

HERNANDO COUNTY CODE ENFORCEMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Hernando County has a division called Code Enforcement, which enforces laws that prohibit the existence of conditions deemed to be a hazard to public health, safety, and welfare.

Code Enforcement employs seven (7) uniformed officers who have been certified by the Florida Association of Code Enforcement. The officers receive approximately 35,000 service requests per year from approximately 150,000 residents covering 477 square miles in Hernando County. Code Enforcement answered approximately 26,000 telephone calls last year.

This brochure is designed to answer some of the most frequent questions that citizens ask about County codes and the process for correcting violations.

Ordinances include weed and grass control, trash and rubbish accumulation, disposal methods, dismantled or inoperable vehicles, non-permitted structures and buildings, final zoning applications, commercial vehicle parking, businesses in residences, land use permits, right-of-way obstructions, and setback violations.

HOW SERVICE IS PROVIDED

When a citizen reports a violation to the Code Enforcement division, a staff member takes the name of the caller, location, and nature of the violation. The officer assigned to the area in which the violation is reported conducts an inspection of the property. If it is determined that a violation exists, the officer issues the violator a Notice of Violation. The Notice of Violation gives the individual a specified number of days, up to 30 days, to correct the problem. When that time has passed, the property is reinspected. If the violation has not been corrected, a Notice to Appear is issued and the matter may be referred to the Special Master. The County also has the authority to have the violation corrected when it involves removal of debris or lot mowing.

If it becomes necessary for the County to bring the property into compliance, the cost of the work, including administrative costs, will be imposed as a claim against the property. If the bill remains unpaid for thirty (30) days after billing, a lien will be imposed on the property.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. A vacant lot in my neighborhood becomes overgrown with tall weeds. Is there a way to make the owner mow the lot?

A. County ordinance makes it illegal to permit grass or weeds to grow more than eighteen (18) inches tall, excluding seed pods. (This does not apply to land on which the natural vegetation has not been removed.) Individuals should contact the Code Enforcement division and provide information on the property. An officer will inspect the property and contact the owner. The owner is given twenty (20) days, upon receipt of notice, to have the property mowed. However, if the owner cannot be located or does not mow the property, a pre-qualified contractor will mow or clean the property at a predetermined cost. The County will invoice the owner of record for the work done, plus administrative costs, and a lien will be placed on the property.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. A house in my area has cars parked around it. Is this legal?

- A. If any of the vehicles are dismantled or incapable of being moved under their own power, they are considered inoperable vehicles and are not allowed to be parked on streets or private property unless garaged. Owners of illegally parked vehicles can be made to remove them within a specified time period. If the owner fails to remove junk vehicles, a Notice to Appear can be issued.

Q. Am I required to have garbage pickup?

- A. All residents living in mandatory collection areas, which consist of areas west of Anderson Snow Road, east of U.S. 19, north of County Line Road, and south of Cortez Blvd., MUST PAY for services by franchisees licensed for that area. Any person living outside this area may dispose of their own trash at the landfill or have service by a licensed franchisee for that area.

Q. Where do I call to report accumulation of garbage and trash?

- A. The person to contact depends on where the trash, garbage, or debris is located. If it is on the County right-of-way or in the street, call the Department of Public Works at 352-754-4060. If trash is on private property, it is the responsibility of the owner to remove it. Code Enforcement will inspect private property when it receives such complaints.

Q. I have purchased a new appliance and want to put the old one at the curb in order to have it hauled away.

- A. You should call the company that provides your trash removal service to determine if they will remove this type of discarded material before you place it at the curb. Such items can also be taken to the landfill at no cost.

Disposing of refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, dryers, and ranges requires special care. To protect curious children, please remove the door, or secure it so it cannot be opened.

Q. I have received a notice from the County Code Enforcement officer for violating one of the County laws. I don't feel I was given enough time to correct the problem. What should I do?

- A. Call, or go to the Code Enforcement Division before the deadline has expired, and discuss the circumstances with the Code Enforcement officer. Based upon the circumstances, the deadline may be extended.

Q. Is it legal to dump liquids or to sweep debris into the gutters and/or streets?

- A. It is illegal to dump, sweep, or deposit, in any way, litter, garbage, liquid waste, or rubbish in to any street, alley, or onto other public property within the County.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What kinds of animals are prohibited in residential areas?

- A. It is unlawful to keep horses, cattle, mules, donkeys, sheep, goats, swine, pigeons, or fowl in residential areas.

In agricultural/residential areas, one grazing animal per acre and one offspring up to one year old is permitted. Swine for personal consumption are allowed, but must be kept seventy-five (75) feet from adjoining property lines. Fowl for personal consumption are also permitted. You may not raise animals for sale purposes.

Q. When is a building permit required?

- A. Any type of construction, including a storage shed or fence, requires a building permit. If there is a question regarding a permit, contact the Building Department at 352-754-4050.

Q. Is there an ordinance against putting signs on County rights-of-way?

- A. The only signs allowed on County rights-of-way are official regulatory signs. All others are considered trash and may be removed and disposed of by a Code Enforcement officer.

Q. What is a Notice to Appear?

A. After a Code Enforcement officer investigates a complaint and determines that a violation exists, a Notice of Violation is issued for compliance. If there is no compliance, a Notice to Appear is issued. First and continuing offences have a maximum fine of \$1,000. Repeat violations have a maximum fine of \$5,000. Violations that are deemed irreversible or irreparable have a maximum fine of \$15,000. Some cases may require a mandatory appearance before the Special Magistrate and hearing fees may apply.

Fines should be paid within 20 days of receipt of Notice to Appear.

Should you wish to contest your case, you should appear at the date and time listed on the Notice to Appear.

Q. Who enforces deed restrictions?

- A. *Code Enforcement only enforces County ordinances.* For deed restriction violations, it is suggested that you contact your civic association or homeowner's association.

Q. Am I required to display an address at my residence?

- A. All residences and businesses in the County must have an address posted. Residences must have four (4) inch numbers and businesses must have six (6) inch numbers.

Q. Where can I sell my vehicle?

- A. You may sell your personal vehicle only from your private property where you reside. You may not sell vehicles from vacant lots or County rights-of-way.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHERE TO OBTAIN ASSISTANCE

Hernando County Code Enforcement

20 N. Main Street, Room 164
Brooksville, FL 34601-2893

Phone: 352-754-4056

Fax: 352-754-4491

Website: <http://www.co.hernando.fl.us>

Mark Caskie

Interim Code Enforcement Director

352-754-4056

Email: MarkC@co.hernando.fl.us

Code Enforcement Officers

Gail Gilchrist
Frank McCabe
Joey Filippelli
Carol Enders
Robert Stone
Rebecca Kibby
Joe Groeneveld

Please feel free to call and make an appointment to come by and meet the Code Enforcement Officer for your area.

Customer Service Technicians

Jeffney
Debbie
Kim