

CHAPTER 44: PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE

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44-1. TITLE

The title of this Ordinance shall be known and may be cited as "The Dawson County Property Maintenance Ordinance."

44-2. PURPOSES

- (A) The Board of Commissioners of Dawson County finds that there are a number of residential and nonresidential properties in Dawson County that are poorly maintained and neglected by their owners. These properties adversely affect citizens who own or occupy nearby buildings and dwellings by lowering property values and rental values and by creating public health and safety problems.
- (B) These adverse effects also increase the incidence of illegal habitation, vandalism, criminal activity, and fire. The Board of Commissioners finds that the elimination and prevention of these conditions is necessary and is in the best interest of the county and its citizens.
- (C) Additionally, the Board of Commissioners finds that in Dawson County there is the existence or occupancy of dwellings or other buildings or structures which are unfit for human habitation, or for commercial, industrial, or business occupancy or use, and are inimical to the welfare and are dangerous and injurious to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Dawson County. The Board of Commissioners finds that it is necessary and in the best interest of the county and its citizens to utilize the authority granted to the

county by O.C.G.A. § 41-2-7, et seq., to adopt this ordinance and to repair, close, seize, or demolish and remove unfit dwellings or structures.

44-3. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This Chapter shall apply to all commercial, office, industrial, multifamily, and single-family residential structures and properties, and any person owning, occupying, managing, or controlling any such property in Dawson County. This Chapter shall constitute the minimum requirements and standards for existing structures and property, as well as any future construction.

- (A) Every property (including unimproved lots) and every building, dwelling or structure in the unincorporated area of the county, whether occupied or vacant, shall conform to the requirements of this Chapter, regardless of when such building, dwelling or structure may have been constructed, altered, or repaired. When a building, dwelling or structure is vacant, the owner, immediately upon vacating, shall ensure that the property is free of trash and debris, and that the dwelling or structure is secured in a closed and inaccessible manner until reoccupied, and continue maintaining the exterior of the property in compliance with this Chapter.
- (B) Certain provisions of this Chapter may not be mandatory for existing buildings, dwellings or structures designated by the state or the county as historic buildings when such buildings, dwellings or structures are judged by the applicable Public Official to be safe and in the public interest of health, safety, and welfare.
- (C) Where parking in open areas is used jointly for the benefit of two or more owners or tenants, the responsibility for maintaining these parking areas in compliance with this Chapter shall be the joint and shared responsibility of the owners and tenants.

44-4. DEFINITIONS

Terms not defined herein shall have their meaning as defined in the Dawson County Zoning Ordinance, the development regulations, building codes, and any other applicable portion of the Dawson County Code of Ordinances, or in the absence of such definition, words shall have their common dictionary meaning. Whenever the words "dwelling unit," "dwelling room," "property," "building," "rooming house," "rooming unit," or "story" are stated in this Chapter, they shall be construed as though they were followed by the words "or any part thereof." The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this Chapter, shall have the meaning ascribed to them in this Chapter, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Authorized litter receptacle means a litter storage and/or collection receptacle as defined or required by this Chapter.

Building means any structure upon a property, presently or formerly used, or intended to be used in whole or in part for residential uses or the purpose of commerce, trade, manufacture, business, government, worship, education, office, medical, storage, or any other purpose.

Building Inspector means any employee of Dawson County whose responsibilities include enforcement of the provisions of this Chapter.

Building Official means the official or other designated authority charged by the county board of commissioners with the administration and enforcement of the state minimum codes and all other building related codes within the county.

Certified Mail means that class or type of mail designated by the U.S. Postal Service as "certified mail" and also includes the class or type of mail designated as "registered mail" and "registered mail, return receipt requested".

Commercial building or establishment means any structure, whether public or private, presently or formerly intended for occupancy, for transaction of business, for rendering professional service, for amusement, for the display, sale, or storage of goods, wares, or merchandise, or for the performance of work or labor, including hotels, apartment buildings, rooming houses, office buildings, public buildings, stores, theatres, markets, restaurants, grain elevators, abattoirs, warehouses, workshops, factories, and all outhouses, sheds, barns, and other structures on property used for business purposes.

Commercial, industrial, or heavy vehicle or equipment means any of the following:

- (a) Any vehicle with more than two axles; or
- (b) Any vehicle exceeding a gross vehicle weight rating of 20,000 pounds; or
- (c) Any bulldozer, tractor/backhoe, or similar heavy construction or farm equipment.
- (d) This definition shall not apply to school buses as that term is defined herein.

Compost pile means plant debris, soil and other putrescible wastes stacked so as to encourage rapid decomposition for the ultimate use as plant fertilizer.

Condemned means any structure on a property which has been determined and noticed by the Public Official to be structurally unsound and unsafe for habitation, unsanitary due to sewer malfunctions, polluted water, or insect or vermin infestations, or otherwise determined to be uninhabitable for any other health or safety reasons.

County means Dawson County, Georgia.

Court means a court of competent jurisdiction.

