

150.21 Procedure for unsafe structures and equipment.

General. When a structure or equipment is found by the building official to be unsafe, or when a structure is found unfit for human occupancy, or is found unlawful, such structure shall be condemned pursuant to the provisions of this Code.

- (A) *Unsafe structures.* An unsafe structure is one that is found to be dangerous to the life, health, property, or safety of the public or the occupants of the structure by not providing minimum safeguards to protect or warn occupants in the event of fire, or because such structure contains unsafe equipment or is so damaged, decayed, dilapidated, structurally unsafe or of such faulty construction or unstable foundation, that partial or complete collapse is possible.
- (B) *Unsafe equipment.* Unsafe equipment includes any boiler, heating/cooling equipment, elevator, moving stairway, electrical wiring or device, flammable liquid containers or other equipment on the premises or within the structure which is in such disrepair or condition that such equipment is a hazard to life, health, property, or safety of the public or occupants of the premises or structure.
- (C) *Structure unfit for human occupancy.* A structure is unfit for human occupancy whenever the building official finds that such structure is unsafe, unlawful or, because of the degree to which the structure is in disrepair or lacks maintenance, is unsanitary, vermin or rat infested, contains filth and contamination, or lacks ventilation, illumination, sanitary, or heating facilities or other essential equipment required by this Code, or because the location of the structure constitutes a hazard to the occupants of the structure or to the public.
- (D) *Unlawful structure.* An unlawful structure is one found in whole or in part to be occupied by more persons than permitted under this Code, or was erected, altered, or occupied contrary to law.
- (E) *Dangerous structure or premises.* For the purpose of this chapter, any structure or a premises that has any or all of the conditions or defects described below shall be considered dangerous:
 - (1) Any door, aisle, passageway, stairway, exit or other means of egress that does not conform to the approved building or fire code of the town as related to the requirements for existing buildings.
 - (2) The walking surface of any aisle, passageway, stairway, exit or other means of egress is so warped, worn loose, torn or otherwise unsafe as to not provide safe and adequate means of egress.
 - (3) Any portion of a building, structure or appurtenance that has been damaged by fire, wind, flood, deterioration, neglect, abandonment, vandalism or by any other cause to such an extent that it is likely to partially or completely collapse, or to become detached or dislodged.
 - (4) Any portion of a building, or any member, appurtenance or ornamentation on the exterior thereof that is not of sufficient strength or stability, or is not so anchored, attached, or fastened in place so as to be capable of resisting natural or artificial loads of 1½ the original designed value.
 - (5) The building or structure, or part of the building or structure, because of dilapidation, deterioration, decay, faulty construction, the removal or movement

- of some portion of the ground necessary for the support, or for any other reason, is likely to partially or completely collapse, or some portion of the foundation or underpinning of the building or structure is likely to fail or give way.
- (6) The building or structure, or any portion thereof, is clearly unsafe for its use and occupancy.
 - (7) The building or structure is neglected, damaged, dilapidated, unsecured, or abandoned so as to become an attractive nuisance to children who might play in the building or structure to their danger, becomes a harbor for vagrants, criminals, or immoral persons, or enables persons to resort to the building or structure for committing a nuisance or an unlawful act.
 - (8) Any building or structure has been constructed, exists or is maintained in violation of any specific requirement or prohibition applicable to such building or structure provided by the approved building or fire code of the jurisdiction, or of any law or ordinance to such an extent as to present either a substantial risk of fire, building collapse, or any other threat to life and safety.
 - (9) A building or structure, used or intended to be used for dwelling purposes that because of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, decay, damage, faulty construction or arrangement, inadequate light, ventilation, mechanical or plumbing system, or otherwise, is determined by the code official to be unsanitary, unfit for human habitation, or in such a condition that is likely to cause sickness or disease.
 - (10) Any building or structure, because of a lack of sufficient or proper fire resistance-rated construction, fire protection systems, electrical system, fuel connections, mechanical system, plumbing system or other cause, is determined by the code official to be a threat to life or health.
 - (11) Any portion of a building remains on a site after the demolition or destruction of the building or structure or whenever any building or structure is abandoned so as to constitute such building or portion thereof as an attractive nuisance or hazard to the public.
- (F) *Closing of vacant structures.* If the structure is vacant and unfit for human habitation and occupancy, and is not in danger of structural collapse, the code official is authorized to post a placard of condemnation on the premises and order the structure closed up so as not to be an attractive nuisance. Upon failure of the owner to close up the premises within the time specified in the order, the building official shall cause the premises to be closed and secured through any available public agency or by contract or arrangement by private persons and the cost thereof shall be charged against the real estate upon which the structure is located and shall be a lien upon such real estate and may be collected by any other legal resource.
- (1) *Authority to disconnect service utilities.* The building official shall have the authority to authorize disconnection of utility service to the building, structure, or system regulated by this Code in case of emergency where necessary to eliminate an immediate hazard to life or property or when such utility connection has been made without approval. The building official shall notify the serving utility and, whenever possible, the owner and occupant of the building, structure, or service system of the decision to disconnect prior to taking such action. If not notified prior to disconnection the owner or occupant

