



South Apopka

Safe Neighborhood Association

A newsletter about issues important to you and your neighbors...

Important Orange County Numbers

Orange County
Customer Service
3-1-1

Sheriff's Non-Emergency
407-836-HELP (4357)

Sheriff's Emergency
9-1-1

Crime Line
407-423-TIPS (8477)

Drug Enforcement
407-521-2400

Parking Enforcement
407-836-0800

Seniors First
407-292-0177

Housing, Food, Social Services
2-1-1

Find hurricane and COVID-19
resources at
WWW.OCFL.NET



Reporting a Code Violation – Call 311

Jordan Hodge, Lead Code Compliance Inspector, Neighborhood Services Division

In the growing lexicon of technology, “Google it” has become the proverbial crutch we’ve adopted, forever propping us up with baked salmon recipes or the biking distance from Albuquerque to Saskatchewan. Albeit on a much smaller scale, Orange County has established its’ own pillar of information in our community. You may be familiar with the 311 non-emergency help and information service, but speaking from the code compliance perspective, you may be curious about what violations should be reported. Well, at the risk of sounding biased or vague, let’s just agree with the tried and true, “If you see something, say something,” as our baseline. If what you’re witnessing appears to be unusual behavior, is bothersome to you, or could otherwise be seemingly problematic for the public at large, report it to 311.

That aside, let’s also try to reveal more of what constitutes an actual code violation. Beginning with what is perhaps the most emblematic issue associated with code violations, let’s focus on high grass and weeds. The operative piece of this complaint is twofold: length and definition. High grass and weeds that meet or exceed 18 inches in height are verifiable violations, but that only satisfies the first portion of the complaint. How vegetation is defined is the second part. The definition of grass and weeds does not include bushes, shrubs, trees, vines, flowering plants, or any other living plant life typically used and being used for landscaping purposes. Keeping these two points in mind, if your neighbor’s property is filled with exotic flowers, aromatic shrubbery, and the grass is kept at 17 ½ inches, a code violation cannot be issued.

Moving on, perhaps what you’re viewing isn’t located on the exterior of the home and is, instead, an interior issue. Do you see what appears to be a construction crew actively replacing a roof, tearing down walls, or converting a garage into an enclosed living space? These could be perfectly legal scenarios, but the appropriate permits are required. For these examples, if there are no permits issued, they would constitute as code violations. Including, but not limited to, these examples of new construction and existing alterations, you can always call 311 and staff will determine whether the applicable permits were issued.

Wait, there’s more. Vehicles located on a property without a license plate/registration tag, trash/junk/debris strewn about the yard, roosters being kept on residential properties, recreational vehicles playing host and remaining occupied for periods of time, etc. are all representative examples of what you should report to 311. Taking this point a step further, a Code Compliance Inspector only has authority within the property’s boundaries. This is to say, if what you’re witnessing is on the sidewalk or in the street, there’s a good chance another division is responsible for addressing the matter, but you should still report it to 311. The matter will be referred to the appropriate agency to ensure it is handled as appropriate.

Orange County Tenant's Bill of Rights

Orange County's Board of County Commissioners voted on January 24 to enact a Tenant's Bill of Rights Ordinance. The ordinance establishes an Orange County Office of Tenant Services, among other things.

The Office of Tenant Services is established to increase tenant awareness of their rights and to provide guidance to tenants regarding available community resources. The Office may enforce violations of the Rental Notices Ordinance and the Tenant's Bill of Rights Ordinance by issuing noncriminal civil citations.

The Tenant's Bill of Rights Ordinance may be found in Chapter 25, Article XIII, Division 3 of the Orange County Code. The effective date is March 1, 2023. The Office of Tenant Services may be reached at telephone number 407-836-RENT (-7368).

Citizen Planner Academy Monthly workshops for citizens

The Citizen Planner Academy consists of monthly workshops usually held on the last Saturday of each month. A series of classes designed to educate the public regarding planning for a sustainable community, the land development process, and special topics within the planning field. The academy's goal is to empower citizens with the tools and knowledge to become active decision makers within their community. Attendees that complete core classes and three special topic classes are recognized as graduates of the Citizen Planner Academy. Visit www.ocfl.net/citizenplanneracademy to register.

2023 Workshop Schedule (9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.):

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| February 25: | Urban Design (Baldwin Park Tour) |
| March 25: | Sustainability |
| April 29: | Economic Development/Redevelopment |
| May 27: | Emergency Management |
| June 24: | Housing and Community Development |
| July: | No workshop |
| August 26: | Mobility |
| September 30: | Make-up Workshop – Planning Basics & Sustainability |

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