



Eveleth Police Department Code Enforcement Office



INFORMATIONAL SERIES

BLIGHT ENFORCEMENT

Historical Perspective: There are conditions that exist at many properties scattered throughout the City of Eveleth that have a negative impact on the various neighborhoods in which they are situated. Consequently, they have a negative impact on the city as a whole. Some of these properties are in such a condition that they present a hazard to the public. Some of these properties are in such a condition that they are clearly a public nuisance. All of these properties are in violation of the Eveleth City Code as it pertains to the regulation of blight conditions. The term “blight” has been defined as any condition or set of conditions that adversely affects the aesthetics, safety, or economic vitality of a property or surrounding area, including but not limited to dilapidation, decay, obsolescence, abandonment, excessive vegetation, accumulation of debris, graffiti, or any other physical or environmental factors that contribute to a decline in the quality of life or property values in the community. The problem has probably existed for as long as Eveleth has been a city, but most certainly has existed for the last 25 years.

Over a long period of time, the City of Eveleth has attempted to address the blight issue a number of different ways. Some of those attempts resulted in a degree of success, but not for a long, sustained period of time. The City Council has recognized that the elimination of blight is a high priority, and has taken affirmative steps to address the issue. In the fall of 2023, the City Council appointed an Independent Contract Code Enforcement Officer to work in partnership with the Police Department to focus on the enforcement of the City Code as it pertains to blight; to implement best practices for remediating the blight problem, and to draft an updated, comprehensive blight ordinance and submit it to the City Council. In the spring of 2024, the City Council enacted Section 10.23 of the City Code, a comprehensive ordinance that regulates hazardous conditions, property maintenance, blight and nuisances. This ordinance is referred to as the Blight Code.

The purpose of this handout is primarily to provide information to Eveleth residents regarding the new blight code and enforcement procedures, and to encourage anyone that is experiencing a blight issue in their neighborhood, to contact the Independent Contract Code Enforcement Officer by phone or text at (218) 750-0340, or by email at codeofficer@evelethpd.gov. You may also report the matter to the Police Department at (218) 744-7560, or drop off a written complaint in the drop box at City Hall. Complaints can be made anonymously if you would rather not provide your name when making a complaint. Following is information regarding the new blight code and enforcement procedures. This handout is the first in a series of handouts to follow.

Basic enforcement procedures include:

- Properties that are not in compliance with the city code are identified through an officer’s patrol efforts, or via an officer inspecting a property after having received a citizen’s complaint about the property.
- Property owners of the property that are not in compliance are identified through investigation, and a “*Blight Code Compliance Order*” is served on the owner. The conditions that need to be corrected are specified on this form. The property owner is given at least ten days to correct the violation. After the ten-day period has elapsed, an officer will recheck the property to see if the property is in compliance. If the property is found to be in compliance by the date specified on the order, the case is closed and no further action is necessary.
- If it is found that the violation has not been corrected, the violator is subject to an administrative citation, and a civil penalty ranging from \$150.00 to \$500.00, or may be prosecuted criminally for a misdemeanor offense. Repeat offenders face higher penalty amounts.

Some of the most common blight complaints that require action include:

- **Unlawful Storage of Junk Property** (Section 10.23, Subd. 8A). In summary, it is unlawful to store junk property on private property, except when it is stored within a lawful building. *Junk property* means wrecked, junked, discarded or scrapped property or waste material having little value other than nominal salvage value, if any, and which has been left unprotected from the elements, including but not limited to, wrecked, junked, inoperative or partially dismantled furniture, furnishings, appliances, power equipment, doors, windows, plumbing fixtures or parts or components thereof, or scrap metal, wood, glass, paper, plastic, Styrofoam, rubber, concrete, carpeting, batteries, boxes or containers, rags, tanks, barrels, bicycles, construction debris, wheelbarrows, brush piles, cut-down trees and branches or other material, whether organic or inorganic.
- **Unlawful Storage of Junk Vehicle** (Section 10.23, Subd. 8B). In summary, it is unlawful to park, store or allow the parking or storing of a junk vehicle for more than 5 successive days, on private property, unless it is so parked or stored within a lawful building. *Junk vehicle* means any vehicle which is determined by the enforcement officer to be an inoperative vehicle, or to which the registered owner has relinquished dominion and control or which does not have attached to it current license plates or tabs as required by state law, including parts or components thereof that are not attached to the vehicle.
- **Failure to Maintain Growth of Weeds, Trees or Brush** (Section 10.23, Subd. 8E). In summary, it is unlawful for the owner or occupant of any real property to fail to maintain any grass or weeds growing thereon at a height of not more than six inches, to allow the growth of noxious weeds as defined in state statute, or to fail to maintain the overgrowth of brush or trees by trimming such brush or trees, except when the trimming of trees requires a permit under other provisions of the city code or other law. The owner or occupant of real property abutting on a street or alley shall cause the grass or weeds to be cut both on the property as well as from the property line nearest to such street or alley, to the center of such street or alley.
- **Unlawful Storage of Refuse** (Section 10.23, Subd. 8F). It is unlawful to store refuse on residential dwelling premises for more than one week. All such storage shall be in 5 to 30 gallon metal or plastic containers with tight-fitting covers, which shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition; provided that leaves, weeds and grass clippings may be stored in plastic bags and tree limbs must be stored in bundles weighing no more than 75 pounds, and no longer than 4 feet.
- **Animal Waste** (Section 10.21, Subd. 1). In summary, it is unlawful for any owner to permit animal excrement to accumulate for more than 7 days on premises occupied by him/her without removal and sanitary disposal.

Please watch for the next handout in this series, where additional regulations in the newly adopted blight code will be discussed, including regulations regarding property maintenance, the outside storage of firewood, limitations on the number of vehicles and watercraft stored outside on residential property, recreational fires, the hourly restrictions of certain operations, and nuisances. Thank you for taking the time to read this information and for taking an interest in the betterment of the City of Eveleth.