Demolish means to destroy a building and to remove all resultant debris and waste materials from the lot on which the building stood.

Deteriorate, Deterioration or deteriorated means the fact or process of decay or degeneration which has progressed to the point where it has resulted in or will soon result in making an object or mechanism unsafe, unsanitary, inoperable, unusable, or unsuitable for its intended use, including, but not limited to the advanced stage of rot, rust, mold, insect, rodent, or vermin infestation or destruction.

Dumpster means a container for the disposal of litter of a capacity of at least ten cubic yards and not more than 30 cubic yards. The use of this term is generic and does not refer to a bulk container manufactured by a specific manufacturer.

Dwelling means a building that contains one or more dwelling units, intended, or designed to be used, rented, leased, let, or hired out to be occupied for living purposes, including single-family, duplex, and multifamily residential buildings, rooming and boarding houses, fraternities, sororities, dormitories, manufactured homes, and industrialized home, but not including, hotels and motels.

Dwelling unit – single family means a single unit providing complete independent living facilities for a single family as defined in this Chapter and any other applicable Dawson County ordinances, including provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation, designed for the exclusive use of a family maintaining a household.

Dwelling unit – multiple family means any dwelling containing more than two dwelling units.

Emergency means a condition which is a violation of this Chapter, and which constitutes an imminent danger calling for immediate action in order to avoid death, injury or illness to a human or the destruction or severe damaging of real or personal property.

Exterior property means open space on the property and on any adjoining property under the control of the same owners or operators of such property.

Extermination means the control or eradication of insects, vermin, rodents, or other pests by eliminating their harborage places; by removing or making inaccessible materials that may serve as their food; by poisoning, spraying, fumigating, trapping, or by any other recognized and legal elimination methods.

Family means an individual, or two or more persons related by blood, marriage, adoption or guardianship, or a group of not more than four unrelated persons, occupying a single dwelling unit; provided however that a domestic servant employed full-time on the premises may be housed on the premises without being counted as a separate family or families. The term "family" does not include any organization or institutional group.

Garbage means Waste, Household Trash, Refuse, Hazardous Refuse, Rubbish, Trash, Debris, Litter, Vegetative Debris, Weeds, Yard Trimmings, Industrial Waste, or any derivations thereof, which means any organic or inorganic items, in any physical state or makeup or of any chemical composition, whether hazardous or nonhazardous or noxious or innocuous, that have been discarded.

Garbage bag means a plastic, or other similar nonporous materials, bag or sack designed specifically to contain garbage or household trash in a secure, airtight manner. Such bags shall also include suitable means of closure to ensure that the material contained therein is not exposed to the outside air.

Graffiti means images or letters scratched, scrawled, painted, or marked in any manner on property, which is unsightly and unwanted by the property's owner or occupant.

Handbill means any printed or written matter any sample, device, dodger, circular, leaflet, sampler, newspaper, magazine, paper, booklet, or any other printed or otherwise reproduced original or copy of any matter of literature, political or nonpolitical, for profit or nonprofit, for commercial or noncommercial purposes not included in the definitions of "newspaper," except the word "handbill" shall not include any notice or any document relating to legal proceedings, court proceedings, or action of any government agency, including Dawson County.

Hazardous means a condition which is a violation of this Chapter and which the applicable Public Officer has determined to be likely to result in the death, injury, or illness of a human or likely to result in severe damage to real or personal property.

Hazardous waste means materials such as poison, acids, caustics, chemicals, infected materials, offal, fecal matter, and explosives, or such other items that may be deemed to be hazardous waste under state or federal law.

Heavy vehicle or equipment. See "commercial, industrial or heavy vehicles or equipment," defined herein.

Household trash means every waste accumulation of paper, sweepings, dust, rags, bottles, cans, or other matter of any kind, other than garbage, which is usually attendant to housekeeping.

Industrial Waste means solid waste generated by manufacturing or industrial processes or operations that is not a hazardous waste regulated under Part 1 of Article 3 of the Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Act. (O.C.G.A. § 12-8-60 et seq.). Such waste includes, but is not limited to, waste resulting from the following manufacturing processes: Electric power generation; fertilizer and agricultural chemicals; food and related products and by-products; inorganic chemicals; iron and steel products; leather and leather products; nonferrous metal and foundry products; organic chemicals; plastics and resins; pulp and paper; rubber and miscellaneous plastic products; stone, glass, clay, and concrete products; textiles; transportation equipment; and water treatment. This term does not include mining waste or oil and gas waste.

Infestation means the presence of insects, rodents, vermin, or other pests within or contiguous to a structure or property.

Inoperable or Junk vehicle means any automobile, Vehicle of any type, including, but not limited to, all-terrain vehicle ("ATV"), moped, motorcycle, or four-wheeler, a, trailer of any type, or any parts of any such automobile, vehicle, or trailer, which remains in place for more than seven (7) days as follows:

- (a) Is in inoperative or junk condition by reason of its having been wrecked, dismantled, abandoned, or discarded; or
- (b) Which does not have a valid license plate where required; and/or

- (c) Where it is incapable of movement by its own power.

