



CITY OF JACKSONVILLE

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICE  
PLANNING AND BUILDING  
320 CHURCH AVENUE SE  
JACKSONVILLE, AL 36265  
256-782-3840

## CODE ENFORCEMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is Code Enforcement?

Rules governing the use of **private** property are intended to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of all citizens. Code Enforcement is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Code of Alabama, City Code, and other regulations related to building codes, zoning, subdivisions, and business licenses. These codes and regulations contain penalties that may be imposed when a property owner refuses to correct a cited violation.

### Who may file a complaint and when may it be filed?

Any citizen may file a complaint whenever they have personal knowledge of conditions, uses of a property, or structures that they have reason to believe are improper. Knowledge of the codes and regulations is not required, since the enforcement staff will make the evaluation as to whether the reported conditions constitute a violation. Misdirected complaints will be forwarded to a more appropriate department or agency (i.e., Police Dept., Animal Control, Street and Sanitation Dept., County Health Dept., etc.).

### Is there a limit as to the number of complaints I can file?

No. Honest, unbiased, complete and accurate complaints are always welcome. However, citizens' complaints are not the only things that cause Code Enforcement to investigate, resolve, and/or prosecute violations of the various codes and regulations. In fact, most resolutions of violations result from routine observations and investigations by the Code Enforcement personnel. Incomplete or inaccurate citizen complaints can actually hinder the discovery and resolution of violations. Therefore, we ask that, before filing a complaint, you gather as many facts as possible concerning the violation and include them on the complaint form. Remember, most of the time you have better access to the facts than a Code Enforcement Officer would have. For instance, if you don't know the names or number of persons living next to you, it will be almost impossible and very time consuming for the CE officer to find out. For these reasons, it is usually more productive if you limit your complaints to those violations which directly affect you and your neighborhood.

### How is a complaint filed?

Except where an immediate hazard exists, compliance actions begin with a signed complaint from a citizen or another public agency. The appropriate form for filing a complaint can be obtained by calling 256-782-3840 or by visiting the Code Enforcement office at 320 Church Av. SE. Code Enforcement cannot accept anonymous complaints. This is because anonymous complaints have been found to be far less reliable than those made by citizens who are willing to identify themselves.

### What happens once I've submitted my written complaint?

Except for issues where an immediate threat to health and safety exists, complaints are usually investigated in the order received. Initial action on your complaint will normally begin within 2 or 3 days of receipt and an inspection of the site will normally occur within 5 working days. Once the inspection is done, the situation will be evaluated and prioritized for resolution. Resolutions, however,

can take weeks, months and sometimes longer depending on the complexity and legal ramifications involved.

### Should I have concerns about making a complaint?

Some people do not report a violation on a neighboring property for fear of reprisal. This concern is rarely justified and, without your participation, the violation will be much more difficult to prove and remedy. The most common form of reprisal is the violator will report any violations on your property. This “finger pointing” makes violation resolution almost impossible. Therefore, if you are unsure whether you have any violations on your property, contact Code Enforcement for a site inspection.

**Please Note:** If any violations are observed on your property, you would be required to correct them prior to any enforcement action being taken on your complaint.

### Will I receive updates as to progress made on my complaint?

Not necessarily. If additional information is required, you will be contacted. However, once a complaint is received, the city is responsible for determining whether a violation has occurred and how to resolve the problem. Of course, citizens have the right to file criminal charges or civil actions on their own, but you should consult your attorney before doing so.

**Code Enforcement Complaint Flow Chart**

