



### Inoperable Vehicles

An inoperable vehicle is one that does not display a current license tag, is not equipped with all the parts that are required to legally and safely operate it on public streets, and/or cannot be driven under its own power. Inoperable vehicles must be stored in an area that is screened from view by walls and a roof. However, one inoperable vehicle may be stored in an area not screened from view for up to 7 days as repairs or arrangements for alternative storage are made.



### Surfacing

Areas used for off-street parking must be surfaced with a solid material with sufficient strength to support the vehicles loads to be imposed. In the case of single family and duplex dwellings, angular and interlocking gravel may be used if proper edging is installed to keep the gravel from entering the yard or right-of-way, and if the area connecting the parking space to the street is paved.

### Recreational Vehicles

Recreational vehicles and trailers designed to be towed by another vehicle must be stored on a paved surface and parked behind the front building line. However, parking of recreational vehicles in the front yard for the purposes of visitation, packing and/or unpacking for travel is permissible for a maximum of 7 consecutive days, with a maximum of 14 days per year.



### Open Storage

The storage, collecting, dismantling, salvaging or repairing of more than one piece of machinery, including inoperable vehicles and appliances, must be screened from view by walls and a roof.

### Junk, Garbage & Debris

Junk, garbage and debris are prohibited from being left in the yard and must be disposed of properly. This includes, but is not limited to, auto parts, appliances, furniture, building materials, tires, discarded paper, cardboard, plastics, etc. Tree trimmings, fallen limbs, and yard waste must also be properly disposed of.



Garbage may be set at the curb for pick up no earlier than 7 pm the evening before pick up is scheduled for the neighborhood. Contact the City's Refuse & Recycling Department at 304.348.6831 for more information or to schedule pick up of larger items.

### Yard Maintenance Standards

Grass and weeds taller than 10 inches in height are prohibited. If a property owner fails to respond appropriately to the City's notice of violation, the City or a contractor hired by the City may enter the property, eliminate the offending grass and weeds, and pass the cost of that removal on to the owner of the property.

### Vacant & Unsecured Structures

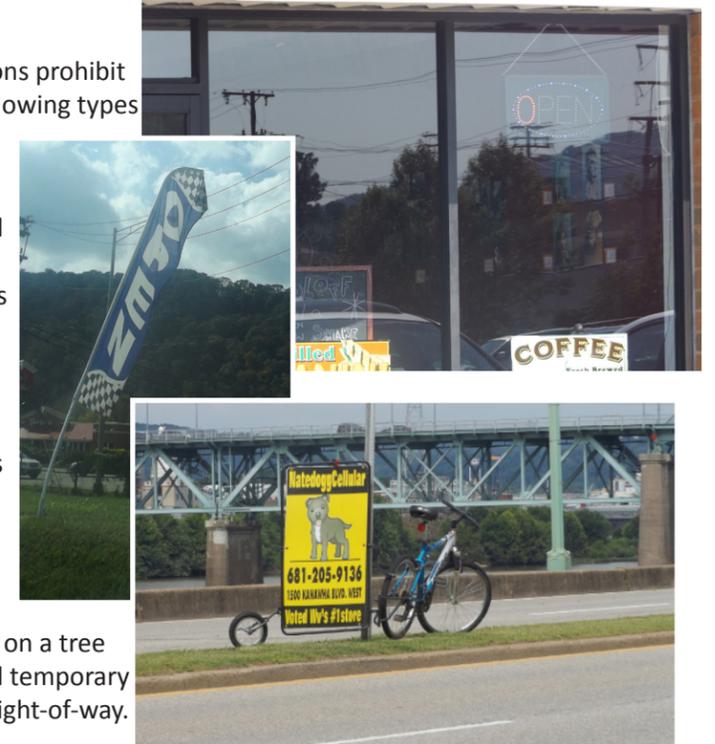
Structures which are unprotected as a result of the omission or disrepair of windows, doors, hatchways or other enclosures are required to be secured in order to prevent further deterioration and/or unauthorized entry. If a property owner fails to respond appropriately to the City's notice of violation, the City or a contractor hired by the City may enter and secure the property, passing the cost on to the owner of the property.



### Signs

The sign regulations prohibit the use of the following types of signs:

- banners, pennants and streamers
- portable signs
- roof signs
- digital signs
- signs that include flashing lights or moving parts



The ordinance also prohibits the erection of a sign on a tree or utility pole and temporary signs in a public right-of-way.

A sign structure no longer containing a sign must be removed, as must any sign which no longer advertises a legitimate business, product or service.

The ordinance also regulates, the size, height, number, and location of signs to be placed on all commercial and non-residential properties.

### Fences

On residentially zoned properties, fences may not exceed 4 feet in height in the front or street side yards. Fences in side and rear yards are permitted at up to 6.5 feet in height. They may be constructed in a wide range of materials, including but not limited to wood, stone, brick, and vinyl. Razor wire and electrified wire are prohibited.

On commercially zoned properties, fences can be up to 10 feet in height.

On industrially zoned properties, fences can be up to 15 feet in height.

In all cases, a clear vision triangle must be maintained at street intersections and driveways.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- The City of Charleston's Building Commission employs 8 inspectors to enforce the International Building Code and the International Property Maintenance Code throughout the City of Charleston. The most common violations they address involve garbage and debris, yard maintenance, and vacant and unsecured property. With questions on these and related items, contact the Building Commission at 304.348.6833.
- The Planning Department employs 2 zoning administrators to enforce the City of Charleston's Zoning Ordinance. The most common violations they address involve inoperable vehicles, recreational vehicles, open storage of machinery, prohibited signage, and fences. With questions on these and related items, contact the Planning Department at 304.348.8105.
- Code violations can be reported anonymously by phone to the appropriate City department or online at <http://www.charlestonwv.gov/government/citizen-support>. Our enforcement officers will not, under any circumstances, share the identity of the individual reporting the violation.
- When reporting a violation, please include the specific address of the property to be evaluated. If the address is unknown, describe the location in as much detail as possible, providing landmarks and identifiers that will enable enforcement officers to quickly locate the property in question.
- Any work beyond the general maintenance of a property requires City permits. This includes, but is not limited to, new construction, remodeling, reroofing, plumbing, and electrical work. Additionally, the installation of signage, fencing and paving requires City permits. When in doubt, contact the City to inquire prior to undertaking any project on property within the City of Charleston.
- If a property owner does not respond to the required legal notifications, the City can mow high grass and weeds or secure a vacant property and bill the property owner or place a lien on the property.
- City staff is available to attend neighborhood meetings to review and explain code requirements. Contact the Building Department at 304.348.6833 and the Planning Department at 304.348.8105 to request our involvement in your next discussion on the condition of properties in your community.



**Building Commission:**  
915 Quarrier Street, Ste 5  
Charleston, WV 25301  
304.348.6833

**Planning & Zoning Department:**  
915 Quarrier Street, Ste 1  
Charleston, WV 25301  
304.348.8105

*This publication was developed by Charleston City Council's  
Strong Neighborhoods Task Force.*

## Let's get Charleston UP TO CODE!

Charleston is the capital city of West Virginia, and our elected leaders, staff, and citizens work every day to develop our city as the cultural, recreational, and business capital of the Appalachian Mountain region. In support of that mission, this brochure was designed to inform property owners of the most common violations of zoning and property maintenance codes occurring within our city, so that our citizens are armed with the information they need to prevent these violations in the future.