



Quick Guide To Code Enforcement

What Does Code Enforcement Do?

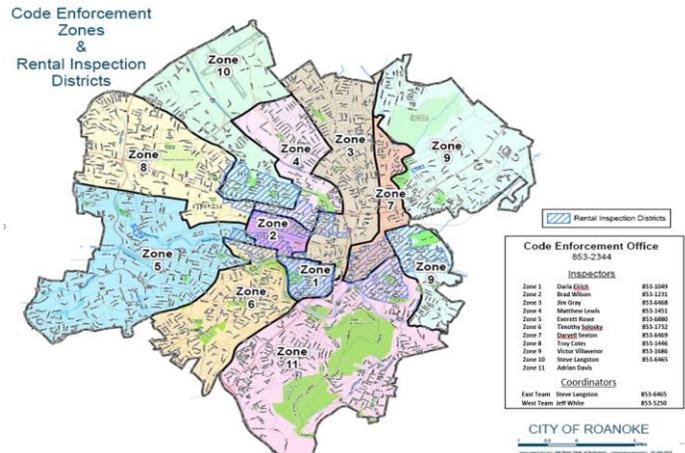
Code Enforcement is responsible for enforcing various City and State codes that help to improve city neighborhoods by eliminating eyesores, blight and nuisances, thus increasing the general attractiveness of the City. We also contribute to the safety, health and welfare of citizens by performing inspections on existing houses and apartments and assuring that necessary maintenance work is done. The department responds to complaints from citizens, neighborhood groups and other agencies as well as regularly canvassing to find and cite obvious code violations.

Code Enforcement cites thousands of violations yearly, from overgrown lots to dilapidated structures. Many of these violations are willingly remedied by the property owners, but in some cases owners must be summoned to court in order to achieve compliance, or contractors retained by the department must perform the necessary abatement. The most common eyesores and nuisances dealt with by Code Enforcement are:

- Overgrown weeds and trash in yards and vacant lots
- Inoperable motor vehicles on private property
- Outdoor storage of inappropriate items in yards and lots
- Houses, buildings and various structures in need of painting, repair or other maintenance
- Commercial vehicles being parked and stored in residential neighborhoods
- Recreational vehicles and boats parked in front yards
- Too many people living in a house or apartment
- Illegal business activities in residential areas
- Vegetation, fences or other obstructions to visibility at intersections
- Vegetation or other obstructions blocking sidewalks
- Continuous yard sales, pods, dumpsters, tents and other "temporary" structures
- Graffiti, non-permitted signs, "snipe" signs (usually stapled onto telephone poles)

Code Enforcement also enforces the City's "Rental Inspection Program", aimed at improving the safety and general maintenance of rental properties in core City neighborhoods. This program requires that rental properties in the City's "Rental Inspection District" be inspected at least once every four years. Code Enforcement also performs maintenance inspections anywhere in the City. This service is used primarily by tenants whose repair issues aren't being addressed in a timely manner.

Roanoke is a City with a predominantly older stock of structures, and many deferred maintenance issues. Code Enforcement regularly cites houses, garages, sheds, fences, retaining walls and other structures in need of repair or demolition. The eventual repair or removal of these eyesores reduces blight and enhances the attractiveness and safety of our neighborhoods.



How Does Code Enforcement Work?

The City is divided into 11 zones, illustrated on the above map. Each zone is assigned to one inspector, and the 11 inspectors are divided into two teams, each with a supervisor who provides training and zone support when needed. Our inspectors are "cross-trained" and certified to enforce all of the codes pertaining to issues mentioned in the previous section. The zone map can be viewed in full size at <http://www.roanokeva.gov>. Click on the "Government" tab, then under Departments P to Z choose "Planning, Building & Development" and at the top choose "Code Enforcement" and click on "Find your code Enforcement Zone and inspector" to see the map.

Click on "Report a Violation" to submit a Service Request. Complaints may also be entered on the main page by putting cursor on "Resident" tab and clicking on "Code Enforcement" under "City Services". If you prefer to phone in a complaint call **540-853-2344**. Staff is on-hand from 8-5, Monday through Friday to assist you.

