

# Common Code Violations

The following information is provided as a homeowner's guide to Code Enforcement in Unincorporated Palm Beach County.

For most people, a home is the largest single investment they will ever make. One of the functions of the Code Enforcement Division is to protect this investment. By enforcing building standards and zoning codes, property values are protected, neighborhood appearances are maintained, and the safety of our citizens is assured.

The following list of common code violations is not meant to be all inclusive, but an overview:

## **Building without a permit:**

A permit must be obtained for structures including pre-fabricated structures such as sheds, gazebos, fences, satellite dishes, reroofing, room additions, pouring concrete slabs, and any other structures including gas, electrical, plumbing or mechanical systems. Permits are also needed to move, remove or demolish any structures.

## **Building too close to property lines:**

The Zoning Code requires minimum setbacks from property lines for all buildings according to the zoning of the property in question. Contact the Zoning Division office for specifics.

## **Overgrown lots:**

County ordinance prohibits accumulations of waste, yard trash, or rubble and debris, uncultivated vegetation greater than 18 inches in height, and/or Brazilian Pepper, within 25 foot of adjacent, developed property. Complaints must be in writing, and the complainant must be from developed property adjacent to the property being complained about. The maintenance of undeveloped and/or uncultivated vegetation and/or Brazilian Pepper shall not apply to vacant premises per case law.

## **Operating a business in a residential zone:**

Only certain home business are permitted and many require special licensing with set guidelines and restrictions (ULDC Article 4).

## **Inoperative vehicles:**

Inoperative vehicles may not be stored on residential property. Additionally, all vehicles on residential property must be properly licensed, with an exception for one such unlicensed vehicle, so long as it is stored in the side or rear yard, screened from view. Code Enforcement has the authority to tag inoperative vehicles on private property and have them towed from the premises.

**Recreational and commercial vehicles:**

Boats, trailers, campers and other such vehicles cannot be stored between the street and the housing structure. They may be stored behind the front setback of the residence, in the side or rear yard areas, provided they are screened from surrounding property and streets with an opaque wall, fence or hedge a minimum of six feet in height (ULDC Article 6). One commercial vehicle may be parked on residential property provided it does not exceed the following requirements: vehicle is registered and licensed; used by a resident of the premises; gross weight, including load, does not exceed 12,500 pounds; height does not exceed 9 feet, including any load, bed or box; and total vehicle length does not exceed 26 feet (ULDC Article 6).

**Sanitary facilities:**

The Property Maintenance Code addresses the requirements for the interior and exterior of housing structures, including lighting, ventilation, hot and cold water supply, electrical outlets and safety requirements. It also addresses damage to structures, including broken windows, torn screens, minimum dwelling space requirements and unsafe structures.

**Trash, debris and other materials:**

Residential property may not be used for open storage of inoperative motor vehicles, vehicle parts, appliances, building materials, garbage, waste, trash and debris. It is the responsibility of the owner or occupant to keep the premises free from all such materials (Property Maintenance Code).

**Garbage can regulations:**

County ordinance prohibits placement of household garbage or garbage receptacles for pick-up before 3:00 pm the day prior to regularly scheduled pick-ups. Further, garbage receptacles must be removed from the front of the property on the day of pick-up. These restrictions do not apply to yard waste resulting from the maintenance of residential properties.

**Farm Animals:**

Farm animals are prohibited in all residentially zoned districts. Those districts zoned as agricultural permit horses, chickens, pigs, goats and other such animals.

**Signs:**

Signs in rights-of-way or on trees or telephone poles are prohibited. All signs require permits, unless exempted by Code. Banners, gas or air-filled balloons are permitted under specific guidelines and regulations set forth in the ULDC and require permits (ULDC Article 8).

**Filing Complaints**

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If you wish to file a complaint, you may do so by phone or in person any week day between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Code Enforcement Division offices are located at 2300 N. Jog Road, 2nd floor, West Palm Beach, FL 33411. The phone number is **561-233-5500**.

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