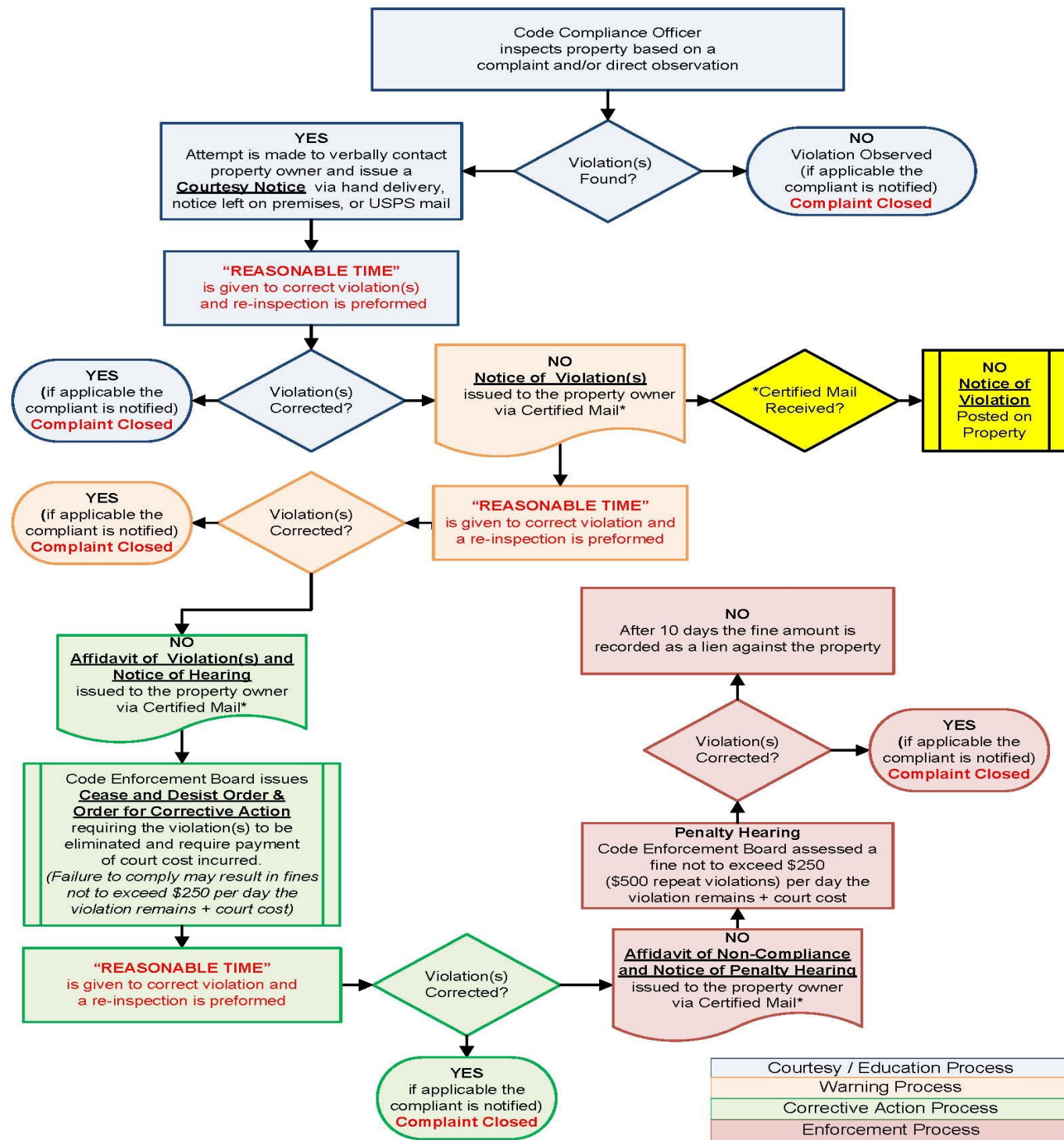


Code Compliance Homeowner's Guide



The concept of Code Compliance is relatively new. In 1980, the State of Florida passed a law (**Chapter 162, Florida Statutes**) outlining the Code Compliance process. The idea was to take the enforcement of local ordinances out of the state court system and have violations handled by local Code Compliance Inspectors. This law also allows municipalities to establish the administrative process.

The City's philosophy is to achieve voluntary compliance with reported and discovered code violations. Education is the key to reaching this goal. One of the greatest obstacles to gaining compliance is that many citizens do not realize that they are violating local ordinances. For instance, it is not at all unusual for a resident to be unaware that parking a vehicle on the city right-of-way without a valid tag, or parking an inoperable vehicle on your private property, violates City code. Most people are willing to play by the rules if they know the rules.

