

Code Enforcement: Frequently Asked Questions

My neighbors fence/tree branches/roots/rockery appears to be on/over/beyond our shared property line? What can the City do?

Private property line issues are a civil matter between the private parties. A privately obtained licensed survey may be needed to clearly establish the property line. The City would only step in when there was a safety issue or if adopted code violations were involved.

I'm concerned that *my neighbor* needs some kind of assistance or;

I don't have the money/strength/ability to resolve my violation.

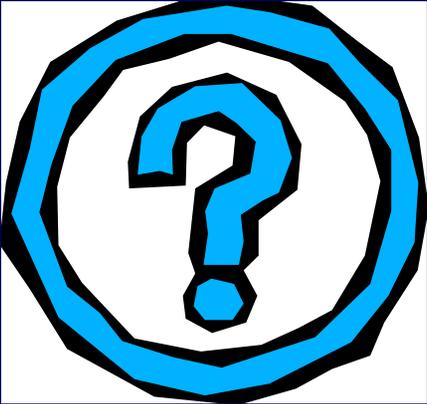
Who should I call?

The Code Enforcement office can provide phone numbers for different types of assistance.



Other selected code enforcement brochures and information available:

- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Checklist For Good Neighbors
- Commercial Signs
- Dispute Resolution Center
- Home Occupations
- Junk Vehicles
- Mold - Environmental Protection Agency general resource references.
- Neighborhood Issues
- Nuisance Violations
- Pet Waste
- Rats: Ridding - Snohomish Health
- Snohomish County Housing Authority Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program
- Summary of the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act of Washington
- West Nile Virus



How can I get more information?

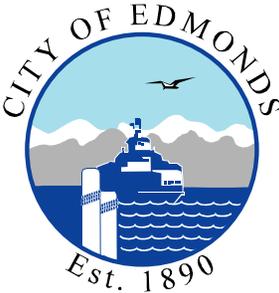
If you have questions involving the procedures and/or the types of code violations subject to City jurisdiction you may contact the code enforcement inspector in person at City Hall, by email or by telephone at the numbers provided on this brochure.

The Development Services Department provides many handouts and brochures to assist citizens with code enforcement, building, planning and engineering questions.

The City's website at www.ci.edmonds.wa.us also provides information and is continually updated.

Development Services
Office Hours:
Monday—Friday
9:00am-12:00pm 1:00pm-4:00pm
Excluding Holidays

Phone: 425-771-0220
Fax: 425-771-0221
www.ci.edmonds.wa.us
codeenforcement@ci.edmonds.wa.us



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How do I request code enforcement action or file a suspected violation complaint with the City?

In emergency situations involving activities which must be stopped immediately to prevent irreparable harm, please contact Development Services during office hours or the police (911). On evenings, weekends, and holidays dial 911.

Non-emergency complaints must be submitted in writing. The complaint must be signed and include the following:

- The address and telephone number of the person making the complaint.
- A clear description of the nature of the alleged violation.
- Location of the alleged violation and name of the alleged violator (if known).
- Any other pertinent information.

To initiate a non-emergency investigation a "Request for Code Enforcement Action" (RCE) form should be completed. The form is available on-line and at City Hall. It can also be emailed, mailed or faxed to you. Although the form is not required, the RCE form will help make sure information is not omitted that could delay the investigation. Email or letters are also acceptable.

Why can't someone just go there?

The City needs complete information in order to conduct a fair, responsible and impartial investigation.



I don't want my neighbor to know I filed a complaint. Can I remain anonymous?

Yes. Per RCW42.56.240(2), the complainant may indicate a request for non-disclosure of their name and identity. Please be advised, the vast majority of violations are resolved without the release of complaint information. However, if the City is required to use legal proceedings to resolve the violation, the written complaint and supplemental information may be disclosed as public information. Your name is required so the City can request further information as needed.

Complaints regarding life, health, safety, and environmental concerns are always investigated, even if the complaint is made anonymously. However, without a contact, the depth of the investigation is limited.

What happens after I file my complaint/request? What do you do? How long does it take? Do you contact me afterwards?

The City investigates every written complaint received. Generally, an investigation begins within a week of receipt. The activity or alleged violation would need to be observed, confirmed or determined through subsequent research.

City, County and State records are examined. The various adopted codes are applied. If a violation exists, the property owner is contacted and informed of the violation. Compliance solutions are reviewed and scheduled. Penalty fees may be imposed.

The time to resolve a violation depends on the complexity of the situation. The property owner's competence, resources and level of cooperation are also time factors in achieving compliance. The person filing the complaint may be contacted at any stage of the investigation by request.



My landlord won't maintain the residence. My tenant won't keep up the premises. What will the City do?

The Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18) contains remedies and procedures to resolve most landlord-tenant issues. A summary of the Act is available at the Development Services office.

The Dispute Resolution Center of Snohomish and Island Counties offers mediation and conflict resolution services to assist landlords and tenants in resolving their disputes. The City requests that the solutions available through the Landlord-Tenant Act are followed precisely (in writing).

Life-safety issues are regulated by the City and health issues by the Snohomish County Health District.



I've been told I am in violation of the Edmonds Community Development Code, but I don't agree. What can I do?



To contest a written Notice of Civil Violation you may request an appeal before the Edmonds Hearing Examiner by filing a written notice of appeal with the Development Services Director within 10 days of the date the notice is placed in the mail, or seven days from the date the notice is posted conspicuously on the property or served personally on the person responsible for the violation. A fee is required.

Action taken by the hearing examiner constitutes a final decision and shall be appealable only to the Snohomish County Superior Court; provided that any petition for review shall be filed no later than 10 working days after the service of the written order of the hearing examiner.

I've been told I am in violation of the Edmonds Community Development Code but the same situation existed before we were annexed to Edmonds. Isn't my property grandfathered?

Buildings, structures and uses of property that were lawful under the laws of Snohomish County are recognized as nonconforming by the City of Edmonds. A legally initiated use is a use of property that was authorized by the County's zoning ordinance.

The best proof for a commercial use are business licenses issued by the county. The best proof for a building or structure is a building permit from the county. Copies of both of these types of records can be obtained from the county.

For older structures that were constructed at a date when the County did not maintain records sometimes can be established through physical dating of fixtures utilized--for example, some plumbing fixtures are dated. Consistent dual utility billings can be a way of establishing a duplex use if building permit records no longer exist.

Nonconforming uses, buildings and structures must be continuously maintained, cannot be revived once abandoned and cannot be expanded. See Edmonds Community Development Code Chapter 17.40 for details.