October 1993, when the Code Enforcement Department was restructured and renamed into today's Community Response Team.

Several notable changes have taken place over the years which would not have been possible without support and commitment from our City Council, City Staff and you, the community. Some highlights of our program:

- We are now a division of the the Development and Neighborhood Services Department working closely with our other main Divisions; Permitting, Building Inspections and Neighborhood Services.
- We emphasize education, communication and cooperation
- We take an active role in community events and meetings
- We identify problems and share strategies with other City Departments and government agencies
- We utilize the County Court System for repeat or problem violators
- We offer on-site counseling and more alternatives to citizens who are in violation of City Codes
- We offer ride-along orientation programs to citizens, Board members or other City employees to see firsthand what our program entails
- We conduct door-to-door, block-by-block inspections in our effort to clean up the City one block at a time

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

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

Sincerely,



Jeff Kronschnabl

Development and Neighborhood Services Director

Q: What are the services/responsibilities of the Community Response Team?

A: Formerly known as Code Enforcement, the Community Response Team is responsible for obtaining compliance to established community standards as set forth in the City's Code of Ordinances. Specifically, we regulate the City's ordinances on Address Numbering, Graffiti, Business Tax Receipts, Newsracks, Public Nuisances, Sign Regulations, Watering Restrictions, Zoning Regulations and other Community Development Code issues.

Q: How do I report a possible violation?

A: Call the Community Response Team. Be prepared to give the street address and a brief description of the potential violation. Your call may remain anonymous.



Q: Do I have to leave my name and number?

A: No. Our office receives and investigates anonymous complaints on a daily basis. If you leave your name or phone number, it becomes part of the public record and is available to any citizen for review.

Q: How do I know my complaint was acted upon?

A: If you've called in a complaint and do not see any results, please call again. Our staff will gladly check the computer records and inform you of the status of your report.

Q: What happens if I'm in violation?

A: First, if there is a suspected violation, an Inspector will leave a card or an informational doorhanger at your residence. Second, if we receive no response from you, a Notice of Violation will be mailed to the property owner and/or occupant giving a specific amount of time to comply. If you need additional time to correct a violation, please take the time to telephone the Inspector. Our goal is to achieve voluntary compliance through education, communication and cooperation. As a rule, monetary fines are used only as a last resort.

Q: What is a “Notice to Appear?”

A: Inspectors have the option of issuing a Notice to Appear citation instead of a Notice of Violation. These citations are sent directly to County Court. You will have the option of a trial or being fined accordingly. Notices to Appear are used most frequently for water and other transient-type violations and for repeat violator and/or violations.

Q: Is there any type of assistance available?

Our Inspectors will gladly work with you to come into compliance with City Codes. However, if you do need additional assistance there are alternative options available, including the City’s Economic Development Department. Please call 727-562-4040 for information on how they may be able to assist you.

Q: My whole neighborhood has violations...why are you picking on me?

A: Our Inspectors try to cover their entire zone on a routine basis and may have spotted your violation at that time. In addition, they respond to any and all complaints that come into our offices. If you feel we have missed a violation in your neighborhood, please feel free to call and ask an Inspector to investigate. In no way is this program designed to be used as a selective enforcement tool or to be biased against any one citizen, group or business entity.

Q: This is a ridiculous waste of taxpayers’ money. Shouldn’t you be out chasing “real criminals?”

A. The Community Response Team is dedicated to maintaining a high standard of living for all citizens of Clearwater. Code enforcement is not law enforcement. 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 debris, overgrowth and graffiti are more susceptible to crime than areas that remain free of Code violations. We actively enforce these regulations to ensure that your neighborhood remains a safe and healthy place to live.

Q: What are some of the more common code violations?

A: The Community Response Team is often asked about the following Codes:

## **Abandoned (Inoperative) Vehicles**

All vehicles must be mechanically operable and display current registration or must be kept under a carport or in a garage. Operable means that the vehicle runs and all tires are inflated (Section 3-1503.B.6.).