Property maintenance laws are designed to promote neighborhood integrity, prevent property value decline, reduce visual clutter and blight, and preserve quality of life. The purpose of this guide is to educate the citizens of Punta Gorda about the Code Compliance process. It is intended only as a general summary of Code regulations and is not intended as a substitute for the Punta Gorda Code of Ordinances.

City of Punta Gorda
 Punta Gorda
 Zoning and Code Compliance
 326 West Marion Ave
 Punta Gorda, FL 33950
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 941-575-3352

Florida's Harborside Hometown



Punta Gorda
 FLORIDA

Neighborhoods and structures in the City of Punta Gorda require proper maintenance to stay in good condition as they age. (Maintaining good neighborhoods is the cooperation of individual property owners and tenants.) The Punta Gorda City Council has adopted a code of ordinances, which create minimum standards for the improvement of our neighborhoods. These standards protect surrounding property owners and tenants from having property values negatively affected by substandard conditions.



Example of a well maintained single family home



Example of a poorly maintained home with several violations

The following are some maintenance recommendations which you can utilize to keep your property in a safe and sanitary condition.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

- Keep your buildings substantially free of dirt, stains, rust, mold and mildew
- Ensure surfaces are free of broken glass and loose shingles
- Maintain brick, stone, stucco, spray crete and painted surfaces so as to not reflect inadequate maintenance or deterioration

YARD MAINTENANCE

- Mow the lawn so that grass, weeds, or other vegetation is 12 inches or less in height
- Mow to the edge of any right-of-way, roadway, or street
- Trees that hang over the sidewalk must be trimmed

OUTDOOR STORAGE

- No outdoor storage of goods and materials or refuse containers shall be located in any yard which is visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties or abutting a street, nor in any required buffer or screen, except for the temporary placement of refuse for scheduled curb side collection.
- Parking, storing or keeping an unlicensed or inoperative vehicle outside of a completely enclosed garage or storage facility is prohibited.

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLABLE CONTAINERS

Solid waste and recyclable containers shall be placed at the street curb no earlier than 24-hours prior to the scheduled collection. To assure collection, items should be placed at the curb prior to 6:00AM the day of collection.

JUNK, TRASH, RUBBISH, AND ABANDONED ITEMS

Discarded items that are allowed to accumulate that are valueless, or have only nominal or salvage value and are abandoned or left unprotected from the elements on public or real property are prohibited. Yard waste must be prepared properly for pick up. Sanitation will not pick up any yard waste on undeveloped properties or construction and demolition debris. Refer to Public Works Department / Sanitation Division information on the website at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/services/sanitation>.



WHITE GOODS are washing machines, refrigerators, stoves, dryers, water heaters and similar appliances. The City handles the collections of these items with special collections and appointments are scheduled by calling the Sanitation Division at (941) 575-5050.

City Code prohibits the taking of any garbage, yard waste, recyclables, white goods or scrap metal placed at the curb by a resident for collection by anyone other than persons regularly employed by the City for such purpose, persons working under contract with the City, or pursuant to a valid franchise agreement with the City. This does not apply to the removal of construction and demolition debris by a contractor. Violations shall constitute a civil offense and violators will be subject to the issuance of a citation imposing the following penalties: First Offense – Written Warning, Second Offense - \$25 Fine, Third Offense - \$50 Fine, and each subsequent offense thereafter - \$250.00 Fine. Violations should be reported to the Police Department's through the non-emergency line, (941) 639-4111.

PERMITTED SIGNS

Up to four (4) yard signs are permitted to be on a residential property with the following limitations:

- Signs may not be placed within ten (10) feet of any roadway
- Shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area (2x2)
- Shall not exceed three (3) feet in height from grade
- Shall not obstruct the vision or path of motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians

Flags are permitted provided that all flags must be hoisted on a pole permanently affixed to the ground or displayed via a pole bracket permanently affixed to a building, and subject to further limitations:

- Maximum number of two (2) flag poles or brackets
- Maximum number of two (2) flags that may be displayed on a single pole
- Flag size shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet
- One flag on the property may be a maximum of sixty (60) square feet in area
- Flags may not be faded, tattered, or torn
- Flags shall be counted toward the maximum number of yard signs per parcel

ADDRESS NUMBERS shall contrast with their background.

