

## King County Code Enforcement Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. What is Code Enforcement?**

Code Enforcement is part of the Permitting Division. We make sure people follow building, land use, and environmental rules in unincorporated King County

### **2. Does Code Enforcement look for violation?**

No, Code Enforcement is complaint based. Code Enforcement responds to complaints received from citizens and other agencies.

### **3. How do I know if someone submitted a complaint on my property?**

Unless immediate life safety or environmental concern exists, code enforcement will mail you a complaint received letter, and requests that you contact the code enforcement to schedule a site visit.

### **4. If code violations are found on my property what happens?**

If the code enforcement officer determines that violations exist on your property, a violation letter will be sent. providing details of the violation, corrective actions, and timelines to fix the violations.

### **5. What happens if I do nothing?**

Code enforcement's goal is to bring properties into compliance voluntarily. In some cases, if the person responsible fails to bring the property into compliance, code enforcement will issue a Notice & Order.

### **6. What is a Notice & Order?**

A Notice & Order is legal notification that violations exist on your property. The order lists the violations, sets compliance dates, and monetary penalties for failure to fix the violation by the deadline. The Notice & Order is recorded on title to the property.

### **7. What if I disagree that my property has violations?**

The Notice & Order includes information on the appeal process and deadline to submit an appeal. Appeals are heard by the King County Hearing Examiner's office.

### **8. What happens in an Appeal?**

The County and the property owner or its representative provide testimony to the Hearing Examiner. The Hearing Examiner determines if the County has proved the violations, if the violations have been fixed by the deadline, and what monetary penalties should apply. The Hearing Examiner issues an order advising if the appeal is dismissed, granted, denied, or modified.

### **9. After the Hearing Examiner order, what happens if I still do not bring my property into compliance?**

The case may be forwarded to the King County Prosecutor's Office for further legal action.

### **10. What happens when I correct the violation?**

If the corrective actions have been achieved, Code Enforcement will close out the case. If a Notice & Order has been recorded on the title to the property a termination of enforcement is filed to release the Notice & Order. If monetary penalties have not been paid, they will remain as a lien on the property.

### **11. What are nuisances?**

All civil code violations are hereby determined to be detrimental to the public health, safety and environment and are hereby declared public nuisances

## **12. What is a "Junk Vehicle"?**

To qualify, a vehicle must meet at least three of the following requirements:

- Must be three (3) years old or older.
- Must be extensively damaged.
- Must be Apparently inoperable.
- Must have a "fair market value" that is equal to the approximate value of the scrap in it.

## **13. Can I just pay a fine instead of correcting the violation?**

No, payment of penalties does not resolve the violation. If penalties have been assessed, payment of the penalties and correcting the violation are necessary to resolve the code enforcement case.

## **14. Do code enforcement cases have statute of limitations? Do they go away after a long time?**

There is not statute of limitations for code violations.

## **15. How do I find out who filed a complaint about my property?**

People who file complaints can request to remain confidential and complaints can be filed anonymously. You can make a public records request to find out more information about the complaint.

## **16. Will Code Enforcement assist with permit documents?**

It is the property owner's responsibility to do the work of developing the information necessary to prepare required permit documentation.

## **17. Can a property owner use a permit expediter to assist through the permitting process.**

Yes. There are several companies that have experience in obtaining permits and assisting the public with the King County permit process. While we are not able to recommend one company over another, using a web search engine for "Permit expediter" should reveal some options. From that inquiry you would then contact the various companies for an estimate and vet the reviews to determine who would best assist you through the King County permit process.

## **18. Can I sell my property if there is a code violation?**

King County does not interfere in the selling of properties while there are code violations.

## **19. How long and how much is a permit going to cost to resolve the code violation?**

Permits vary depending on the scope of the violation and the proposed remediation. Applying for and going through the ABC pre-application process provides you with the financial information and permit staff to answer questions and explore options.

## **20. Can I negotiate compliance schedules?**

Yes, the Code Enforcement Officer has the authority to extend compliance deadlines for a reasonable amount of time.

## **21. What is abatement and can you do it on my property?**

Abatement is when the County has a legal right (either by court order or emergency) to enter a property and bring the property into compliance and the expense for that abatement action is transferred to the property owner.