## **Address Numbering**

For public safety reasons, all developed properties must have their address number clearly visible from the street that they face and the numbers must be Arabic numerals (script and numbers on the curb do not meet code requirements). Residential properties must have numbers at least 3 inches in height, nonresidential properties must have numbers at least 6 inches in height (Section 28.82).

## **Animals**

City Code empowers Police Officers to handle **ALL** animal complaints including barking dogs, animals running at large, etc. If you wish to report a violation involving animals, please call the Police Department's non-emergency number at 727-562-4242 (Chapter 8).



## **Boats**

In residential zones boats may not be parked or stored on the street or street right-of-way. Boats 20 feet or less in length may be parked between the principal structure and the right of way. Boats over 20 feet long may not be located between the principal structure and the right-of-way. Boats must display a current registration (Section 3-1407.A.).

## **Business Tax Receipt**

Any person holding him or herself out to the public as being engaged in business or offering services for sale to the public, is required to obtain a City of Clearwater Business Tax Receipt. For more information on how to apply for a license, please call our Development Services Department at 727-562-4567. If you suspect someone is running an unauthorized home business, call the Community Response Team at 727-562-4720 and an Inspector will investigate (Sections 29.28 and 29.30(1)).

### **Canvas Carports**

Canvas or other similar materials may not be used for any accessory structure. A carport is an accessory structure (Section 3-201.B.9.).

### **Commercial Vehicles**



In residential zones commercial vehicles and semi-tractor trailer trucks or cabs may not be parked or stored on the street or street right-of-way. No semi-tractor trailer truck or cab may be parked or stored anywhere on a residential property.

Commercial vehicles over 20 feet in length, 7 feet in height or 7 feet in width may not be located between the principal structure and the right-of-way (Section 3-1407.A.).

### **Debris**

To keep our City free from blight, no accumulation of debris is allowed on a property, including rear and side yards. (Sections 3-1503.B.5. and 7.).

### **Fences**

Fences require a building permit which can be obtained from our Development Services Department at 727-562-4567. In addition, fences must be maintained in a structurally sound and attractive manner (Section 3-808).

### **Garage Sales**

Garage, yard or estate sales may be held no more than 2 times per property within one year-no longer than 3 days each (Section 3-2103.A.).

### **Graffiti**

Graffiti is monitored and tracked by the Community Response Team, Solid Waste Department and Police Department. In order to keep Clearwater a clean, safe place to live, prompt removal is required. Assistance is available for those properties targeted with graffiti. Please call the Community Response Team at 727-562-4720 for information (Section 3-1504 and 3-1503.B.14.).

### **Grass and Overgrowth**

Grass must be maintained under 12 inches high and must not extend more than 4 inches over the sidewalk, curb or edge of pavement. Rights-of-way and sidewalks shall be clear of refuse and vegetation and a height clearance of at

least 8 feet from the pavement surface shall be provided unless an exception has been granted by the Urban Forester for protected trees (Section 3-1503.B.).

### **Grass Parking**

Motor vehicles may not be parked, displayed or stored on grass or other unpaved area unless specifically authorized by the parking code (Section 3-1403.B.1.). (See Grass Parking - Single-Family and Duplex)

### **Grass Parking - Single-Family and Duplex**

Is restricted to one space only and that space must be adjacent and parallel to the driveway. If the space is not kept landscaped (as in “grass”) it may have to be filled in with pavers, concrete, turf block or other approved suitable parking material (Section 3-1407.A.4.).

### **Hauling Trailers**

In residential zones, hauling trailers may not be parked or stored on the street right-of-way; nor may they be parked or stored between the principle structure and the right-of-way. Hauling trailers must display a current registration. (Section 3-1407.A.)

### **Housing**

All residential properties must be in compliance with the 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 our Building Construction Inspectors (Section 3-1502.A.).

### **Landscaping**

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 727-562-4720 and we will provide you with a copy (Section 3-1502.H).

### **Motorized Scooters**

Use of motorized scooters, go-peds, mini-cycles and similar powered vehicles may require licenses, registrations and meet other requirements. Call the Police Department at 562-4242 for information.

## **Newsracks**

The City has restrictions regarding the location of newsracks upon rights-of-way and public property. Call us at 727-562-4720 if you have questions regarding newsracks (Section 3-909).