Inoperable or Junk marine vessel means any vessel or Vehicle that is designed for use on the water, including, but not limited to, any boat, marine vessel of any type, including, but not limited to, personal watercraft, trailer for the movement of, or any parts of any such boat, marine vessel, or trailer, which remains in place for more than seven (7) days as follows:

- (a) Is in inoperative or junk condition by reason of its having been wrecked, dismantled, abandoned, or discarded; or
- (b) Which does not have a valid vessel registration where required; and/or
- (c) Where it is incapable of movement by its own power.

Intended means:

- (a) The purpose, operation, and/or arrangement for which something has been designed or built; or
- (b) The purpose, operation, and/or arrangement for which something is currently safely and legally being used.

Interested parties means:

- (a) Owner;
- (b) Those parties having an interest in the property as revealed by a certification of title to the property conducted in accordance with the title standards of the State Bar of Georgia;
- (c) Those parties having filed a notice in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 48-3-9;
- (d) Any other party having an interest in the property whose identity and address are reasonably ascertainable from the records of the complainant or records maintained in the county courthouse or by the clerk of the court. Interested parties shall not include the holder of the benefit or burden of an easement or right-of-way whose interest is properly recorded, which interest shall remain unaffected; and
- (e) Persons in possession of said property and premises.

Junk means any used and discarded or abandoned materials or articles including, but not limited to, Junk or Inoperable Vehicles, Junk or Inoperable Marine Vessels, trailers, machinery, equipment, appliances, house furnishings, furniture, including, but not limited to, mattresses, box springs, bed frames, couches, and chairs, structures, recreational equipment, building materials and debris, vehicle parts, marine and vessel parts, rimless tires, scrap, and parts and any other article or material which has been discarded and is not generally useable for the purpose for which it was manufactured.

Junkyard means land on which Junk, two or more Inoperable or Junk Vehicles or Inoperable or Abandoned Marine Vessels are parked, standing, or allowed to remain.

Litter means all garbage, refuse, waste materials, sand, gravel, slag, brickbats, rubbish, tin cans, trash, debris, dead animals or any other discarded, used, or unconsumed substance, which is not handled in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter.

Litter receptacle means a container for the disposal of litter of not more than 60-gallon capacity; provided that garbage containers or other waste containers serving single-family or multifamily residences are not included in this definition.

Marshal's Office means the person or persons authorized by the Board of Commissioners to issue citations to violators of this Chapter.

Maintenance means the act of keeping property and structures in good repair, in proper condition to prevent the deterioration or failure thereof, structurally sound, and free from rubbish, garbage, infestation, and other debris. The property should be kept so that it is not conducive to the harboring or breeding of reptiles, rodents, mosquitos, or insects.

Newspaper means any newspaper of general circulation, any newspaper duly entered with the U. S. Postal Service Department of the United States in accordance with federal statute or regulation, and, in addition thereto, means and includes any periodical or magazine regularly published with not less than four issues per year and sold or distributed to the public.

Nonresidential structure means any structure or portion of a structure occupied or intended to be occupied, in whole or in part, for a use other than a dwelling, home, residing place, and living space or sleeping space for one or more human beings, either permanently or transiently.

Noxious weed means any plant designated by federal, state or local government officials as injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife or property.

Occupant means any person, over one year of age, living or having actual possession of a dwelling unit.

Operator means any person who has charge, care or control of a dwelling, building, or structure, or part thereof, in which dwelling units are let.

Owner means any person, firm, corporation, or entity who, alone or jointly or severally with others:

- (a) Has legal title to any property, dwelling, dwelling unit, building, or structure, with or without accompanying actual possession thereof; or
- (b) Has charge, care or control of any property, dwelling, dwelling unit, building, or structure, as owner or agent of the owner, prime tenant, real estate agent, mortgagor, bank, or as executor, executrix, administrator, administratrix, trustee or guardian of the estate of the owner. Any such person thus representing the actual owner shall be bound to comply with the provisions of this Chapter to the same extent as the owner.

Park means a park, reservation, playground, beach, recreation center, or any other public area in Dawson County, owned or used by Dawson County, and devoted to active or passive recreation.

Parking Lot means

- (a) an area, whether paved or unpaved, designated, reserved or used for the reserved parking of motor vehicles, excluding street parking, which has more than 10 parking spaces or can accommodate more than 10 parked vehicles;
- (b) any commercial parking lot or garage; and
- (c) the driveway, drive-through, parking spaces or other paved areas adjacent to convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants and other retail establishments.

Premises means a lot, plot or parcel of land including any structures thereon.

Property means any lot, unit, or parcel of land inclusive of any dwelling, building, structure, or improvements located thereon. This also includes vacant lots that do not have any dwelling, building, structure, or improvement located thereon.

