



DEPARTMENT OF
**Buildings, Safety Engineering &
Environmental**

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Property Maintenance Division Inspections, Maintenance Requirements and Responsibilities

What is a Vacant Building?

A Vacant building is a structure that is unoccupied for more than thirty (30) days, unsecured or secured by other than normal means, illegally occupied, or poses an imminent danger to the health and safety of the surrounding residents, properties or the general public.

REGISTRATION

1. Must complete online Vacant Property Registration: <https://aca-prod.accela.com/Detroit>
2. For help with registering for eLAPS: <https://detroitmi.gov/BSEED/elaps>

Incomplete registration forms will not be accepted

INSPECTIONS

1. Annual Inspections are required for vacant property and may occur more often based on complaints. 2. Inspections are made to ensure compliance with the Property Maintenance Code, the Zoning Ordinance, the Michigan Building Code with regard to the safety and security of the buildings.
2. Inspections may be scheduled by calling (313) 628-2451 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday.
3. An Exterior Certificate of Compliance is required annually for exterior conditions of all vacant buildings and structures in the City of Detroit, which is obtained after passing the annual inspection.
4. Upon Inspection and finding the property vacant, a correction order may be issued to the owner of record to correct violations of the Property Maintenance Code, the Zoning ordinance and the Michigan building Code.
5. When the Department deems a building unsafe, collapsing or unfeasible for repair, it may refer the property to the Dangerous Buildings for emergency demolition.

NATURE OF INSPECTIONS

1. Structural
 - Structural safety
 - Exterior soundness
 - Falling components
 - Means of ingress/egress (**Must have operating door**)
 - Foundations
 - Windows/Doors security
 - Roof/ roof structures
 - Chimneys/Stacks
2. Land and Environment
 - High weeds (Debris along property line)
 - Graffiti
 - Solar Light
 - Emergency Contact Visible on site
 - Abandoned vehicles (referred to Police)
 - Fencing
 - Security of accessory buildings
 - Eradication of nuisance and blight conditions

ENFORCEMENT

All inspections and processes are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the City of Detroit Property Maintenance Code, Chapter 8 of the Detroit City Code, as well as the City of Detroit Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 50 of the Detroit City Code. These matters are enforced as Blight Violations in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 1-1-9, of the Detroit City Code. The Buildings & Safety Engineering Department is continuously vigilant for violations of codes and ordinances related to the maintenance of all properties within the City of Detroit. The City of Detroit Department of Administrative Hearings adjudicates tickets for Blight Violations. An Administrative Hearing Officer levies fines upon findings of 'Responsible' and civil remedies are applied to affect collection of judgments, including liens, garnishments, seizures and other such actions as permitted by law.

VACANT PROPERTY IS A FACT OF LIFE IN ANY COMMUNITY, PROPER MANAGEMENT OF VACANT PROPERTY IN OUR COMMUNITY IS VITAL TO THE CITY'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

Safe, Secure and healthy vacant properties reduce blight and the negative impact it causes to property values in our City.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNERS

- Maintain the physical structure and environs in a safe, clean, secure and healthy manner pursuant to Chapter 8 and 50 of the Detroit City Code, including but not limited to: replacement of broken windows, grass cutting and keeping property free of trash, debris and graffiti.
- Get annual inspections and current exterior certificates of compliance for exterior conditions.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMUNITY

- Monitor vacant properties
- Report deteriorating and open buildings to the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department
- Report trespass and vandalism to the Detroit Police Department

For Vacant Building Complaints Call: 313-628-2451

INSPECTOR CHECKLIST/REQUIREMENTS

Sec. 8-15-113. - Minimum requirements for vacant buildings and structures.

In addition to the other applicable requirements set forth in this division, each vacant building or structure shall remain in compliance with the following requirements during the time that the building or structure is vacant:

- 1) All grass and weeds on the premises, including grass and weeds that abut sidewalks, gutters and alleys, shall not be permitted to grow more than eight inches in height;
- 2) All dead or broken trees, tree limbs or shrubbery shall be cut and removed from the premises;
- 3) The interior walkway leading to the main entry door, and any public sidewalk adjoining the lot, shall be cleared and remain free of snow;
- 4) Debris, garbage, litter, rubbish, or any solid waste that creates a health, safety or fire hazard, including, but not limited to, any mail or flyers which have been delivered to the building or structure, shall not be permitted to accumulate on any portion of the exterior lot of the building or structure;
- 5) Foundations, basements, cellars, and crawl spaces shall be maintained in sound and watertight condition, shall be adequate to support the building or structure, and shall protect against the entry of rodents or other animals;
- 6) Exterior walls shall be free of holes, breaks, loose or rotting boards or timbers, and any other condition, which might allow rain or dampness to enter the interior portions of the walls or the interior spaces, and shall protect against the entry of rodents or other animals;
- 7) Peeling paint shall be removed from all exterior surfaces of any building or structure;
- 8) Exterior windows and doors shall be maintained in sound condition and good repair. Windows and doors shall fit tightly within their frames and the frames shall be constructed and maintained in relation to the adjacent wall construction so as to prevent rain or dampness from entering the building or structure. Any window that is broken, cracked or missing glass or glazing shall be replaced and maintained in good repair, or the opening for the building or structure shall otherwise be adequately secured pursuant to this section;
- 9) All exit areas shall have continuous exterior lighting from dusk to dawn, provided, that the normal intensity of lighting shall be not less than two foot candles per square foot on the floor surfaces, within an eight-foot radius around said exit and shall shine away from adjacent properties. This requirement may be met by the use of battery-powered or solar-powered lighting where such lighting meets the performance standards set by this subsection;
- 10) As applicable, all openings of a building or structure shall be closed and secured using secure doors, glazed windows, commercial-quality steel security panels, or filled with like-kind material as the surrounding wall to prevent entry by unauthorized persons and, except as authorized by Subsection (11) of this section, the use of plywood is prohibited. All barricades shall be secured to the building or structure in such a manner that entry to the building or structure through the barricade is not possible, unless the barricade has a lock device and is designed to be opened and closed to allow for authorized or legal access to the building or structure;
- 11) Openings that are less than one square foot in area and higher than eight feet above the ground may be boarded with plywood, provided, that the plywood is made weathertight and finished with varnish, or paint of a similar color to the exterior wall, and cut to the inside dimension of the exterior of the opening, and otherwise secured in the manner prescribed by the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department; and
- 12) At least one entrance to the building or structure shall be accessible from the exterior and secured with a door that is locked to allow access only to authorized persons. A minimum of two exit doors shall be available to exit from the interior of the building or structure, with at least one exit door available per 150 linear feet or horizontal travel at ground-floor level.

(Code 1984, § 9-1-113; Ord. No. 11-10, § 1(9-1-113), eff. 8-6-2010)