



Code Enforcement Informational Handout

ABATE – work flow & process

- Complaint or Inspector initiated.
- Inspection is performed. If a violation(s) is found, pictures are taken of each violation, of the Abate notice, and of the Abate notice posted on the property.
- Property is occupied – An Abate get posted – then a notification is sent out.
- Property is unoccupied – No Abate is posted but a work order gets issued instead (see W/O process).
- A citation can issued for the violation existing and can be written at any time or everyday if needed, it's different from an Abate and work order and as such has no bearing on either. The citation is the punishment for having the violation. (See Citation section)
- The property is then reinspected after 6 days.
- If the original violations exist from the original ABATE then a W/O will be issued. New violations = new ABATE.
- Not complete – W/O issued (See W/O section).
- Complete - the case is closed.

Work order – work flow & process

- Complaint or Inspector initiated.
- Inspection performed. If a violation(s) is found, pictures are taken of each violation and attached to the W/O cover sheet. This W/O "packet" gets submitted to the contractor.
- If a property is unoccupied – No ABATE is posted but instead a work order gets issued.
- W/O gets issued – a notification is sent out (See Notification System section) and we hold the W/O for 24hrs then release it to our contractor.
- W/O goes to our contractor to be completed.

- Work is completed based on the original W/O "packet" that gets submitted and filled out by the Inspector
 - Before and after time stamped pictures are taken by the contractor and attached to the W/O "packet"
 - If the violations are corrected by the time the contractor visits the property, the W/O gets marked DBO (Done by Owner) and there is no charge applied to the W/O.
- W/O gets returned once completed for the Inspector to review and sign.
 - W/O goes to Code Supervisor to review and sign.
 - W/O goes to Assistant Director to review and sign.
 - Case is closed.
 - W/O then gets billed to the property owner.

Housing Court – work flow & process

- Complaint or Inspector initiated.
- Inspection performed.
- Write up housing code violations and notice.
- New: Residential Rehab Program to launch early 2019
 - It would allow qualifying property owners to avoid the court process for 90-180 days, no appearing in court, no monthly follow up with an Inspector.
 - A detailed agreement must be signed.
 - A work scope is provide at the beginning and work completed at your pace.
 - However all violations must be completed in that time frame, no exceptions, otherwise the property will be put into housing court, an admin fee and reinspection fees will then be assessed and a bill sent to the property owner at the end of the process.
 - If compliance is gained within that time frame and agreement then no admin fee or reinspection fee.
- If the property violates or does not qualify for the Rehab Program then traditional housing court is the next step.
- Legal dept. assigns a court date (4-6 weeks) and mails the housing notice.
- First appearance court date is on the housing notice you receive (Court is on the 4th floor of City Hall).
- Inspector reinspects the property prior to court and reports any progress during court.
- At the first appearance a work scope is established between you and your inspector for work to be completed in the next "X" amount of days.
- That work scope and the next court date is written on the order from the hearing officer and given to you in court.
- Inspector reinspects the property prior to court and reports progress during court

- In court work completed and the next work to be completed is established between you and your inspector.
- A work scope is established between you and your inspector for work to be completed in the next "X" amount of days.
- That work scope and the next court date is written on the order from the hearing officer and given to you in court.
- This cycle continues until full compliance is gained or the case defaults.
- The case is dismissed – but dismissed in court and not at any other time. An Inspector may tell you they are dismissing the case because the work was completed prior to the court date; but the case is only truly dismissed in court.
- If the case defaults, a fine is imposed by the hearing officer to the property owner. The fine can be appealed by contacting our legal department within 35 days.
- Only the hearing officer can impose a fine and dismiss a fine.
- Starting in 2019, all cases will be continued for 60 days for all violations to be corrected. Properties can be continued for 30 days but will be assessed a \$100 reinspection fee.