Public authority means any housing authority officer or any officer who is in charge of any department or branch of the government of the county or state relating to health, fire, or building regulations or to other activities concerning dwellings, buildings, or structures in Dawson County.

Public officer means the individuals who are authorized to exercise the powers prescribed by this Ordinance or any agent or designee of such officer or officers. A public officer may be the County Manager, Planning Director, Building Official, Dawson County Environmental Health, the Dawson County Marshal's Office, the Dawson County Fire Marshal's Office and or the Dawson County Sheriff's Office, as applicable.

Public record means deeds, mortgages and other instruments of record relating to land titles.

Recreational vehicle means any vehicular-type unit designed primarily as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping or travel use that either has its own motorized power or is mounted on or drawn by another vehicle. This shall include, but not be limited to, travel trailers, camping trailers, truck campers, and motor homes. This shall also include boats, personal watercraft, wave runners, all-terrain vehicles, trailers of any type, or school buses. Recreational vehicles are not permitted to have attachments such as stairs, steps, handrails, porches, decks, and the like.

Refuse means all decayable and non-decayable solid wastes, except body wastes, including, but not limited to, garbage, rubbish, ashes, residue from street cleaning, and solid market and industrial wastes.

Regular mail means that class of mail designed by the U.S. Postal Service as "first class" mail. Regular mail shall also include post cards and postal cards.

Resident means any person residing in Dawson County on or before the date on which the alleged nuisance arose.

Residential structure means any structure or portion of a structure occupied or intended to be occupied, in whole or in part, for a dwelling, home, residing place, and living space or sleeping space for one or more human beings, either permanently or transiently.

Residential district or *residential property* or *residential-zoned property* means property approved for residential use according to the Dawson County Zoning Ordinance, as it may be amended from time to time.

Responsible person means an owner, operator, and/or a person or persons designated in this Chapter as being responsible for meeting the standards of this Chapter.

Road or *street* shall be mutually inclusive and shall likewise be deemed to include any public or private alley, lane, right-of-way, court, and other thoroughfare, however described or designated.

Rooming house means any dwelling or that part of any dwelling containing one or more rooming units in which space is let by the owner or occupant to three (3), but not more than twenty (20), persons who are not related by genetics, adoption, or marriage.

Rooming unit means any room or group of rooms within a dwelling used or intended to be used for living and sleeping, but not for cooking or eating purposes.

Rubbish means combustible and noncombustible waste materials and the term shall include the residue from the burning of wood, coal, and other combustible materials, paper, rags, cartons, boxes, wood, excelsior, rubber, leather, tree branches or trunks, yard trimmings, tin cans, metals, mineral matter, glass, crockery, and dust or other similar materials.

Safe means a condition that is not likely to do harm to humans or to real or personal property.

Sanitary means the absence of a condition that is conducive to the spreading of disease or illness, or conducive to harboring vermin.

Scavenge or *scavenging* means any unauthorized or uncontrolled retrieval of discarded garbage or refuse materials.

School bus means any public or private school bus that is being operated as a school bus in Dawson County.

Secure or *Securing* means measures directed by the Public Officer that render the property inaccessible to unauthorized persons including, but not limited to, repairing fences and walls, chaining or padlocking gates, repairing doors, windows, or other openings.

Signature means the handwritten or electronically generated name of a person, or a facsimile thereof found on a document.

Structure means anything constructed or placed upon or within a property which is permanently or temporarily affixed to the property, and which is supported by the ground or another structure,

including but not limited to, garages, carports, sheds, racks, and swimming pools, but not including a currently operable and licensed vehicle, trailer, or recreational vehicle.

Structural alterations mean any change in the supporting structural members of a building such as load-bearing walls, joists, columns, beams, or girders, except repair or replacement of supporting structural members.

Trash means waste materials and items which are not in good repair or are discarded and which are of little or no value, including, but not limited to, plaster, paper, wrappings, plant cuttings, household furnishings, furniture items, including, but not limited to, mattresses, box springs, bed frames, couches, and chairs used or salvaged building materials, packing and clothing, appliances, equipment, machinery, or parts thereof, scrap metal, scrap lumber, masonry blocks, disassembled vehicle parts or dismantled portions of vehicles.

Unfit for human habitation means designation of dwellings or dwelling units as so damaged, decayed, dilapidated, unsanitary, unsafe, or vermin-infested that such create a serious hazard to the health or safety or which lack illumination, ventilation, or sanitation facilities adequate to protect the health or safety of the occupants or the public and which are condemnable. This term shall specifically include, but not be limited to, dwellings or dwelling units that lack basic sanitation such as connection to public water and sewer or septic necessary for supply of potable water.

Unsafe means a condition that is reasonably likely to do harm to humans or property if not corrected or stopped.

Vehicle means any means of conveyance, whether self-propelled or not, that is designed to travel on the ground or on water or in the air, including, but not limited to, automobiles, buses, motorbikes, motorcycles, motor scooters, trucks, tractors, go-carts, golf carts, campers, recreational vehicles, boats, personal watercraft, airplanes, train cars, and any means of conveyance which are designed to be pulled by motorized vehicles upon the roadway such as boat trailers, wagons, balers, motorcycle trailers, auto transport trailers, and any other trailer designed to haul specific items attached to vehicles on the roadway.

