

Community Development Department

Citizen Complaint Process

The City of Longview Nuisance Abatement and Property Maintenance Process

The Code Compliance, Building and Zoning departments are responsible for enforcing the Longview Municipal Code's property maintenance, building and zoning codes. If you have questions or want to report a nuisance, building or zoning issue you can the Code Compliance Department at 442-5093, the Building Department at 442-5084 or 442-5089, the Electrical Department at 442-5085 or the Zoning Department a 442-5083 or 442-5092.

Complaints are required to be submitted in writing or in electronic form.

In order to ensure that every concern is appropriately addressed and to protect complainants from possible reprisal, every complainant must provide a written or electronic statement regarding the nature of their complaint. Complainants must provide their contact information but can indicate that they wish to remain anonymous/confidential. (If a case were to make its way to court, it is possible that a judge could require a complainant to be named).

Easy accessibility:

Complaints may be submitted in the following ways:

- Online by using the "Ask Longview" web based information and reporting tool www.mylongview.com.
- Filling out a Complaint/Concern form while at city hall, the police department or police satellite office.
- Printing a form from the Community Development Departments web page and mailing it.
- Calling the Community Development department (442-5093) and requesting a form in the mail that can be returned to city hall.
- Provide a written signed letter.

Voluntary Abatement

The most desirable course of action is to obtain voluntary cooperation from a property owner in seeking the abatement of nuisances. With few exceptions, informing property owners what is required and convincing them to voluntarily take care of their property is the quickest, most cost effective way of dealing with any nuisance condition. When a property owner or tenant recognizes that it is their responsibility to see that their portion of our community is kept clean, that person will typically correct the problem in a timely manner.

When a request for voluntary correction does not appear to have its intended effect, the judicious application of a notice that includes fines is a necessary next step to polite requests for correction.

Compliance Expectations

In most cases you can expect that it will take 15 to 30 days to resolve your concern. Cases involving extenuating circumstances, where compliance requires application for permits or where the property owner refuses to make the required corrections, compliance may take longer.

It is also important to recognize that some people do not keep their properties properly maintained for reasons that are not always obvious. Factors that can slow compliance can include mental and/or physical limitations or economic hardship. There are several programs and partnerships that have been developed to assist property owners in this position and can include voluntary compliance agreements that provide a detailed plan and timeline for achieving compliance.

Please understand that due to inspector caseloads and staff reductions that it is not practical for the Community Development Department staff to contact complainants to keep them updated on case progress. You may inquire about the status of a case at any time by calling the appropriate department phone numbers listed above.

Like you, we know that when people take responsibility for their dilapidated buildings, inoperable vehicles, graffiti marked structures, weed infested lots, and all those other little things that make urban life just a little less pleasant, our whole community benefits. Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

Code Compliance Process

The normal enforcement process is outlined below:

1. Complaint received.
2. Investigation / Verified Violation(s).
3. Verbal request for compliance or Written Warning Notice sent.
4. Re-inspection after 1 to 14 days. (Extension may be granted by written Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA)).
7. Notice and Order issued after Warning Notice without compliance or VCA request.
* Civil penalties(s) apply at \$500 per violation.
8. Option to appeal "Notice and Order" to Hearings Examiner within 20 days of service of notice or enter into a VCA. * No compliance or appeal renders the "Notice and Order" a final determination.
9. Last Chance Letter summarizing case sent and case forward to city attorney.
10. After ruling in favor of the City by the Hearings Examiner or with default on Notice and Order, a complaint is filed in Superior Court.
11. Default Order and Judgment from Superior Court provides specific direction for city performed abatement.