

Vacant Building Registration Information

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 falling into neglect can discourage economic development and have a negative impact on property values. With those considerations in mind, the Long Lake City Council gave direction to City staff to work on the preparation of a vacant buildings ordinance and registration program. Similar ordinances and registration programs have been implemented by a number of cities as a mechanism to protect their communities from health and safety hazards, and from blight through the lack of adequate maintenance and security of vacant buildings.

Under the terms of the City's "vacant buildings" ordinance, 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.

The ordinance defines "vacant building" as 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 windows 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 that are not maintained to the standards prevailing in the neighborhood or are not maintained in compliance with sections 38-33 of the city code.

Buildings substantially damaged by fire or severe weather are exempt from registering as vacant buildings for 90 days after the fire or weather event; however, the property owner must submit a written request for the exemption to the City Administrator. "Snowbirds" who leave their homes temporarily for vacation or to reside elsewhere during the winter and have intent to return are also exempt. It should be noted that "snowbird" properties may be registered

voluntarily at no cost to the property owner - this can be a useful tool for these types of properties, as it offers a mechanism for City staff to be able to reach an owner in the event of an emergency involving the property while the owner is away.

Those properties that meet the definition of “vacant building” are now required to register their properties with the City on an annual basis for as long as the property remains “vacant”. To do so, the property owner will annually be required to fill out a Vacant Building Registration application form, submit a Vacant Building Property Plan, and pay an annual registration fee. If a property owner fails to register their property, the property may be registered administratively and a penalty assessed. The Vacant Building Registration application, fee structure, and property plan requirements may be found below. If you are the owner of a “vacant building” as defined, please begin the registration process for your property.

For assistance or more information regarding the vacant buildings ordinance and registration program, please call City staff at 952-473-6961.

Vacant Building Forms and Information

[Vacant Building Registration Application](#) (Includes Property Plan Requirements)

[Vacant Building Registration -- "Frequently Asked Questions" Handout](#)

[Vacant Buildings Ordinance](#) - Adopted 2/16/2016

[Vacant Buildings Ordinance Appeal Form](#)

Vacant Building Registration Fees

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