Vermin means rodents, birds and insects that are destructive of real or personal property or injurious to health.

Vermin control means block sanitation, distribution of poison, and/or the setting of traps or such other methods recommended by a licensed pest control operator, as may be approved to control the rat, rodent, and/or vermin population.

Vermin harborage means any condition under which vermin may find shelter or protection, and shall include any construction or condition, which permits the entrances of vermin into any building.

Vermin-proofing means taking action to prevent the ingress of vermin into business buildings through the exterior walls, ground, or first floors, basements, roofs, sidewalk gratings, sidewalk

openings, foundations, and other places that may be reached and entered by vermin climbing, burrowing, or otherwise.

- (a) The material to be used for rodent-proofing shall include cement concrete, brick masonry laid in cement concrete mortar, sheet metal, 24 or 26-gauge wire cloth of not less than 19-gauge having a mesh not larger than three-eighths of an inch.
- (b) All material for rodent proofing shall be of such strength and thickness as to be impervious to rodent gnawing.
- (c) Windows and other openings for light or ventilation that may be reached or entered by rodents shall be covered with wire cloth screen incorporated in a metal frame conforming to the above gauge and dimensions.
- (d) All exterior doors shall be protected against the gnawing of rodents by the use of materials prescribed above.
- (e) When closed, all exterior doors shall have a maximum clearance between doors, doorsills, and jambs of not exceeding three-eighths of an inch.

Vintage car means a car or light truck more than 20 years old that is in good operating and cosmetic condition or in the process of being restored to good condition.

Weeds means active vegetative growth including, but not limited to, kudzu, poison ivy, jimsonweed, burdock, ragweed, thistle, cocklebur, dandelion, plants of obnoxious odors, or other similar unsightly vegetative growths. This term shall not include cultivated flowers, fruits, vegetables, and gardens.

Yard trimmings means leaves, brush, grass, clippings, shrubs, and tree pruning's, discarded Christmas trees, nursery and greenhouse vegetative residuals, and vegetative matter resulting from landscaping development and maintenance other than mining, agricultural and silvicultural operations.

44-5. PROPERTY MAINTENANCE REQUIRED

All property regulated by this Chapter, whether occupied or unoccupied, shall meet or exceed the standards of this Chapter. All property shall be maintained in a manner so as to ensure that the property is not unsafe, uninhabitable, or a nuisance.

44-6. SECURING UNOCCUPIED/VACANT STRUCTURES

- (A) A dwelling, building or structure, or any such part thereof, that is not physically occupied by a person shall be kept secured by the owner against unauthorized entry and water damage. Securing shall further be accomplished by ensuring doors and windows are closed and locked and/or boarding of doors and windows with exterior grade plywood. Securing shall be in a manner which is consistent with the building codes and regulations of Dawson County and as determined by the Building Official, which may include such additional acts of repairs to fences and walls, chaining or padlocking gates, and repairing doors, windows, or other openings.

(B) Alternative Methods of Securing. Notwithstanding subsection (A) of this section, the Building Official may approve alternative methods of securing doors, windows or other openings of any building or structure. In making the determination to approve any alternative method, the Building Official shall consider the aesthetic and other impacts of such method on the immediate neighborhood and the extent to which such method provides adequate and long-term security against the unauthorized entry to the property.

44-7. VACANT NON-RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES

A non-residential building or non-residential structure that is not occupied for 90 days shall be deemed a vacant non-residential structure and shall be maintained in good repair and comply with applicable laws, codes, and ordinances, including all requirements of this Chapter. Any vacant commercial structure shall conform to the following additional minimum standards:

- (A) A placard 24 inches by 24 inches with a red background, white reflective stripes and a white reflective border shall be placed on the front of the vacant structure and shall be visible from the street. An "X" within the placard shall signify significant structural deficiencies within the building, which will limit firefighting to exterior operations only with entry occurring only for known life hazards;
- (B) All doors and windows and other openings shall be weather-tight and secured against entry by the general public and animals;
- (C) All roof and roof flashings shall be sound and tight so that no rain or other precipitation shall penetrate the structure and shall allow for appropriate drainage so as to prevent deterioration of the interior walls or other interior portions of the structure;
- (D) The structure and all plumbing therein shall be maintained in good repair and be structurally sound; the structure shall be free from rubbish, garbage and other debris;
- (E) Supporting members of the structure shall be capable of bearing both live and dead loads and the foundation walls likewise shall be capable of supporting an appropriate load;
- (F) The exterior of the structure shall be free of loose and rotten materials as well as holes. Any exposed metal, wood or other surface shall be protected from the elements by appropriate weather coating materials (paint or similar treatment);
- (G) All balconies, canopies, signs, metal awnings, stairways, fire escapes or other overhanging extensions shall be in good repair and appropriately anchored. The exposed metal and wood surface of overhanging extensions shall also be protected from the elements against rust or decay by appropriate application of paint or similar weather coating;
- (H) Any accessories or appurtenant structures including, but not limited to, garages, sheds or other storage facilities shall meet the standards set forth herein; and

- (I) Retaining walls, drainage systems, or other structures shall be maintained in good repair and shall be structurally sound. Any existing fence shall be maintained in good repair with gates locked at all times.