Demo Court – work flow & process

- Complaint or Inspector initiated.
- Inspection performed.
- Write up Demo code violations and notice (demo criteria differs from housing code violations). For more information regarding demolition criteria; please visit municode.com/Peoria; demolition criteria is Sec 5-402.
- Legal dept. assigns a court date (6-8 weeks) and mails the demo notice
- First appearance court date is on the demo notice you receive (Court is not at City Hall, rather the Courthouse).
- Inspector reinspects the property prior to court and reports any progress during court.
- This cycle continues until full compliance is gained or a demo order is granted to the city.
- Property is in compliance then the case is closed.
- Occasionally, the city will petition the court to take the property as abandoned if it meets certain criteria, in those instances the City will then be the deed holder for the property.
- Once the deed holder, the City will assess the condition of the structure by having a Code and Building Inspector inspect the property.
- From that inspection depending on the condition, the property is either demolished or sold to a new owner and rehabbed.
- Typically the City doesn't have the opportunity to rehab many properties because the property must first qualify and meet demo criteria and then go thru the court process which could take up to a year or longer.

- If a rehab agreement is signed with a new owner, the City has multiple follow ups and inspections in order to gain compliance and ultimately sign over the deed to the new owner.

Notification System

- Newly implemented early 2018.
- You can receive text and/or email notifications for the following actions:
- ABATE – Work Order – Tagged ‘inoperable’ vehicle.
- Example – if an inspector tags a property with an ABATE notice, a notification will go out the following morning stating such.
- The notification will list the inspector name and desk number, enabling a phone call to be made to the inspector if questions arise.
- The same notification goes out with a work order or when they tag a vehicle
- If a work order gets issued, the notification will be sent out, and the work order held for 24 hours before it gets released to our contractor.
- To sign up go to peoriacodeviolations.com and click the link.
- You’ll be prompted to enter the parcel ID number.
- Anyone is also able to sign up for notifications on any property, so if you have a vacant lot next door to your property that always has tall grass, you can sign up for notifications on that lot and whenever an inspector issues a work order you could get a notification, providing extra peace of mind knowing it will then be cut shortly.
- Keep in mind that example also applies in the opposite direction, anyone can sign up for notifications for any property.
- Not receiving a notification is not a defense for receiving a work order or a citation. This is not meant to replace adequate property maintenance from the property owner, it is a curtesy notice.
- The City does not manage the software system. The Notification System was custom built for our Department by a third party contractor out of Champaign, IL. With any technology, errors or malfunctions may occur.
- We continue to follow the same protocol regarding abates and work orders as we’ve done in years past, the notification system is merely meant to be a curtesy and was not put in place to rely upon for proper property maintenance.

Emergency work orders

- Emergency work orders are reserved for only the most egregious violations.
- They are executed by our contractor the same day when the violation is first noticed.
- They are only executed when first approved by a management employee. An inspector can ask for an emergency work order be performed but ultimately is at the discretion of someone from management.

- Since they do not follow the normal work order process, a notification is not issued.
- Examples of emergency work orders: Tall grass over 24" or higher, extreme amounts of loose garbage or debris, evictions (see next section), refrigerators or freezers with the doors on, not in an enclosed space (left outside).

Evictions

- We work with the local sheriff's office, they provide us with a weekly log of evictions for that week that includes date, time, and address.
- The sheriff's department when performing an eviction, always put the properties belongings in the front yard, they also put a sign in the front yard with the date and time of eviction.
- The properties belongings must stay on the property and cannot be removed for 24 hours, this provides time for the tenants to retrieve those belongings
- However, after the 24 hours, the property owner needs to remove all debris from the eviction.
- If the debris does not get removed, an emergency WO will be issued for our contractor to correct the violation and a bill will be sent to the property owner
- Example – an eviction occurs at noon on a Wednesday; by noon Thursday the debris can be removed by the property owner, sometime will be given to remove the debris but if the debris is not removed by 3-4pm that day, an emergency WO will be issued.
- Remember that an emergency WO is a judgement call by management, typically any debris that's been there 24 hours is all over the property and can spread to neighboring properties or in the street.

