

# How to Report a Violation


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If you are seeking relief from conditions on a property in your community, there are a number of options available to you:

**Make contact with the responsible person.** Describe your perception of the problem. Discuss how the problem affects you and possible solutions.

Contact the **San Diego Mediation Center at (619) 238-2400**. The Center will assist in establishing an effective dialog between you and the person responsible for the problem.

## How do I report a violation?

If you believe that there is a violation in your neighborhood or near your business, call (619) 236-5500 to file a complaint, or complete the [Request for Investigation Form](#) and submit online, or print and mail. The  [Request for Investigation Form in Spanish](#) is available in a PDF format. The form is also accessible at any City of San Diego [library](#) computer by going to the Code Enforcement website or at our office located at 1222 First Ave., Fifth Floor, in downtown San Diego. Any forms submitted via regular mail should be addressed to:

### Code Enforcement Division

1222 First Ave., Fifth Floor, MS 511

San Diego, CA 92101

(619) 236-5500

When you phone in your complaint, we will ask if you have contacted the responsible party. Most people want to be good neighbors and are cooperative once the issue is brought to their attention.

Due to the existing case load and staff constraints, the complaint you file should be for those properties where the violations directly affect you.

Community-initiated complaints will usually receive a higher priority than individual complaints.

High service demands can routinely cause cases to remain open for 30 or more days. These cases usually involve violations that do not affect the public at large and do not constitute a health and safety problem.

## **What actions should I expect from Code Enforcement once an alleged violation is reported?**

In most cases, the person responsible for an alleged violation is given an opportunity to voluntarily comply and correct the situation.

Once the deadline in our Notice has expired, the owner or responsible person is subject to one or more of the remedies listed below. In addition to any fines that might be imposed, fees are charged after the second scheduled inspection for all reinspections of the property.

**Recordation of Notice of Violation** - This remedy is used for violations where there is no immediate need for correction. When the title transfers, the assumption is that the title will be cleared and the violations removed prior to funding a loan. There is a fee for removing the recorded Notice.

**Civil Penalties** - This remedy is used for violations where financial gain is achieved by not complying with the code. The fine may be assessed up to a daily maximum amount of \$2,500, and up to a total maximum amount of \$100,000.

**Abatement** - This remedy is used where the City requires the property owner to take action to abate the nuisance. If the property owner fails to take corrective action, the City's Code Enforcement Division hires a contractor to either demolish or board and secure a structure, or to clean a property of junk and debris. The responsible party has appeal rights.

**Judicial Remedies** - The assistance of the City Attorney is requested when the property owner fails to voluntarily comply. The City Attorney can file criminal or civil cases against the responsible party(ies).

**Mediation** is also available.

## **What if I wish to make an anonymous complaint?**

It is the policy of the Code Enforcement Division to request the source of the complaint. It is also the department's policy to keep the source of the complaint confidential. There is a potential, however, that the department may be ordered to reveal this information in a judicial proceeding. This policy does not apply to animal noise cases which require the support of adjacent property owners/occupants in order to identify a public nuisance. The department will not accept complaints from anonymous sources.

## **Information for Owners/Tenants**

Code Enforcement encourages voluntary compliance through a Voluntary Compliance form requesting correction of the alleged violations. Notification to the property owner/property manager allows the responsible party to take corrective action prior to, and possibly eliminating the need for, an on-site property inspection by an Code Enforcement Inspector/Investigator. **Typical sources of inquiries include:**

- Tenants
- Tenant's friends and/or neighbors
- Concerned citizens
- City departments with the responsibility of enforcing City codes, such as Code Enforcement, Fire, Police, Environmental Services, Planning and/or Development Services
- Community and neighborhood organizations who have instituted a community clean-up program (such as Community Pride)

## **Property inspection**

In general, an inspector reviews the development/use of the property and the condition as it relates to state of California housing laws and the San Diego [Municipal Code](#).