44-8. STAGNANT WATER

Stagnant water which has not been chemically treated or is not circulated as to not be conducive to the breeding or harboring of mosquitoes or other insects shall not be permitted or maintained on any property.

44-9. PRIVATE SWIMMING POOLS

Private swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas containing more than 24 inches in depth shall be completely surrounded by a fence or barrier not less than 48 inches in height above the finished ground level measured on the side of the barrier away from the pool. Gates and doors in such barriers shall be self-closing and self-latching. Where the self-latching device is less than 54 inches above the bottom of the gate, the release mechanism shall be located on the pool side of the gate. Self-closing and self-latching gates shall be maintained such that the gate will positively close and latch when released from an open position of 6 inches from the gatepost. An existing pool enclosure shall not be removed, replaced, or changed in a manner that reduces its effectiveness as a safety barrier.

44-10. OUTDOOR STORAGE

No property owner shall allow outdoor storage of any Inoperable or Junk Vehicle, Inoperable or Junk Marine Vessel, junk, trash, garbage, debris, scrap metal, concrete, sand, asphalt, cans, bottles, tires, salvage materials, boxes, containers, bins, used or damaged lumber, damaged outdoor furniture, household furniture, stoves, refrigerators, freezers or other appliances intended for indoor use, sinks, toilets, cabinets or other household fixtures, yard waste, and/or any other item, whole or in part, regardless of item condition, including but not limited to, rusted, wrecked, junked, dismantled, abandoned, discarded, or inoperable, which is not completely enclosed within a building or dwelling and which may become a breeding place for insects, rodents or reptiles, or which may constitute a health, accident or fire hazard, or which creates a blighting or deteriorating effect on the county.

This does not apply to any issue that may be existing as a result of the natural and undisturbed state of the property that is free from any act of human conduct. Nothing herein shall preclude the storage of stacked firewood for use on the property. Further, this section shall not apply to construction sites or licensed businesses for which all applicable permits have been issued by the county and such storage is compliant with all other applicable rules and regulations.

44-11. VEGETATION

It shall be unlawful for any person to maintain, cause or allow growth of weeds or grass in excess of 18” (eighteen inches) to grow on any property on which is located a residential dwelling, commercial establishment or vacant commercial property where excessive growth may become a breeding place for insects, rodents or reptiles, or which may constitute a health, accident or fire hazard, or which creates a blighting or deteriorating effect on the county. Noxious weeds shall be prohibited. This does not apply to agriculturally zoned property, property used for agricultural purposes, county-designated green space, or areas existing in their natural, undisturbed state.

In any event, no tree, shrub or other vegetation shall obstruct the safe vision of a sidewalk, drive, or road.

44-12. HEALTH AND SANITATION

All exterior property shall be maintained in a sanitary and safe condition. All exterior property shall be free of trash and garbage to the extent such trash and garbage shall create a breeding place for insects, rodents or reptiles, or which may constitute a health, accident or fire hazard, or which creates a blighting or deteriorating effect on the county. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the composting of vegetative materials is allowed provided that it does not create odors, health hazards, or nuisances.

44-13. GRAFFITI

Any person who causes graffiti to appear on property shall be subject to penalty under this Chapter, as well as all other applicable criminal laws. The owner of the property on which the graffiti appears shall be responsible for removal of the graffiti, whether by cleaning the graffiti off, painting over the graffiti, or otherwise. Failure by the property owner to remove the graffiti within 30 days of written notice to do so by a Public Officer shall constitute a violation of this Chapter by the property owner.

44-14. TENANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE

A tenant, in addition to the owner, shall be responsible for complying with the standards of this Chapter on that portion of the property controlled exclusively by the tenant.

44-15. OWNER RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE

The owner of a property shall be responsible for complying with the standards set forth in this Chapter, except as otherwise stated in this Chapter.

44-16. MAINTENANCE OF REAL PROPERTY AFTER CASUALTY DAMAGE

(A) All buildings or structures not being presently and physically occupied, which have been rendered hazardous by fire or other acts of nature, shall immediately be made secure by the

owner and/or operator to prevent unauthorized access to the hazardous property. If the property remains physically unoccupied and hazardous to public health and safety 90 days after the casualty damage occurred, unless a natural disaster is declared by an authorized governmental entity, the owner and/or operator shall be subject to the enforcement provisions of Chapters 48 of the Dawson County Code of Ordinance for abatement of a nuisance.

(B) Burned structures.