## **Noise**

Excessive noise can be a serious problem for residents. To report noise violations, please call the Police Department at 727-562-4242 (Section 3-1508).

## **Outdoor Storage**

Equipment, material or furnishings not designed for use outdoors, such as automobile parts and tires, building materials and interior furniture may not be stored outdoors. Additionally, goods and materials may not be stored so that they are visible from an abutting property or a public right-of-way (Section 3-912 and 3-1502.F. & G.).

## **Parking Lots**

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 (Section 3-1502.K.4.).

## **Portable Storage Units**

A portable storage unit may be placed for no more than 4 days and no more than 4 times per year on residentially zoned property. On nonresidential property, portable storage units may be placed for 30 days, not more than 4 times a year or for the duration of an active construction permit. The unit may not be larger than 8 feet high, 8 feet wide and 16 feet long, have no more than 2 sign faces no larger than 12"x18" each and have a sticker that indicates the most recent date on which the unit was delivered to the site (Section 3-2103).

## **Property Maintenance Standards**

Exterior surfaces of buildings must be maintained so that they are free of mildew, rust and peeling paint. All cornices, trim and window frames that are damaged, sagging or otherwise deteriorated shall be repaired or replaced to be made structurally sound. All exterior surfaces other than decay-resistant wood shall be protected from the elements by paint or other protective covering. Doors, windows and roofs must be maintained in a secure and weatherproof condition (Section 3-1502.B.).

## Recreational Vehicles



Recreational vehicles, travel trailers, motor homes and camping trailers may not be parked or stored either in the street right-of-way or on private property between the principal structure and the right-of-way. All RVs must be operable and display current registration.

Hauling trailers are subject to the same restrictions. No vehicle shall be used for living, sleeping or housekeeping purposes in the city except as recreational vehicles, travel trailers or campers may be permitted within an approved recreational vehicle park. (Section 3-1407.A. and 3-915.A.).

## Rental Property

A business tax receipt is required for all rental of condominiums, single family and multi-family residences. Rental of property for less than 30 days or one calendar month (which ever is less) is prohibited in certain areas and must meet requirements of restrictions in all areas where allowed (Please call the Planning Department at 562-4567 for information on approvals if allowed).

## Residential Parking Restrictions

The parking restrictions placed on RVs, boats, commercial vehicles (except semi trucks and semi trailers) and hauling trailers do not apply to the loading, unloading or cleaning of these vehicles completed within a 24-hour period no more than 2 times a month; nor do they apply to commercial vehicles during the performance of a service. (Section 3-1407.B.).

## Signage

1. Business opening: One temporary grand opening sign is permitted for 30 days after the issuance of an occupational license. Maximum area for such sign is 12 square feet in area (Section 3-1805.C.1.).
2. Garage sale signs: Maximum area of garage sale signs is 4 square feet per sign. There may be one sign on site and 2 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 and so on (Section 3-1805.H.).
3. Sign Permit: 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 our Development Services Department (Section 4-1002).

4. Prohibited signs: In most cases, the following are prohibited: balloons, cold air inflatables, human signs, streamers, strings of pennants, portable signs, roof and above-roof signs, and vehicle and trailer signs (Section 3-1803).
5. Signs in the Right-of-Way: Signs cannot be placed on publicly-owned land or easements or inside street rights-of-way. This includes signs on utility poles, sidewalks, bridges, etc.. Such signs may be removed and disposed of by any City employee (Section 3-1803.L.).
6. 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 8 square feet per window, with a total max cumulative area of 24 square feet per located (Section 3-1805.Q.).
7. Maintenance: Signs must be maintained in good condition, free of mildew, rust, and loose material, including peeling or fading of paint or materials (Section 3-1502.I.).
8. Political signs: One sign per candidate or issue per street frontage is allowed. Maximum allowable area per sign is 6 square feet in a residentially-zoned area and 32 square feet in a nonresidentially-zoned area (Section 3-1805. N.1).

Sign questions? Call 727-562-4726.

## **Trees**

Permits may be required for removal of trees. Call the Planning Department at 562-4567 for information on approvals for removing trees.

