

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long does it normally take to clear the title of a code lien?

- A code lien cannot be cleared until the violation is corrected. If corrected, the process can be done within 10 business days.

How long does it typically take a buyer to get a Stipulation Agreement through the City?

- Typically, it can be done within 10 business days and will cost the requesting party **\$350** (effective December 6, 2008).

Can the realtor get water and electricity turned on at a vacant property?

- An owner or agent can get the water turned on in their name by contacting the appropriate utility company?

What should a realtor do to ensure escrow is not delayed due to code violations?

- Contact Neighborhood Services at (209) 937-8813, and determine if there are violations and have them corrected.
- Inspect the property frequently. If there is evidence of code violations not cited, have the problems corrected.
- Don't wait until the property is in escrow to start the abatement process.

How can a property owner keep from being cited for garbage toters being left out at a vacant property?

- Keep the garbage toters in the garage or backyard where they are out of sight.

Can garbage service be stopped at a vacant property?

- Yes, this is done by contacting the garbage service provider directly.

What should a realtor do if their telephone call is not returned by a Code Enforcement Officer in a timely manner?

- Contact Neighborhood Services at (209) 937-8813, and ask to talk to a supervisor. Code Officers are to return calls within 24 hours.
- Send a request to Neighborhood Services through "ASK STOCKTON" and someone will respond.

How should an emergency at a vacant or abandoned property be handled?

- An in-progress emergency like a fire, break-in, or vandalism should be reported by dialing 9-1-1.

EXAMPLES OF CODE VIOLATIONS



Graffiti/Yard Maintenance



Junk/Trash/Debris/Yard Maintenance



Vandalism



**VACANT &
ABANDONED
BUILDINGS &
PROPERTIES**

REALTOR EDITION

**Help keep our
All-America
City clean!**

**Police Department
Neighborhood Services Section
22 West Weber Avenue, Rm 350
Stockton CA 95202**

**Phone: (209) 937-8813
Fax: (209) 937-7264
Web site: www.stocktongov.com**

VACANT & ABANDONED BUILDINGS & PROPERTIES

The City of Stockton has an ordinance to protect neighborhoods from becoming blighted through a lack of adequate maintenance and security of vacant buildings and properties, S.M.C. Sections 14-520 through 530.

Vacant and abandoned properties, and the costs associated with monitoring and upkeep, are the responsibilities of property owners and must not become a nuisance and liability to the surrounding community.

Vacant properties and buildings:

- Attract transients and criminal activity and become a danger to children;
- Increase risk of fire for the building and adjacent properties;
- Become a dumping ground for junk & 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 full use and enjoyment of their property.

Property owners subject to this ordinance are required to:

- Comply with all laws and codes, including zoning, historic preservation, housing, and building codes;
- Actively monitor and maintain the exterior appearance of the property and inspect vacant or abandoned property at least on a monthly basis; and
- Post the property with a sign containing the telephone number(s) to reach a local owner or property manager, (See below);

This property managed by
(name of property owner or manager)

To report problems, please call (telephone
number (s) where property owner or
manager can be reached

24 hours a day/7 days a week

- ◆ Sign must be at least 4 by 6 inches, posted on the interior of a window facing the street to the front of the property.
- ◆ Contact telephone numbers must be for both business and non-business hours, 24 hours a day/7 days a week.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What can a Code Enforcement Officer inspect at a vacant property?

- Anything that is open, unsecured, and does not violate the owner's reasonable expectation of privacy.

How can I find out if there are violations at a vacant property?

- Call Neighborhood Services at (209) 937-8813, or send a request to the City through "ASK STOCKTON" on the City Web site.

How can a realtor get a list of the violations?

- Owners or their agents can call the Hot-Line, (209) 937-8158, that Neighborhood Services has established for realtors and request the information.
- Non-owners must submit a Request for Public Information to Neighborhood Services and pay a small fee for copies. The form can be obtained on the Web site under "Foreclosure" or by contacting Neighborhood Services at (209) 937-8813.

Why do new violations show up every couple of weeks on some properties?

- Some properties are more susceptible than others to ongoing vandalism or problems. New violations are cited as they are reported.

What should a realtor do if they need more time to correct violations?

- Contact the Code Enforcement Officer who issued the citation and make arrangements for an extension. Their name and phone number are on the citation.

If a realtor asks about violations at a property, will this generate an inspection?

- Requests for information do not generate inspections.

Why do violations have to be corrected if a buyer is willing to purchase the property "as-is"?

- It depends on the violation; however, we will generally clear the title if the "Buyer" will sign a "Stipulation Agreement" that acknowledges the violations and agrees to the City's conditions to bring them into compliance.