



Vacant Building Ordinance – FAQ's

CITY OF LONG LAKE

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Vacant Building Registration Ordinance FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: When did this ordinance go into effect?

A: Drafts of the ordinance were discussed at public meetings on January 19 and February 2, prior a public hearing and adoption of the ordinance during the February 16, 2016 City Council meeting. The ordinance became effective following publication on February 27, 2016.

Q: What are some of the impacts associated with vacant buildings that the ordinance can address?

A: Vacant buildings can attract transients, trespassers and criminal activity. Neglect of vacant buildings creates a risk of fire, explosion or flooding for the vacant building and adjacent properties. Vacant buildings are often used as dumping grounds for junk and debris, and often are overgrown with weeds and grass. Vacant buildings fallen into neglect can discourage economic development and have a negative impact on property values. The vacant building ordinance and registration program is a mechanism to protect the community from health and safety hazards and from blight through the lack of adequate maintenance and security of vacant buildings.

Q: What constitutes a "vacant building"?

A: *Vacant building* means a building or a portion of a building that is unoccupied and meets one or more of the following conditions:

- (1) Records of the Hennepin County Recorder show the property is in lien foreclosure;
- (2) Windows or entrances to the property are boarded up or closed off, or multiple doors or window are broken and unrepaired;
- (3) Doors to the property are damaged, smashed through, caved in, broken off, unhinged, or continuously unlocked;
- (4) The property is without gas, electric, or water service;
- (5) Rubbish, trash, putrescible materials or debris has accumulated on the property;
- (6) Law enforcement agencies have received at least two reports of trespass, vandalism or other illegal acts being committed on the property within 12 months;
- (7) The yards on the property exhibit grass, lawn, weeds, and other vegetation which are not maintained to the standards prevailing in the neighborhood or are not maintained in compliance with section 38-33 of city code.

Q: When must a property owner register a vacant building?

A: When a residential, commercial, industrial or other non-residential building has become vacant, it must be registered within 30 days. The registration is valid for one year, and a property owner must secure a new registration annually if the building remains vacant.

Q: How do I register a vacant building?

A: Fill out a Vacant Building Registration application form, complete a Vacant Building Property Plan, and pay the applicable annual registration fee (contact city staff for fee assistance).

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Q: What constitutes a "Vacant Building Property Plan"?

A: The Property Plan identifies the owner's plans for the building, its status, and the measures in place to ensure that the building and property will be brought into compliance and continue to be maintained in compliance with applicable city codes.

Q: Are there exemptions to vacant building registration?

A: Yes. Buildings substantially damaged by fire or severe weather are exempt from registering as a vacant building for 90 days after the date of the fire or severe weather event; however, the property owner must submit a written request for the exemption to the City Administrator (contact city staff for assistance in the event this occurs). "Snowbirds" who leave their homes temporarily for vacation or to reside elsewhere during the winter and have intent to return are also exempt.

Q: What is the registration fee?

A: Fees are due at the time of registration and renewal. The fee schedule is as follows:

VACANT BUILDING REGISTRATION

Residential Property

Vacant Less Than 1 Year \$100.00 / Unit

Vacant 1+ Years \$200.00 / Unit

Commercial, Industrial, Non-Residential Property

Vacant Less Than 1 Year \$1,000.00

Vacant 1+ Years \$2,000.00

Administrative Registration Penalty \$100.00

Q: What happens if a property owner refuses to register a property or pay the fee?

A: If a property owner fails to register a vacant property, the city will register it administratively. There is an additional \$100 fee assessed in the event administrative registration is necessary. The fee will be billed to the property owner by invoice. If fees are left unpaid, the fee will be certified to the property taxes at year end.

Q: Is the city's list of registered vacant buildings public information?

A: No, the city of Long Lake does not release its list of registered vacant buildings because it is "security information" classified as confidential under Minnesota Statutes, Sec. 13.37.

Q: How can a vacant building owner appeal the applicability of the ordinance and registration requirements?

A: There is an appeal form on the city's website at www.longlakemn.gov. A completed appeal form would need to be submitted in person or mailed via US Mail to the City Clerk within 6 days of a decision to declare a property as a "vacant building" or an order to secure a vacant property. Please contact city staff for more information if you are a property owner with special unique circumstances (for example, if legal proceedings prevent your access to your property for any reason) preventing you from maintaining and securing your property.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: Additional information and the registration form are available on the city's website at www.longlakemn.gov. You may also call city staff for assistance at any time.