

Charlotte - Neighborhood & Business Services

Code Enforcement

Helping create a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

Code Enforcement, a division of Neighborhood & business services, exists to improve the appearance of residential and commercial neighborhoods and maintain standards of living. Teams of dedicated employees work with residents and business owners to help educate them and resolve any code violations.

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Health & Sanitation

Preserving our well being

The health & Sanitation Ordinance requires property owners to maintain their premises in a safe and sanitary condition. This ordinance only applies to properties within Charlotte city limits.

Health & Sanitation violations include:

- Tall weeds and grass
- Trash and junk piles
- Litter
- Uncollected bulky items and other curbside violations
- Graffiti
- Abandoned, junked or otherwise dangerous motor vehicles

What will happen after you report a health and sanitation violation?

An inspector will verify the problem exists. The property owner will be identified through Mecklenburg County tax records and a letter describing the violation and what must be done to correct the violation will be sent. The time allowed may vary depending upon the circumstance.

What if the problem isn't fixed within the time allowed?

The inspector may:

- Issue a citation
- Seek legal action through the Environmental Court
- Hire a contractor to fix the violation. If the owner doesn't pay the City for contractor costs, a lien will be placed against the property.

Property owners can appeal citations or property assessments for contractor costs within 30 days of citation or invoice date.

What can I do about signs in my neighborhood?

Signs are not allowed in the following locations:

- On public property or within public rights-of-way, including medians
- Within 11 feet of any paved road, street or alley
- On any post, pole, tree, tree stake or guard, shrub, fire hydrant or anything else within 11 feet of the edge of the pavement.

Code Enforcement personnel and their designees have the authority to remove and dispose of any sign or written material in any of these locations.

What are the penalties for sign violations?

- 1-5 signs: \$100 per sign
- 6-10 signs: \$500 per sign
- 11 or more signs: \$1,000 per sign

What are curbside violations?

- Improperly bundled yard waste
- Rollout carts placed at the curb too soon or not removed as required
- Unscheduled, improperly prepared bulky items, or scheduled items placed at the curb too soon

For details on how to properly dispose of yard waste and bulky trash, call **CharMeck 311** or visit Solid Waste Services online at <http://www.charmeck.org>.

What is considered “tall” weeds and grass?

On average, grass, weeds and other vegetation should not exceed 12 inches.

What are some common Health & Sanitation violation fees?

| | |
|---|----------|
| Rollout containers stored in front of house | \$25.00 |
| Rollout container curbside violation | \$50.00 |
| Yard waste | \$50.00 |
| Bulky and junk items | \$50.00 |
| Unauthorized accumulations | \$50.00 |
| Neglect of property | \$50.00 |
| Dilapidated conditions on premises | \$50.00 |
| Illegal dumping | \$500.00 |

What can I do about Graffiti?

Charlotte’s anti-graffiti program focuses on prevention through education and enforcement. If you discover any form of graffiti, report the violation immediately by calling **CharMeck 311**.

Vehicles

Abandoned/Junk motor vehicles

Vehicle violations fall into three categories:

1. Abandoned
 - a. Vehicle left on a City street or right-of-way for more than seven days, on City property longer than 24 hours or on private property without the owner's permission
2. Safety/Health Hazard
 - a. Vehicle with trash or junk inside, broken windows, surfaces of exposed glass metal, breeding ground for rodents, etc.
3. Junked
 - a. Inoperable vehicle that does not display a current license plate, has flat tires, is damaged, wrecked, etc. Property owners are allowed to keep one "junked" vehicle provided it is covered with an acceptable car cover and is located at the rear of the property.

If your vehicle is towed and you want to reclaim it, you are required to pay the towing and storage fees.

Parking on the lawn

In 2004, The City of Charlotte adopted an ordinance banning parking on the front lawn and side lawn of corner lots. Vehicles should be parked on an approved parking pad. Vehicles found in violation will be given a \$25.00 citation for each occurrence and may be towed on the forth occurrence.

Housing Code Enforcement

Keeping Homes Safe

Charlotte's Minimum Housing Code sets basic standards that homeowners, tenants and landlords must follow to ensure their residential properties are in a safe and clean condition. Housing violations range from broken windows and other repairable situations to major structural issues.

The city conducts inspections for housing violations in response to:

- Tenant request
- Referral from public agencies
- Citizen petition

I've noticed a neglected home in my neighborhood needs repair, what can I do?

Submit a petition asking for an inspection. The petition must be signed by five Charlotte residents, 18 years of age or older. Petitions should include a name, address, and phone number for each petitioner. Petitions and code inspection requests are public information. The petition and the Minimum Housing Ordinance can be found online at <http://nbs.charlottenc.gov>.

Submit signed petitions to:

City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services
Code Enforcement Division
600 E. Trade Street, Charlotte, NC 28202

Rental Property Issues

If a landlord neglects the property you are renting, a tenant can make a request for an inspection by calling CharMeck 311.

Within three days of receiving a request, an inspector will attempt to contact the owner or tenant to schedule an inspection. Based on their findings, the inspector will determine if a residence needs to be repaired or demolished.

Owner are legally notified and given a time frame to bring their property into compliance. If demolition is ordered, the owner may still choose to make repairs within the time allowed.

Property owners have the right to appeal and inspector's findings to the Housing Appeals Board and the tenant will be notified of any hearings scheduled.