## **Tree Trimming**

By City ordinance, owners of residential properties may place tree trimmings by the curb for City collection, providing the homeowners perform the tree removal themselves.

Note: Landscape and tree contractors must remove all tree trimmings and associated debris from the site and are not permitted to leave debris for City collection. For questions, please call Solid Waste Department at 562-4920.

## **Unsafe structures**

To report unsafe structures or properties which are not secure, contact the Development Services Department at 727-562-4567 (Section 3-1502.A.).

## **Vehicle Repair**

In residential zones, no repair of any vehicle is permitted unless such repair is either confined within a completely enclosed building and limited to vehicle service involving vehicles owned by a person who resides at that residence. Under no circumstance shall such repair be conducted as a commercial activity (Section 3-915.C.).

## **Watering Restrictions**

To conserve our water supply, watering is allowed (Section 32.153) per the following schedule:

### **- WATER RESTRICTIONS: -**

#### **Potable water-no watering between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.**

Addresses ending in an **even** number, letters **A** through **M** - **Saturdays only.**

Addresses ending in an **odd** number, letters **N** through **Z**, or **no street address** - **Sundays only.**

#### **Wells, lakes or ponds-no watering between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.**

Addresses ending in an **even** number, letters **A** through **M** - **Saturdays only.**

Addresses ending in an **odd** number, letters **N** through **Z**, **mixed** or **no street address** - **Sundays only.**

Water restrictions are subject to frequent changes depending on drought conditions. Please call: 562-4987 for the most current water rules.

Website for watering restrictions: [http://www.myclearwater.com/gov/depts/pwa/public\\_utils/divisions/water/water\\_restrictions.asp](http://www.myclearwater.com/gov/depts/pwa/public_utils/divisions/water/water_restrictions.asp)

The Clearwater Community Response Team is responsible for the regulation and enforcement of established community standards as set forth in the City's Code of Ordinances.

Community Response Team Inspectors respond to anonymous and citizen complaints, complaints from other City departments and other jurisdictions. They will perform routine "sweeps" or patrols of each subdivision within the City to locate violations. In no way is this program designed to be used as a selective enforcement tool or to be biased against any one citizen, group or business.

Once 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 time to comply.

Inspectors have the option of taking a case to the Municipal Code Enforcement Board or through the Pinellas County Court System for those violators who do not comply.

As a rule, fines and liens are used only as a last resort. Instead, our goal is to achieve problem resolution through education, communication and cooperation.

#### City of Clearwater Contact Numbers

Building Permits	562-4567
Economic Development	562-4054
Engineering	562-4747
Environmental	562-4745
Fire Administration	562-4334
Landscaping	562-4746
Neighborhood Services	562-4665
Parks & Recreation	562-4800
Planning	562-4567
Police Non-Emergency	562-4242
Public Works	562-4950
Solid Waste	562-4920
Trees-City Property	562-4950
Trees - Private Property	562-4746
Traffic Engineering	562-4750
Utilities	562-4600
Zoning	562-4567

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 our City Codes. For additional information or assistance, please feel free to contact us.

### **COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM**

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

727-562-4720

FAX 727-562-4735

web page:

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

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

City of Clearwater Website: [www.myclearwater.com](http://www.myclearwater.com)

### **INSPECTORS**

Shelby Brown, Code Inspector	562-4725
Cornelius Collins, Code Inspector	562-4732
Rick DeBord, Code Inspector	562-4728
Nilda Espinosa, Code Inspector	562-4864
Peggy Franco, Code Inspector	562-4727
Janet McMahan, License Inspector	562-4731
Vicki Niemiller, Housing Inspector	562-4729
Corey O'Neil, Code Inspector	562-4785
Julie Phillips, Code Inspector	562-4730
Alan Ruud, Inspections Specialist	562-4711
Dee Shawen, License Inspector	562-4722
Mary Jo Weaver, Sign Inspector	562-4726



Frank V. Hibbard, Mayor

George N. Cretekos, Councilmember  
Paul F. Gibson, Councilmember

John Doran, Councilmember  
Carlen A. Petersen, Councilmember

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