Neighborhood Groups

The Code Enforcement department has forged an alliance with the City's neighborhood groups and works closely with them to address their concerns. Our eleven field inspectors regularly attend meetings of the groups for their respective zones. There are over fifty of these groups. They are a powerful and vigilant force in making the City of Roanoke a safer, cleaner and more attractive place to live. To find your neighborhood group and a schedule of meeting dates and locations go to the City's website at roanokeva.gov, hover on the "Residents" tab, and under the "Community" tab to the left click on "Neighborhoods" for groups, meeting schedules and other useful information.

What Specific Codes Do We Enforce?

No Virginia municipality may undertake any form of enforcement unless it is specifically permitted by the State Code. This is called the “Dillon Rule” named after the 19th century judge who proposed it. Thus, all of Code Enforcement’s activities are derived from the Code of Virginia, and in turn adopted by City Code, as follows:

Zoning Code	Code of Virginia 15.2-2280 Chapter 36.2 of the City Code
Virginia Maintenance Code	Code of Virginia 36-98 Chapter 7 of the City Code
Weed & Trash Abatement	Code of Virginia 15.2-901 Chapter 33, Article II of the City Code
Inoperable Motor Vehicles	Code of Virginia 15.2-905 Chapter 20, Article VI of the City Code
Graffiti Abatement	Code of Virginia 15.2-908 Chapter 21, Article I of the City Code

The Code Team

The Code Team exists to deal with situations beyond the scope of Code Enforcement alone, such as properties where there is suspected drug activity coupled with other nuisance issues, or large properties, such as motels where there are numerous units in disrepair, fire hazards, insect infestations, prostitution, or other health concerns. The Code Team, spearheaded by one of our Code Enforcement inspectors, uses an “inter-agency” approach to deal with these tough issues, collaborating as needed with The Police Department, Social Services, The Commonwealth Attorney’s Office, The Department of Environmental Quality, Fire and EMS, The Health Department, Solid Waste Department, Building Inspections, Environmental Management and Billings & Collections.

Referrals, Collaborations, Contractors

In addition to the Code Team’s regular collaborations, the entire Code Enforcement department works with and exchanges referrals with many other departments and agencies. If a problem cannot be handled “in house” in will be referred to someone who will be able to take care of it.

Agencies and Departments Closely Allied With Code Enforcement	
Neighborhood Services	Public Works
Solid Waste Management	Legal Aid Society
Real Estate Valuation	Fire and EMS
The Police Department	Social Services
Department of Technology	Lead Safe Roanoke
Billings and Collections	Building Inspections
Commonwealth Atty’s Office	Parks and Grounds
Neighborhood Partnership	City Attorney’s Office
Roanoke Redevelopment & Housing Authority	

When general citation procedures fail to yield the desired results Code Enforcement will use the court system or employ contractors to achieve compliance. Hundreds of yards and vacant lots per year are cut and trash cleaned up by Code Enforcement’s contractors. Our contractors also board up and raze derelict properties, generally when the owners either refuse or cannot afford to do so. Property owners are billed for work done by the City and if the bill is not paid a lien goes against the property. Code Enforcement inspectors also donate time at no charge to remove graffiti when owners will not or cannot do the work.

Checking the Status of a Code Enforcement Complaint On The Web

If you would like to check the status of a complaint or a building permit on the Web go to:

<https://roanokeweb.roanokeva.gov/etrakit/Search/permit.aspx>

Search by the address or tax parcel number. If searching by address choose “contains”, type the address into the area provided and click “search”. Double click on any of the citations to obtain details.

The screenshot shows the eTRAKIT web application interface. On the left is a navigation menu with categories like Permits, Projects, Contractor, Properties, Inspections, Code Enforcement, Shopping Cart, and Contact. A red arrow points to the 'Code Enforcement' link. The main content area is titled 'Case Search' and includes a search form with 'Property Address' selected, 'Contains' as the operator, and '912 Bullitt' as the search term. Below the search form is a table of search results:

Property Address	Tax ID	Case Number	Case Type
912 BULLITT AVE SE	4120713	VMC021601	VIRGINIA MAINTENANCE CODE
912 BULLITT AVE SE	4120713	VMC130238	VIRGINIA MAINTENANCE CODE
912 BULLITT AVE SE	4120713	VMC150854	VIRGINIA MAINTENANCE CODE
912 BULLITT AVE SE	4120713	VMC160317	VIRGINIA MAINTENANCE CODE
912 BULLITT AVE SE	4120713	WT040985	WEEDS AND TRASH

At the bottom of the results table, it indicates 'page 1 of 6'.