

Avoid Common Code Violations

1. **Do not accumulate junk** or inoperable vehicles in your yard, or allow grass or nuisance vegetation to become overgrown.
2. **Assume you need a building permit.** Do your research and check with City staff. If it turns out you don't need one – celebrate!
3. **Do not assume your shed or other accessory structure is exempt from building permits** just based on the size of the structure. If it is used as an art studio, home office, or other “habitable space”, a building permit is **always** required.
4. Even if your tool shed is exempt from a building permit, remember that **all structures are required to meet setbacks** (distance from the structure to your property line).
5. Know where your property lines are located and **do not build in the public right-of-way**. If your old fence or garage is located in the right-of-way, you **cannot** rebuild/replace them in the same location. Avoid the headache of having to move a structure.
6. Fences 7 feet tall and under don't require a building permit, but **all fences are subject to height and design requirements**. Contact us for details.
7. If you have a rooster, make sure your neighbors are not bothered by the noise.
8. **If you want to operate a business from your home**, research what is allowed and what permits and licenses are required.
9. **Do not use recreational vehicles or tiny homes on wheels as dwelling units** or a home office.

Contact Code Compliance

File a complaint online, view frequently asked questions, and find permit applications and other helpful documents at:
www.cityofpt.us/development-services

Phone: **(360) 379-5094**

Email: klabadie@cityofpt.us

Hours: 8 am to 5 pm, Monday - Friday

Other Resources

Emergencies: 911

**Non-emergency police dispatch:
(360) 344-9779**

- Barking or dangerous dogs
- Loud parties or other noise complaints
- Parking issues or junk vehicles in the right-of-way
- Other non-emergency police matters

**East Jefferson Fire and Rescue:
(360) 385-2626**

- Fire complaints
- Information on burn bans

**Olympic Region Clean Air Agency:
(360) 539-7610**

- Air quality and smoke complaints



City of Port Townsend Development
Services Department

(360) 379-5096 | www.cityofpt.us

250 Madison St. Suite 3, Port Townsend, WA 98368

City of Port
Townsend

Code Compliance



In this brochure you can learn about:

- Common code violations and how to avoid them
- How to report a possible violation
- The code enforcement process

Common Code Violations

Building without required permits, including re-roofs, window replacement, new construction, most remodeling, structural repairs, fences taller than 7 feet in height, and clearing and grading of land.

Private use of the public right-of-way, including the placement of fences, signs, or other structures in the right-of-way.

Setback violations, including the construction of sheds or other structures too close to the property line.

Rooster noise that causes neighbors to complain, or the accumulation of manure that creates odors.

Feeding of wildlife, such as deer or geese, that creates a public nuisance.

Junk accumulation, high grass, and overgrown vegetation which may create a fire hazard or public nuisance.

Short term vacation rentals without a permit, offering guest lodging for 29 days or less.

Living in an RV or tent that is not located within a designated campground.

Operating a business without a business license or other required permits.

Critical area violations that cause damage to shorelines, wetlands, or create geological hazards.

Report A Possible Violation

Code enforcement plays a critical role in maintaining the health, safety, and quality of life for residents of the City of Port Townsend. The Code Compliance Officer is responsible for responding to and investigating code violations.

To report a possible code violation:

- Submit a complaint online at: www.cityofpt.us/compliance
- Or by phone at: (360) 379-5094

Note: You must provide your name and phone number. You may ask to remain anonymous, and the Code Compliance Officer and staff will not disclose your name; however, if the case goes to court your information may be disclosed during court proceedings.



Shed constructed illegally in the public right-of-way.

Code Enforcement FAQ

What issues are not enforced by code compliance?

Issues not enforced by code compliance include Home Owners Association (HOA) covenants, fire complaints, parking or junk vehicles in the right of way, barking or dangerous dogs, and most noise complaints. See the other side of this brochure for information on where to report these concerns.

How quickly are complaints responded to?

The Code Compliance Officer will respond to most complaints within 2 business days. Life safety issues receive priority response.

What is the process and timeline to correct code violations?

If a code violation is found, the Code Compliance Officer issues a letter to the property owner or occupant requesting that they correct the violation(s) typically within 14-30 days, or longer. The deadline can vary depending on the nature of the violation. If the violation is not corrected, a formal Notice and Order of Violation letter is sent by certified mail with a new deadline. If that deadline is not met, daily fees begin to accrue and/or citations may be issued.

Should I try talking with my neighbor before filing a complaint with the City?

Only if you feel comfortable doing so. Some issues, like rooster noise, can be resolved by neighbors talking with one another.

I think I have violations in my rental unit and my landlord won't fix them, can code compliance help?

For some issues, yes. Visit our code compliance FAQ for more information at: www.cityofpt.us/development-services