



MARCH-APRIL 2015

Inside College Station

* * * * * CITY OF COLLEGE STATION * Home of Texas A&M University® * College Station, Texas * * * * *



3 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CODE ENFORCEMENT

Can you imagine a community without ordinances or zoning restrictions? Through the years, city councils have put ordinances in place to ensure the health, safety and attractiveness of our community. College Station's Code Enforcement Division upholds such ordinances and strives to keep our community a nice, clean and safe place to live, work and play.

The division consists of five officers, including a supervisor and staff assistant. Each officer is responsible for a specific geographic area. Officers proactively and reactively respond to potential violations. Proactive is when an officer drives around their respective areas looking for violations. Reactive is investigating a possible violation reported by phone, SeeClickFix or email.

In 2014, Code Enforcement handled 7,942 proactive cases, including 537 SeeClickFix complaints and 41 internal complaints.

In some cases, the reports turn out to be something a resident doesn't like seeing, but it's not a violation. Many of these are civil matters that don't involve the city.

When it comes to code enforcement, misconceptions are bountiful. So, let's take a closer look at some of those myths:

Myth No. 1: Code Enforcement tickets violations immediately.

Code Enforcement's foremost goal is to educate citizens on the ordinances, whether it's a business displaying a banner without a permit or a residential property with a couch on the porch.

When officers see a violation, they give the resident seven days to comply before phone calls are placed and letters are sent. The process begins with a tag being left on your door or trash can (if its trash related). The door-tag will say "inspection notice," and a can tag will simply say "notice." These tags are not citations, which require you to pay a fine based on a listed fine structure.

If you receive an actual code citation or court summons, it means Code Enforcement has already sent several letters to you, your property owner and your management company, placed

numerous phone calls and left notices about your violation.

Myth No. 2: Code Enforcement does little to address residents' concerns.

Residents who call in complaints are encouraged to contact Code Enforcement for updates about the complaint. While details cannot be given, you can at least find out if contact has been made and know about follow-up plans.

You can report possible code violations by calling 979.764.6363, emailing CommunityEnhancement@cstx.gov, or downloading the SeeClickFix smartphone app (cstx.gov/seeclickfix). Once reported, an officer will investigate the issue within 48 hours.

Myth No. 3: "I don't like the way that looks, so it must be a violation."

Code Enforcement doesn't have the ability to make things up as they go. For example, some people think a large, 12-inch high clump of clover is a violation, but that's only true if the entire yard is higher than 12 inches.

Other examples are weeding flower beds, trimming curbs and dead trees. There is no ordinance for flower beds or trimming a curb since these are not health and safety issues, and while a dead tree may be a concern, no ordinance exists regarding dead trees on private property.

If the tree falls on someone else's property, it's a civil matter between the two parties. Homeowner associations may even have deed restrictions on dead trees, but those are not enforced by the city.

cstx.gov/codeenforcement
979.764.6363

Need a Summer Job? We're Hiring!

The City of College Station has seasonal positions open for recreation assistants, lifeguards, water safety instructors (teach swim lessons) and swim coaches (Tsunami Swim Team).

Recreation assistants will work with ages 6-15 for the city's Summer Camps as counselors, activity instructors, trip leaders, and support staff.

Work Schedule: June 2-Aug. 7

Multiple Shifts: 7:45 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Required Training: May 26-28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

American Red Cross water safety instructor and lifeguard certification programs are available. For more details and to register, visit cstx.gov/swim.

View complete position details and apply at csjobs.cstx.gov.

We Can Help You With Your Home

The following housing assistance programs are available through the City of College Station's Community Development office:

Homebuyer Education Course

If you are thinking about becoming a homeowner, this course is for you! Topics include understanding credit, obtaining a mortgage loan, home shopping and maintaining your home. For complete details, visit cstx.gov/homebuyer.

Down Payment Assistance

This program offers shared equity gap financing of up to 30 percent of the sales price of a home in College Station for income-eligible households through a 0 percent interest, deferred loan.

Minor Repair Assistance

A grant of up to \$7,500 may be available for eligible owner-occupied homes in need of minor but necessary repairs.

Housing Rehabilitation

A low-interest loan of up to \$50,000 may be available to eligible owner-occupied homes in need of major home renovations. Up to \$25,000 of the assistance may also be forgivable.

Reconstruction Loan Assistance

A \$110,000 reconstruction loan may be available to eligible owner-occupied homes in substandard condition. Up to \$40,000 of assistance may also be forgivable.

Learn more by calling 979.764.3778 or visiting cstx.gov/housingassistance.

Spruce Up Your Sprinkler System

When it comes to home irrigation systems, a little maintenance goes a long way. Before you ramp up your watering this spring, spruce up your irrigation system by remembering these four simple steps:

INSPECT. Check your system for clogged, broken, or missing sprinkler heads. Repair broken sprinkler heads yourself or contact a licensed irrigator for repairs.

CONNECT. Examine points where the sprinkler heads connect to pipes/hoses. If water pools in your landscape or you have large wet areas, you could have a leak in your system. A leak about as small as the tip of a ballpoint pen can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month.

DIRECT. Are you watering the driveway, house, or sidewalk instead of your yard? Redirect sprinklers to apply water only on the landscape.

SELECT. Update your watering schedule with the seasons using a "Seasonal Adjust" feature, or select a WaterSense labeled controller to take the guesswork out of scheduling.

City of College Station Water Services offers FREE landscape irrigation checkups. Interested? E-mail jnations@cstx.gov or call 979.764.6223.

Are you over-watering your lawn? Find out at bvwatersmart.tamu.edu. You can also sign up to receive weekly, personalized watering recommendations based upon weather in your neighborhood.

For more water-saving tips, visit cstx.gov/water.

events

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Lincoln Recreation Center

Ages 6-18.

cstx.gov/lincolncenter, 979.764.3779

Southwood Community Center

6th-8th graders.

cstx.gov/southwood 979.764.6351

APRIL 3 - EASTER EGG HUNT

1-3 p.m. at Lincoln Recreation Center

cstx.gov/lincolncenter, 979.764.3779

REGISTER FOR SUMMER CAMPS

Ages: 5-16. Registration opens April 6.

cstx.gov/camps, 979.764.3486

FREE MOVIES IN THE PARK

April 10 - "The Sandlot"

May 8 - "Brave" (2012)

8 p.m. at Wolf Pen Creek Park

cstx.gov/movies, 979.764.3486

APRIL 18 - BRAZOS VALLEY EARTH DAY

11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Free admission!

Wolf Pen Creek Park

BrazosValleyEarthDay.com

APRIL 25 - HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE & COMPUTER COLLECTION

7 a.m. - 2 p.m. Texas A&M University Services Building (by Veterans Park) Residents can dispose of household hazardous waste free of charge.

TwinOaksLandfill.com, 979.764.3809

MAY 2 - PARKS OPEN HOUSE

9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Free admission!

Lincoln Recreation Center

cstx.gov/events, 979.764.3486

REGISTER FOR SWIM LESSONS

Registration opens May 2.

cstx.gov/swim, 979.764.3486

MAY 3 - NATIONAL LEMONADE DAY

Nationwide event that teaches kids how to start and operate their own business through a lemonade stand.

Registration and provided materials are free. Learn more: LemonadeDayBCS.com