If any building or structure is partially burned, then the owner and/or operator shall, within 30 days after completion of the investigation by the fire department and law enforcement and/or the insurer of the property, remove from the premises all refuse, garbage, trash, debris, and all charred and partially burned lumber and material. If the building or structure shall be burned to an extent that the building or structure cannot be repaired, then the owner and/or operator shall, within 60 days after completion of the investigation by the fire department and law enforcement and/or the insurer of the property, remove from the premises the remaining portion of the building or structure. If the building or structure is to be repaired, then a permit shall be obtained, and work shall begin within 60 days after completion of the investigation by the fire department and law enforcement and/or insurer of the property.

44-17. VERMIN INFESTATION CONTROL

(A) Non-Residential Buildings.

- (1) The owners of all non-residential buildings shall have such buildings vermin-proofed and kept vermin-proofed in accordance with this Chapter.
- (2) Whenever conditions inside or under any such non-residential buildings or on any property on which a non-residential building is located provide harborage for vermin such that the Public Official deems it necessary that such harborage be eliminated, the Public Official shall order the owner to take such steps toward the elimination of the harborage as the Public Official, in his/her discretion, deems essential.

(B) Duties of occupants of non-residential buildings.

The owner, operator, and/or occupants of any non-residential buildings or property on which a non-residential building is located in Dawson County shall at all times comply with the following regulations:

- (1) Store all garbage in a vermin-proof metal container or other type approved by the Public Official, pending removal of such garbage;
- (2) Keep non-residential buildings and property free of trash, garbage, debris, rubbish, salvage, or similar materials which provide nesting places and harborage for vermin; and

- (3) Maintain buildings and/or property in a vermin-free condition by pursuing a program of vermin proofing.

(C) Residential Buildings.

- (1) The owner of any residential building shall be responsible for vermin elimination within the building prior to renting or leasing the structure.
- (2) The occupant of a one-family dwelling shall be responsible for vermin elimination on the premises.
- (3) The owner of a building containing two or more dwelling units, a multiple occupancy, or a rooming house shall be responsible for vermin elimination in the public or shared areas of the building and exterior property. If an infestation is caused by failure of an occupant to prevent such infestation in the area occupied, the occupant and owner shall be responsible for vermin elimination.
- (4) The occupant of any building shall be responsible for the continued vermin free condition of the building. Except where the infestations are caused by defects in the building, the owner shall be responsible for vermin elimination.

(D) Inspections.

The Public Official is hereby authorized to make inspection of all buildings and property in Dawson County for the purpose of determining the conditions as to vermin proofing and rodent infestation where there is reasonable cause for the Public Official to believe that vermin infestation or harborage exists. All owners, operators, and/or occupants of buildings and property shall permit such inspection when requested by the Public Official.

44-18. UNFIT DWELLINGS OR BUILDINGS

(A) Unfit dwellings and buildings defined.

Any dwelling or building, which has any or all of the following defects, as determined by the Building Official, shall be deemed unfit for human habitation, as defined by this Chapter, and subject to condemnation by the County. The following is a non-exclusive list of conditions that will be deemed unfit for human habitation:

- (1) Any dwelling or building whose walls or vertical members list, lean or buckle to such an extent that a plumb line suspended from the top edge of such member shall fall outside of a distance from the edge equal to one-third of the thickness of such members.
- (2) Any dwelling or building which has support member or members which have deteriorated to such an extent as to be unable to safely support the applied loads or which have 40 percent damage or deterioration of the non-supporting, enclosed, or outside walls or covering.

- (3) Any dwelling or building which has improperly distributed loads upon the floors or roofs or in which the same are overloaded or which have insufficient strength to be reasonably safe for the purpose used.
- (4) Any dwelling or building which has been damaged by fire, wind, or other causes so as to have become dangerous to life, safety, or the general health and welfare of the occupants.
- (5) Any dwelling or building which has parts thereof, which are so attached that they may fall and injure persons or property.
- (6) Any dwelling or building which does not have an unobstructed means of egress leading to an open space at ground level, whether such unobstructed egress is at ground level or via steps to ground level.
- (7) Any dwelling or building which has wiring that is dangerous due to lack of insulation, improper fuses, inadequate grounding, lack of capacity of wires or other dangerous condition.
- (8) Any dwelling or building, which does not have an installed kitchen sink in each dwelling unit properly, connected to the hot and cold-water supply pipes and the sewer system, and which connection is actively providing a potable water supply.
- (9) Any dwelling or building which does not have an installed tub or shower and lavatory properly connected to hot and cold-water supply pipes and sewer system, and which connection is actively providing a potable water supply.
- (10) Any dwelling or building which does not have a flush-type water closet located in a room affording privacy and properly connected to the water supply pipes and sewer system, and which connection is actively receiving a water supply so as to allow a toilet to be flushed.
- (11) Any dwelling or building which does not have installed and operational (i.e., electricity running through the lines) electric lighting facilities installed and functioning in accordance with the minimum requirements of the National Electric Code.