What it means if you receive a citation

- A citation is issued for the violation existing and can be written at any time or everyday if needed, it's different from an Abate and work order and as such has no bearing on either. The citation is the punishment for having the violation
- Current ticket structure:
 - First time an inspector is at a property for a violation they will issue an Abate or a work order, usually not a ticket unless is pretty egregious.
 - Second time the inspector is at the property for the same violation they will issue an abate or work order, and a \$50 citation
 - Third time the inspector is at the property for the same violation they will issue an Abate or work order, and a \$200 citation.
 - Fourth time the inspector is at the property for the same violation they will issue an Abate or work order, and a \$500 citation.
 - It then stays at \$500 for every ticket written thereafter in a 2 year period
- Each citation will be sent to the property owner and no one else

- Each citation has a court date on it and the property owner is welcome to appear to contest the ticket in front of the hearing officer.
- The inspector wrote the ticket for a violation and will not dismiss it, it can only be dismissed by the hearing officer.
- If you have a ticket dismissed in court, only that citation is dismissed, it has no bearing on any work order or any additional tickets being dismissed.

Illegal dumping on your property – what to do

- Illegal dumping happens all over the city, not just in one area, but does happen more on vacant properties.
- If something is illegally dumped, it is the property owner's responsibility to clean it up.
- 99% of illegal dumping happens without anyone knowing who did it, most instances we are unable to go back to that person to have them clean it up.
- Code Enforcement understands this is not an ideal situation, asking property owners to clean something up they didn't commit but it's in the best interest of both parties to have it cleaned up ASAP, as dumping leads to more dumping.
- Inspector will not write a ticket for illegal dumping but still needs to get it cleaned up and may issue an abate or work order, however, if that dumped item doesn't get removed for an extended period of time, weeks and weeks, then an inspector will likely issued a ticket.
- Appreciatepeoria.com has a recycling list as a tool to help get rid of some of these items. The recycling list also includes other items that PDC may not take.
- Illegal dumping is a burden on everyone. But the best way to avoid dumping is thru proper property maintenance and cleaning up the property ASAP.
- It's also good practice to contact your inspector when illegal dumping occurs so they are aware and can work out any extra time you may need to correct it. This may avoid an Inspector issuing a ticket. Inspectors are willing to work with you. Communication is the key.

How to get more information when you receive a citation, work order bill, abate, housing notice, demo notice

- If you receive anything from the Code Enforcement Department you should contact the inspector for that property and they can provide more information.
- Pictures for the case can be provided at your request and an inspector can get those for you, either thru email, picking them up at City Hall, or mail.
- Every piece of correspondence (abate, work order bill, ticket, housing/demo notice) has the inspectors name on it.
- Typically if you call or come in and talk to a member of the admin staff, they can only provide so much information about a case. They weren't on site and aren't familiar with the entire case.

- Inspectors are can be reached by calling the main Code Enforcement line at 309-494-8654, and selecting your Inspector from the phone message.
- When leaving a message please provide as much information as possible; name, date, address, case and/or work order number, reason for the call, that way the Inspector is able to do some of the leg work needed beforehand and can keep your phone call short and efficient.
- Inspectors are in the field every day from 9-3:30 and will return messages when they return to the office.
- You can also make an appointment to meet with an Inspector if you want to talk about a case face to face, by calling and confirming a time with the Inspector, office hours are in the afternoon only.

How to contest a citation, work order, housing notice, demo notice – what information we can provide you – what information you can provide us.

- How to contest an item:
 - Citation – appearing in court and talking to the hearing officer, an inspector issued the citation for a reason, they will not dismiss a ticket.
 - Work order –If you believe a work order was done in error, contact your Inspector. If there was no error but you wish to further discuss the issue you can talk to the Code Supervisor. The Code Supervisor can best be reached by calling 309-494-8654. Please also leave as much information as possible in the message. Name, date, address, reason for the call.
 - Housing Case – Formal hearing (see Housing section), talking to the hearing officer to contest the case.
 - Demo Case – Formal hearing (see demo section), talking to the judge (courthouse) to contest the case.
- If you feel something is in error, your best course of action is to first talk to the Inspector for the case to get more information about the case, request any pictures you want, if after the information is given to you and you feel any case is not warranted, you have the options listed above.