- of the building, structure, or service system shall be notified in writing as soon as practical thereafter.
- (2) *Notice.* Whenever the building official has condemned a structure or equipment under the provisions of this section, notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place on or about the structure affected by such notice and served on the owner or the person or persons responsible for the structure or equipment in accordance with [section 150.20](#)
 - (3) *Placarding.* Upon failure of the owner or person responsible to comply with the notice provisions within the time given, the building official shall post on the premises or on defective equipment a placard bearing the word "Condemned" and a statement of the penalties provided for occupying the premises, operating the equipment, or removing the placard.
 - (4) *Placard removal.* The building official shall remove the condemnation placard whenever the defect or defects upon which the condemnation and placarding action were based have been eliminated. Any person who defaces or removes a condemnation placard without the approval of the code official shall be subject to the penalties provided by this Code.
- (G) *Prohibited occupancy.* Any occupied structure condemned and placarded by the building official shall be vacated as ordered by the building official. Any person who shall occupy placarded premises or shall operate placarded equipment, and any owner or any person responsible for the premises who shall let anyone occupy placarded premises or operate placarded equipment shall be liable for the penalties provided by this Code.
- (H) *Abatement methods.* The owner, operator, or occupant of a building, premises, or equipment deemed unsafe by the code official shall abate or cause to be abated or corrected such unsafe conditions either by repair, rehabilitation, demolition, or other approved corrective action. The building official shall cause a report to be filed on an unsafe condition. The report shall state the occupancy of the structure and the nature of the unsafe condition.
- (I) *Emergency measures.*
- (1) *Imminent danger.* When, in the opinion of the building official, there is imminent danger of failure or collapse of a building or structure which endangers life, or when any structure or part of a structure has fallen and life is endangered by the occupation of the structure, or when there is actual or potential danger to the building occupants or those in the proximity of any structure because of explosives, explosive fumes or vapors or the presence of toxic fumes, gases or materials, or operation of defective or dangerous equipment, the building official is hereby authorized and empowered to order and require the occupants to vacate the premises forthwith. The building official shall cause to be posted at each entrance to such structure a notice reading as follows: "This Structure Is Unsafe and Its Occupancy Has Been Prohibited by the building official." It shall be unlawful for any person to enter such structure except for the purpose of securing the structure, making the required repairs, removing the hazardous condition, or of demolishing the same.
 - (2) *Temporary safeguards.* Notwithstanding other provisions of this Code, whenever, in the opinion of the building official, there is imminent danger due to an unsafe condition, the code official shall order the necessary work to be done, including the boarding up of openings, to render such structure

temporarily safe whether or not the legal procedure herein described has been instituted; and shall cause such other action to be taken as the code official deems necessary to meet such emergency.

- (3) *Closing streets.* When necessary for public safety, the building official shall temporarily close structures and close, or order the authority having jurisdiction to close, sidewalks, streets, public ways, and places adjacent to unsafe structures, and prohibit the same from being utilized.
- (4) *Emergency repairs.* For the purposes of this section, the building official shall employ the necessary labor and materials to perform the required work as expeditiously as possible.
- (5) *Costs of emergency repairs.* Costs incurred by the town in the performance of emergency work shall be paid by the property owner. The town attorney shall institute appropriate action against the owner of the premises where the unsafe structure is or was located for the recovery of such costs.
- (6) *Hearing.* Any person ordered to take emergency measures shall comply with such order forthwith. Any affected person shall thereafter, upon petition directed to the town commission, be afforded a hearing as described in [section 150.22](#)
- (7) *Demolition.*
 - (a) The building official shall order the owner of any premises upon which is located any structure, which in the building official's judgment after review is so deteriorated or dilapidated or has become so out of repair as to be dangerous, unsafe, unsanitary, or otherwise unfit for human habitation or occupancy, and such that it is unreasonable to repair the structure, to demolish and remove such structure; or if such structure is capable of being made safe by repairs, to repair and make safe and sanitary, or to board up and hold for future repair or to demolish and remove at the owner's option; or where there has been a cessation of normal construction of any structure for a period of more than two years, the building official shall order the owner to demolish and remove such structure, or board up until future repair. Boarding the building up for future repair shall not extend beyond one year, unless approved by the building official.
 - (b) *Notices and orders.* All notices and orders shall comply with [section 150.20](#)
 - (c) *Failure to comply.* If the owner of a premises fails to comply with a demolition order within the time prescribed, the building official shall cause the structure to be demolished and removed, either through an available public agency or by contract or arrangement with private persons, and the cost of such demolition and removal shall be charged against the real estate upon which the structure is located and shall be a lien upon such real estate.
 - (d) *Salvage materials.* When any structure has been ordered demolished and removed, the governing body or other designated officer under said contract or arrangement afore said shall have the right to sell the salvage and valuable materials at the highest price obtainable. The net proceeds of such sale, after deducting the expenses of such demolition and removal, shall be promptly remitted with a report of such sale or

transaction, including the items of expense and the amounts deducted, for the person who is entitled thereto, subject to any order of a court. If such a surplus does not remain to be turned over, the report shall so state.

(71 Code, § 6-12; Ord. 157, passed 10-1-69; Amd. Ord. 98-24, passed 7-16-98; Amd. Ord. 04-12, passed 7-12-04; Ord. No. 2012-26, § 6, 7-1-13)

Cross reference— *Dangerous buildings deemed nuisances, procedures for abatement, § 150.23.*