



Litter Compliance

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NEIGHBORHOOD CODE COMPLIANCE OFFICER

BELLINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

360-778-8735

Litter Complaints

- ▶ Complaint-based
- ▶ Average 115 complaints a month, about 500 complaints every 4 months
- ▶ *Enough for one officer to be entirely dedicated to litter control!!*
- ▶ Common complaints:
 - ▶ *“Garbage out of control”*
 - ▶ *Not enough service (garbage is overflowing)*
 - ▶ *Graffiti*
 - ▶ *Containers left out indefinitely along street or alley*
 - ▶ *Illegal dumping (“free” piles, couch/mattress on corner)*
 - ▶ *Trash, rats, etc. spreading onto neighbor’s property*
 - ▶ *Junk vehicles*

Who complains?

- ▶ Neighbors
- ▶ SSC (Sanitary Service Company)
- ▶ Other city departments, county health department
- ▶ Other officers
- ▶ Tenants
- ▶ How? Email, calls, tip line, dispatch, PD, Mayor's office



What happens when someone complains?

- ▶ Site Visit
 - ▶ Is there a violation? If so, how many and which ordinances apply?
 - ▶ Who's property is the issue occurring on?
 - ▶ Can I tell where the problem came from/why it occurred?
- ▶ Background info:
 - ▶ Who owns the property?
 - ▶ Is there a property management company?
 - ▶ How many units?
 - ▶ Call SSC: do they have service, and what kind, how often?
- ▶ Contact owner/property manager (NOT tenants).
- ▶ Letter notifying of violations and 7-10 day compliance period.
- ▶ GOAL is voluntary compliance. (Solve the problem.)



Why contact the owner and not the tenants?

- ▶ **Because it's the law.**

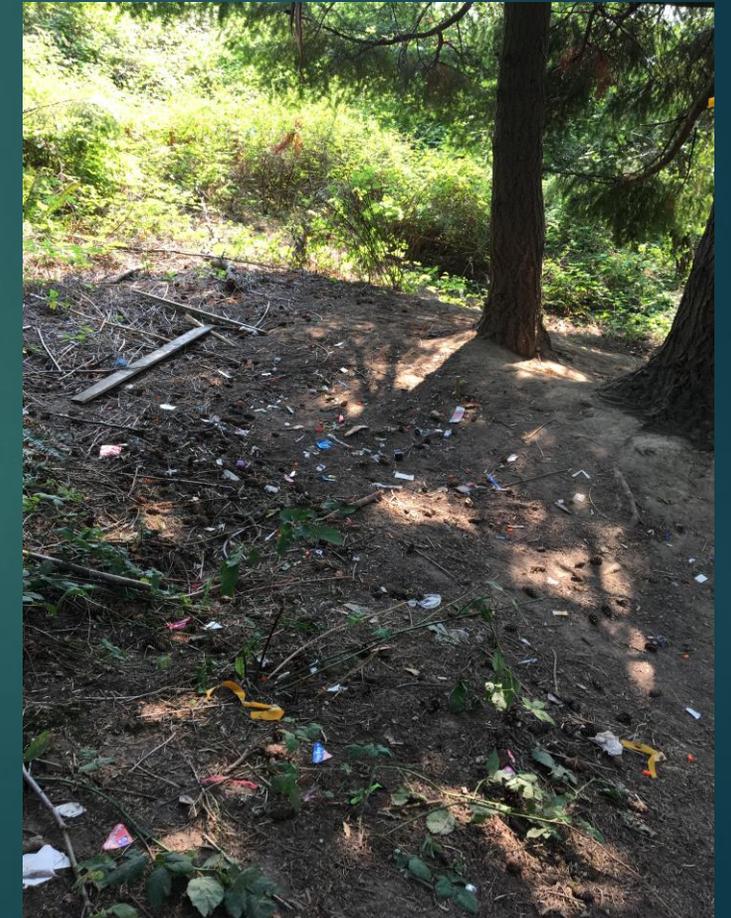
- ▶ Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) 10.60.130 Property Owners' Duty to Keep Premises Litter-Free states: *"The owner or person in control of any private property shall at all times maintain the premises free of litter"*
- ▶ BMC 10.60.070 Property Owners' Duty to Keep Sidewalks Litter-Free

Why is it an issue? *(Besides that it's illegal.)*

- ▶ Brings down enjoyment, character of the community. (An eyesore.)
- ▶ Decreases home values, neighborhood reputation.
- ▶ “Broken window” Theory: allowing small crimes increases chances of more serious crimes to occur. Gives the impression that homeowners don't care what happens in their neighborhood.



- ▶ Increased risk of scavengers, rodents, critters
- ▶ Environmental impact



It tends to multiply!



Applicable laws:

▶ 9.12.030: Deposit of garbage & refuse into a **covered container, braced** so contents **cannot be scattered** by elements or animals:

▶ Means

▶ No dumping



No Free Piles



No furniture at the curb/dumpster



▶ No piles



Braced so it doesn't tip



Off public right of way except at pickup



BMC 9.12.040 Universal and compulsory use of garbage services for **EACH AND EVERY** single family dwelling unit.

BMC 9.12.070 **Accumulation** of Garbage and Refuse

▶ Meaning: 1 can per unit

For example: 4 units=4 containers

▶ Not enough service is a violation

For example: overflowing containers

▶ Accumulation of trash prohibited

▶ EVERYTHING must fit in the can.



Nuisances

- ▶ Graffiti
- ▶ Junk vehicles
- ▶ Anything blocking use of right of way
- ▶ Trees, bushes, falling fences, signs in the way



What does this mean for landlords? (Tips)

- ▶ The LANDLORD is ultimately responsible. (YOUR name on the ticket. YOU go to court.)
- ▶ Cannot leave leftover furniture, piles of garbage for the next tenants.
- ▶ Make it clear in your lease: Cans brought in after pickup, no free piles, no dumping.
- ▶ Consider scheduling a quarterly (or move-out) special pickup.
- ▶ CHECK ON YOUR PROPERTY!!! Monthly, if not weekly. (Even if you have a manager.)
- ▶ Make sure you have adequate service. 1 can per unit.

Resources

- ▶ SSC : Schedule a special pick-up 360-734-3490. Only \$4.75 per extra 30gal bag's worth.
- ▶ Rent a truck and go to the Ferndale dump: One truck load about \$8.
- ▶ ReUse Works: Donate old appliances: free if dropped off, \$15 for pickup.
- ▶ Schedule a free pick-up of usable household goods from the ARC.
- ▶ Sell/donate household and building materials to Re-Store.
- ▶ Furniture to Habitat for Humanity thrift store.
- ▶ Lots of organizations will pick up junk vehicles for free (just google it).
- ▶ Questions? Call me 303-778-8735.
- ▶ If you see active dumping, call 911.