

How long does it take to resolve a violation?

The nature of the violation varies from property to property. It takes approximately two to three weeks to initiate an investigation, depending on the existing workload and the seriousness of the alleged violation. It may take several months or more to resolve a violation.

Health and safety violations rank higher than non-health and safety violations, and if severe, can be referred to the Board of Commissioners after an initial investigation. The Board decides if legal action should immediately be initiated. For less serious offenses, the Code Enforcement Administrator is required by policy to write a letter to the landowner, typically allowing the landowner 30 days to respond. Once a property owner has contacted the Code Enforcement Administrator they work together to come up with a plan to fix the violation in a reasonable timeframe.

If the landowner refuses and/or is unable to cooperate with Code Enforcement and other related agencies, the case may be brought to the County Board of Commissioners with a request for legal action. The Board decides which cases the county attorney processes. If a case goes to the attorney, it may take months, up to years, to resolve the violation.

Office Hours

The Code Enforcement Administrator is available for appointments only. No appointment is necessary to file a complaint (it can be left at the office, mailed, or sent electronically).

Disclaimer

This brochure is for information purposes only and does not share all aspects of the Code Enforcement Program. This flyer is intended to clarify the most common questions involving a violation or the enforcement process. A complete set of codes is available online and at the Community Development Department. Rules are subject to change, and likely will. Please always check to verify you have the most current flyer or codes, both available on the website.

PLEASE BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR!



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Oregon**

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**JOSEPHINE COUNTY
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**



**CODE
ENFORCEMENT**

**VIOLATIONS
AND COMPLAINTS**

What is Code Enforcement?

Code Enforcement is a Division of the Josephine County Community Development Department. Code Enforcement serves both Planning and Building Safety Divisions.

Code Enforcement investigates violations of the Josephine County Code (JCC), and/or Oregon State Specialty Codes. The JCC regulates land use whereas the state codes regulate building safety. Investigations include prevention, detection and enforcement of violations.

Code Enforcement partners with other agencies to ensure environmental and health and safety standards are met. As an enforcement team the primary goal is to help the landowner come into compliance with the JCC and building safety codes. It is our practice to help land owners achieve compliance.

The county's Code Enforcement Program applies to rural lands only. The program does not apply to lands within the cities of Grants Pass or Cave Junction, or lands within the urban growth boundary of the city of Grants Pass.

Code Enforcement is complaint driven. Staff does not drive around looking for violations.

Where do I file a Complaint?

A Complaint Form must be filled out and signed before the Code Enforcement Administrator can investigate an alleged code violation.

The Complaint Form may be downloaded from the County Planning website at: www.co.josephine.or.us/. Once completed, the form can be mailed, or delivered in person to the Department. (See *Office Hours* section to file a complaint.)

You are welcome to contact the Code Enforcement Administrator to discuss potential violations. You can reach her at (541) 474-5425 or email at cenforcement@co.josephine.or.us.

Can I file a Confidential Complaint?

Yes. Most complaints are non-confidential in nature. However, if warranted for fear or safety reasons, confidential complaints can be filed. Two complaints must be received within one half mile of the alleged violation before a confidential complaint can be investigated. (See *Office Hours* section to file a complaint.)

What is a Confidential Complaint?

A Confidential Complaint is an allegation made of a possible code violation. The complaint must be filed on a Complaint Form which is then filed with the Department, but your name is kept private. The Complaint Form is not subject to Public Records Requests. However, the form may be discoverable if the case moves towards legal action. At that time the property owner or his attorney may subpoena the form for court purposes.

What are the most common violations?

- *Camping/Compounds*: trailers, campers, motor homes and makeshift living quarters on property longer than allowed.
- *Unpermitted Structures*: homes, ramadas, decks, additions, vaults, shipping containers, accessory structures, green houses, water tanks.
- *Fences*: no permit, setback issues, composition (tarps), height concerns.
- *Electrical, Plumbing and Septic*: no permit, not inspected, not to code.
- *Erosion*: Excavation in or around a stream or on a grade greater than 15%.
- *Riparian*: Setback, removal of vegetation.

Does Josephine County enforce ordinances?

Yes. All complaints merit some level of consideration. Priority is based on degree of health, safety and public harm. When a complaint is filed, the Code Enforcement Administrator attempts to work with the landowner to cure the violation. The Administrator interviews complainants and witnesses, makes a site visit, takes photographs and measurements, and follows up accordingly.

What if the violation cannot be addressed by County Code Enforcement Staff?

If you suspect a violation, and it is outside the scope of our jurisdiction, you may file a complaint with the appropriate enforcement agency:

- Septic/Water Pollution
 - Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Hotline (888) 997-7888
- Garbage
 - County Environmental Health, Brad Carlson (541) 474-5336 (Be advised, per county code, three complaints must be filed with Carlson before it can be investigated)
- Forestry/Tree Removal
 - Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Doug Thackery (541) 761-9690
- Fish and Wildlife
 - Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), David Haight (541) 826-8774
- Water and/or Riparian
 - Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL), Melody Redenko (503) 508-4035