Boarded-Up Structure Requirements

To keep neighborhoods and citizens safe, Charlotte's Boarded Up Registration Ordinance requires vacant homes to be boarded-up properly and kept free of trespassers, crime and fire hazards.

What should you do if you own a boarded-up home?

Boarded-up properties must be registered with the City within 48 hours. Failure to do so may result in civil penalties. A property can remain boarded for a six month period. Property owners can register boarded-up structures and view boarding specifications and penalties online at

<http://boardedupregistration.charmeck.org>.

Zoning

Building In the Right Place

Without ordinances, a factory might be built in the middle of a park or a night club next to a school. Zoning prevents this, making sure the way a property is used supports the safety and well-being of its surrounding neighborhood.

How do permits affect Zoning?

Here are some examples of permits that require inspectors to visit a site and determine if its use meets Zoning guidelines:

- Zoning Use Permits
- Alcoholic Beverages Commission Permits
- Home Occupation Permits
- Sign Permits
- Mobile Food Vendor Permits

Zoning Use Permits can be obtained from Zoning Staff located at the Hal Marshall Service Center, 700 N. Tryon Street.

Zoning Use Permits are required for certain improvements placed on property that are not subject to local building codes but are subject to zoning required (zoning clarification for property and applicable development standards). Examples include temporary tent events, parking lots, temporary construction trailers, and mobile food units. A detached accessory structure may either require a building permit or a zoning use permit. A detached accessory structure that is twelve feet (12'), or less in size for any wall of structure (width or height) does not require a building permit, but will require a zoning use permit. Conversely, an accessory structure that is greater than 12' in size for any wall of structure (width or height) will require a building permit. A zoning use permit does not require an inspection by a Mecklenburg County Building Trades inspector, since it's not subject to compliance with local building codes. The City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services Code Enforcement Inspector is responsible for inspections related to a zoning use permit.

What about Business License?

To operate a business in the City or County, you must apply to the Mecklenburg County Business Tax Collections Department for a business license. Before your application can be approved, Zoning staff will review the application to make sure the business use follows Zoning Ordinance requirements.

What if I suspect a Zoning violation in my neighborhood?

Citizens may request a Zoning Inspection by calling CharMeck 311. Some of the most common citizen zoning violation complaints include:

- Operating a business without a permit
- Operating a business from a residence or other area where it isn't allowed
- Operating certain types of businesses too close to residential districts
- Large commercial vehicles parked in residential districts
- New construction, building additions and improvements done without a Building Permit, examples include sheds or detached garages
- Accessory structures
- Property use not allowed by its Zoning classification
- Business signs erected without a Sign Permit
- Property improvements that ignore setback/yard requirements
- Too many vehicles parked on a property
- Operation of a group home or home child care without a Zoning Use Permit

What happens after I request a Zoning Inspection?

An inspector will determine if a violation exists. The property owner will be identified through Mecklenburg County tax records and a Notice of Violation (NOV) is sent describing the violations and what must be done. The time allowed may vary depending upon the circumstance. If conditions are not corrected within the allowed time, a citation may be issued. Zoning penalties increase with continued failure to obey the Ordinance. The inspector may also start legal action through the Environmental Court.

Property owners may appeal a Zoning Notice of Violation to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Non-Residential Building Code

Protecting Businesses and Employees

Charlottes' Non-Residential Building Code (NRBC) makes sure our City's commercial structures – offices, factories, retail and warehouse centers, restaurants, etc. – are safe and sanitary. Long term, it helps make Charlotte a great place to live and work, enforcing standards for the healthy upkeep of places where many of us spend our time.

How are Non-Residential Code Violations reported?

Like residential violations, public agency (police, fire and health departments, etc.) referrals and tenant requests are most common. Inspectors also report violations they observe through filed observation. Citizens may also report commercial buildings that appear unsafe and deteriorating by calling CharMeck 311.

What happens next?

Inspectors will contact the property owners within three business days of receiving a request to schedule an inspection of the structure. Everyone involved (presorting tenants and public agencies) will be notified of any hearings or other actions resulting from their reports.

Noise Ordinance

Outdoor Amplification and Music at Commercial Establishments

Enforcement of the noise ordinance is shared by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and the Code Enforcement division. Police will monitor noise decibel levels and make a determination if there is a violation. A \$100 fine can be assessed during this phase.

If a property owner continually violates the ordinance, it is at the police's discretion to label them a chronic noise producer. Chronic noise producers will be referred to City Code Enforcement and will be required to develop and adhere to a noise mitigation plan.

For additional information and a copy of the complete ordinance, visit: <http://cmdp.org>.

Reporting a Code Violation

To report a code violation, you can go online to <http://nbs.charlottenc.gov> and click on “report a code violation”, call CharMeck 311, or download the “My Charlotte” application for smart phones and report a violation via your phone. If you provide your name and phone number, the inspector will know what to call with questions and will be able to call you back with inspection results.

Code Enforcement and Your Right to Know

The Code Enforcement Division is dedicated to your right to know. Government transparency is important and lists of active and recently closed cases are available online. You can find the information at <http://nbs.charlottenc.gov>.

Charlotte

Neighborhood & Business Services

600 East Trade Street

Charlotte, NC 28202

704-336-3380

<http://nbs.charlotte.gov>

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