(B) Renting an unfit dwelling or building.

It shall be unlawful for any owner, operator, occupant, and/or any party in interest of a dwelling or of a building to rent or offer for rent any dwelling, building, or rooming unit which is unfit for human habitation as determined by inspection by the Dawson County Building Official, for any reason set out in this Chapter, due to the dilapidation, leaking water lines, leaking gas lines, electrical defects increasing hazards of fire, accidents or other calamities, lack of ventilation, light or sanitary facilities, or due to other conditions rendering such dwelling or building or rooming unit unsafe or unsanitary or dangerous.

Upon discovering that a dwelling, building, or rooming unit has been deemed by the Public Official to be unfit for human habitation, any person shall have 72 hours or three business days (in the case of office closure) after execution of a lease for such dwelling, building, or rooming unit to rescind the lease by providing notice in writing to the landlord that the dwelling or building has been discovered to be unfit as described in this Chapter.

(C) Persons occupying dwellings or buildings.

In addition to limitations on occupants and residents and the definition of family under this Chapter and any other applicable Dawson County ordinance, the number of persons beyond c persons related by blood, marriage, adoption, or guardianship occupying any dwelling unit shall be limited by the following additional requirements: The total of all habitable rooms in a dwelling or building shall be such as to provide at least 200 square feet of total building square footage (as determined and maintained in the records of the Dawson County Board of Tax Assessors) per each adult occupant thereof. Any floor space under a ceiling less than five feet high shall not be counted.

(D) Rooming houses.

If the use is allowed in the zoning district, and all other applicable requirements under the applicable zoning ordinance are satisfied, the owner and/or operator of a rooming house must comply with the following additional requirements:

- (1) Each rooming house and room shall be in compliance with the minimum standards set forth in this Section, Section 44-17-A, subsections (1) through (7), and (11), and Section 44-17-C above.
- (2) Each rooming house shall be equipped with at least one flush water closet, one lavatory, an installed tub or shower for each five persons or fraction thereof within the rooming house, including members of the family, if they are to share the use of the facilities. All such facilities shall be properly connected to the water supply and sewer system as required by Section 44-18-A.
- (3) Each flush water closet, lavatory, tub, or shower required above, shall be located within the rooming house, in a room, or rooms, which:
 - (a) Affords privacy;
 - (b) Is accessible by a common hall without going outside the rooming house;
 - (c) Is accessible by a common hall without going through sleeping quarters of others; and
 - (d) Is not more than one story removed from the room of an occupant intended to share the facilities.

(E.) Non dwelling structures.

It shall be unlawful for any owner, operator, occupant or any party of interest to connect a non-dwelling structure to utilities and be used as a dwelling in any zoning district. Non dwelling structures shall not be parked or stored to be used as a dwelling on any property unless the property is zoned, licensed, and operated as a Recreational Vehicle Park.. Non dwelling structures include but are not limited to: campers, travel trailers, recreational vehicles, motor homes, busses, pickup campers, converted trucks or buses, motorized homes, tent campers, tents, or other short-term housing or shelter arrangements and devices, boats and boat trailers, combinations thereof and other similar equipment, cases and boxes, and utility buildings.

44-19. ENFORCEMENT

This Chapter shall be enforced by the appropriate Public Officer as may be applicable to the particular offense.

44-20. PENALTIES

- (A) The applicable Public Officer is hereby authorized and directed to administer and enforce all the provisions of this Chapter. Failure to comply with any requirement of this Chapter shall constitute a violation subject to citation and penalty as provided herein.
- (B) Upon the first violation of any of the provisions of this Chapter, a warning notice shall be issued by the Public Officer with a notice to cure the violation within a time determined reasonable under the circumstances by the Public Officer. Upon the second violation of any of the provisions of this Chapter, a citation shall be issued, and the individual shall go before the Dawson County Magistrate Court. Upon conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction, the offending person will be guilty of a criminal misdemeanor and shall be subject to criminal penalties not to exceed \$1,000.00, by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of time not to exceed 60 days, or by both such fine and imprisonment, or up to the limits of any penalty provided by state law for the ordinance. For purposes of sentencing, the first citation before the Magistrate Court shall be deemed the "first offense," however; consideration may be given by the court to the previous warning citation.
- (C) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to preclude Dawson County from pursuing any and all other remedies provided by law, including, but not limited to, pursuit of a restraining order, injunction, abatement of the nuisance, condemnation, or other appropriate legal action, or proceeding through a court of competent jurisdiction to prevent, restrain, or abate the unlawful use or activity.
- (D) Each violation of this Chapter shall constitute a separate offence. Additionally, each day of noncompliance with the terms of this Chapter is considered a separate offense and the

offending person will be subject to the penalties in subsection B above for each day of noncompliance.

44-21. NO LIABILITY-COUNTY

No officer, agent, or employee of Dawson County shall be personally liable for any damage that may accrue to persons or property resulting from any act required or permitted when discharging duties pursuant to this Chapter.