Numbers shall be no less than 3-inches in height for residential buildings & structures and 6-inches in height for all other buildings or structures. Must be permanently attached with a fastener (not glue, adhesive, tape, etc.) and be numerical (not script writing or roman numerals)

TREE REMOVAL No person shall cut down, destroy, damage, remove, or poison any native and approved non-native tree 12 inches or larger in Diameter at Breast Height [DBH] within the City without an approved no-charge tree removal permit. A tree removal permit may be approved if one or more of the following circumstances exist and is evidenced by a report from an arborist: the tree constitutes a hazard to life or property which cannot be mitigated without removing; the tree is dying or dead so that its restoration to a sound condition is not practical; or it has a disease which can be transmitted to other trees. Tree replacement shall be required pursuant to requirements in Section 12.14 should the tree removal cause the property to fall below minimum requirements.



GARAGE & YARD SALES

Only personal property may be offered for sale. The maximum number of "no-charge permits" which may be issued to any person or location per calendar year is 2 and are limited to 4 consecutive days. Only one sign shall be permitted on the lot where the yard sale is located. Such sign shall not exceed 2 square feet in area per side and 30 inches in height and shall remain in place only from 5:00PM on the day before until 8:00AM on the day after the sale. No off-premise directional signage is permitted.



RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (Special Residential Overlay—SRO)

A residence may have a single vehicle for human habitation kept or parked on premises, on the paved driveway within the front yard, or with in the public right-of-way between the hours of 7:00AM and 7:00PM. A no-charge parking permit can be obtained allowing a single vehicle for human habitation to be parked on the premises for a cumulative period not exceeding 7 nights per 30 day period.

STORAGE OF WATERCRAFT VEHICLE (Special Residential Overlay—SRO)

Any watercraft, boat, empty boat trailer, or a boat and/or watercraft on a trailer must be parked entirely within the confines of a garage or carport, stored entirely on the dock, or on a lift or davits or in the water. Small watercraft such as kayaks or canoes may be placed on a roof rack of a vehicle parked in the driveway overnight; however, watercraft may not be left on the vehicle for more than 2 consecutive days. A residence may have a single watercraft stored on the premises in the paved driveway, or within the public right-of-way off of the paved roadway between the hours of 7:00AM and 7:00PM. A no-charge

permit can be obtained for a watercraft on no more than 4 occasions per calendar year.

CODE ENFORCEMENT/COMPLAINT RESPONSE

In many instances, Code Compliance investigates a code violation and takes compliance action when a citizen reports a potential violation. On weekends when the Code Compliance Division is closed, you may leave a message on the voice mail, or you may call the Punta Gorda Police Department's non-emergency number at (941) 639-4111 to report an issue or request a parking permit.

As of July 1, 2021, Florida Statute Chapter 162 no longer permits anonymous violation complaints. Florida Statute Chapter 162, 162.06 (1) (b); and 162.21 (3) (b):

A Code Enforcement Officer may not initiate enforcement proceedings for a potential violation of a duly enacted code or ordinance by way of an anonymous complaint. A person who reports a potential violation of a code or an ordinance must provide his or her name and address to the respective local government before an enforcement proceeding may occur. If a complainant states that he or she has a substantial fear of retaliation or of status-based legal jeopardy; which must be expressed by the complainant, then the complainant must be advised that if the claim is a false claim of fear of retaliation or of status-based legal jeopardy, then they are liable for all costs incurred by the City of Punta Gorda in investigating the claim of violation, including costs of personnel, equipment, testing, and reasonable costs and attorney fees if the City of Punta Gorda brings an action to prosecute the complainant or to collect amounts made payable.

All emails sent and received regarding City business are public records and must be released as required by law. When reporting a possible violation, you should provide Code Compliance with the exact address of the building, unit number if applicable, or as specific a location as possible to enable the inspector to locate the site. Describe the condition you have observed.

After receiving a citizen request, Code Compliance will inspect the property as soon as possible to determine if a code violation exists. Public health and safety related complaints are the highest priority. If a violation is found, a courtesy notice will be either mailed to the property owner or they may receive a door hanger courtesy notice requiring compliance by a certain date.

IF YOU RECEIVE A NOTICE OF VIOLATION FROM THE CODE COMPLIANCE DIVISION carefully read the notice to find out what the violation is so that you can address the issue. If you have questions about the violation or need additional time please call Code Compliance at (941) 575-3352 and ask to speak to the Code Officer involved.

On Line: www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us
Telephone: (941) 575-3352
Email: code@puntagordafl.gov
In Person: City Hall Annex, 3rd Floor
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