



New Ordinance Vacant Buildings & Properties

Urgency Ordinance Adopted by Stockton City Council—August 19, 2008

Ordinance Approved

On Tuesday, August 19, 2008, the Stockton City Council adopted an ordinance to protect neighborhoods from becoming blighted through the lack of adequate maintenance and security of vacant buildings and properties.

The ordinance addresses health and safety issues. It was adopted on an urgency basis and became effective immediately.

The following is a summary of the Stockton Municipal Code, Chapter 14—Uniform Codes; Part V—Uniform Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings; Division 2—Maintenance, Security and Rehabilitation of Abandoned and Vacant Property, Section 14-520—14.530.

Purpose of the ordinance

The purpose of the ordinance is to ensure that vacant and abandoned properties, and the costs associated with monitoring and upkeep, are the responsibility of the property owners and do not become a nuisance and liability of the surrounding community.

Vacant properties and buildings:

- Can attract transients and criminal activity and become a danger to children,
- Increase risk of fire for the building and adjacent properties,
- Often become a dumping ground for junk and debris and overgrown with weeds and vegetation,
- Attract vandals, encourage graffiti, and disrupt neighborhood stability,
- Retard appreciation of property values and discourage economic development, and
- Deny neighboring property owners and residents the full use and enjoyment of their property.

Nuisance Properties

- Buildings or structures that are under construction or rehabilitation and are not completed during the term of a valid building permit, and
- Unoccupied buildings or structures that have been left unlocked, open, or unsecured, and
- Buildings or structures for human use or occupancy that have been left vacant for more than 180 days, unless one of the following applies:

1. Property has an active building permit.
2. Property does not otherwise constitute an active nuisance and is being offered for sale, lease or rent.
3. Property is being actively maintained and secured according to all City Codes.

Requirements

Property owners must actively monitor and maintain the exterior appearance of the property, in addition to all other Health and Safety Codes. Property owners must inspect abandoned or vacant property on a monthly basis, or more frequently if required by the City of Stockton Planning Director or his appointee.

Property must be secured and in good repair, including, but not limited to:

- Kept free of weeds, garbage, junk, debris, trash, and graffiti,
- Visible front and side yards must be mowed and landscaped, and
- With pools and spas clean and clear and in working order, free of debris and pollutants—or drained and kept dry—with security fencing maintained to State of California requirements.

Owners must comply with all laws and codes, including zoning, historic preservation, housing and building codes. Owners, trustees, beneficiaries, or corporations, that are “out-of-area” must contract with a local property management company to oversee the property and ensure compliance with all laws.

Owners must post vacant buildings with 24-hour owner or property management contact information.

- Owner's or company's name and telephone number(s) where the owner/company can be reached during business and non-business hours,
- 4” x 6” sign posted on the interior of a window facing the street to the front of the property, so that it is visible from the street, or
- 4” x 6” weather resistant sign, secured to building exterior, near the front door, or
- If no such area exists posting must be on a stake of sufficient size to support the posting in a location that is visible from the street to the front of the property but not readily accessible to vandals, and
- Worded, as follows, “This property managed by _____.” To report problems or concerns, call _____.”

**For a copy of the ordinance:
www.stocktongov.com/smc
Chapter 14, Part V**

**To report vacant or
abandoned property, please
call
(209) 937-8813**