



Homeowner's Guide to Property Maintenance

Prince George's County
Department of Environmental Resources



Dear Residents and Citizens,

Prince George's County is proud to provide you with the *Homeowner's Guide to Property Maintenance*. Improving the visual appearance of our neighborhoods, roads and gateways into our County is an individual, as well as public, responsibility. We believe that our residents and public servants should work together through policy, effective enforcement and established programs to increase neighborhood pride. This handbook has been compiled to give you the information and tools you need to play an active role in the Livable Communities Initiatives.

The creation of livable communities is our number one priority. This guide will educate homeowners on their responsibilities and rights in the area of property maintenance. The Department of Environmental Resources' enforcement of the Housing Code helps to maintain and enhance residential property values and stabilize neighborhoods.

I hope you will find the information in the following pages educational and useful. A healthy, blight-free environment equals a more livable community and higher quality of life for all Prince Georgians. We hope you will partner with us in this effort. Together, we can make a difference.

JACK B. JOHNSON
County Executive

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Property Owner Responsibilities

The minimum requirements provided in this guidebook apply to all existing residential structures and premises located outside of a municipality

and to municipalities that do not provide their own code enforcement. For properties located within a municipality, please check with your local municipality.

Exterior Structure

- Must be clean, safe and sanitary
- Outside walls cannot have holes, breaks, loose or rotting materials
- Accessory buildings must be maintained, structurally sound and in good repair
- No peeling, flaking or chipped paint
- No evidence of rust or corrosion
- No graffiti
- Gutters and downspouts must be in good repair and unobstructed
- Swimming pools must operate properly or be covered to prevent stagnant water



- Stairways, decks and balconies must be safe
- No broken windows or door glass
- Must display approved address numbers (4 inches high)

Yards

- Must have grass or other approved plant material for ground cover (mulch, ivy, Blue Rug juniper, etc.)
- Must slope to prevent water accumulation



Grasses/Lawn

- No taller than 12 inches
- Must not block walkways, sidewalks, streets, adjoining driveways or house numbers
- Free of rodents
- Noxious weeds prohibited



Sidewalks and Driveways

- Must be in good repair and free of cracks, tree roots, etc.
- Must be free from obstruction

Snow Removal

- Sidewalks, walkways, steps, driveways and parking spaces must be safe
- Sidewalks and walkways should be shoveled within 48 hours after snowfall has ended

Garbage Pickup

- Must use approved, covered trash containers or garbage disposal facilities

Wrecked/Dismantled/Inoperable/ Unlicensed Vehicles

- No more than one allowed and must be kept inside a closed garage
- Not allowed on streets, driveways or public rights-of-way

Outside Storage

- Household appliances, motor vehicle parts, building materials, furniture, weeds, dead trees, branches, tree limbs, garbage, and similar items are prohibited, except those in use for an active project covered by a Building Permit
- Firewood, cut to length for final use, neatly stacked, minimum 18 inches above ground or six inches above a weed-free surface

Interior Areas

- Free of trash or garbage
- Free of rodents



- Free of insects
- Walls, floors, ceilings, windows and doors must be clean, safe and structurally sound
- No peeling, flaking or chipped paint
- No lead-based paint
- Every stair, landing and walking surface must be safe

How to File a Complaint

By e-mailDERcares@co.pg.md.us

By telephone(301) 883-6100

By FAX(301) 883-6050

or

Submit written complaints to:

**Department of Environmental Resources
Director's Office**

9400 Peppercorn Place, Suite 500
Largo, Maryland 20774

Complaint Process

Provide the address of the property and a brief description of the complaint.

The case is assigned to an Inspector and an inspection is conducted. If there are any violations, a Notice of Violation will be sent to the property owner. In most cases, violations must be corrected within 30 days.

A reinspection will be conducted. If any violations have not been corrected, a Final Notice will be sent to the property owner. The notice states that if the violations are not corrected, normally within 15 days, the case will be referred to the Office of Law.

Once referred to the Office of Law, a hearing date is set. If the property owner is found guilty at the hearing, the County will seek a Court Order allowing the County to correct the violations and charge the property owner for the cost. If the property owner fails to comply with the Order, he/she may also be charged with Contempt of Court.



The Property Standards Group will work with property owners and occupants to correct Code violations.

Right to Appeal

If the owner/occupant receives a violation notice and feels it was in error, the decision of the Code Official may be appealed to the Board of Appeals for Prince George's County.

- Request must be in writing
- Must be filed within 30 days after receiving the violation notice

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who do I call to register a complaint regarding a vacant lot that needs to be cleaned?

A. If the lot is located outside a municipality, contact the Property Standards Group (PSG) at (301) 883-6080. By County law, a vacant lot that has been neglected must be cleaned by the property owner within ten days, or the County will clean the lot at the owner's expense.

Q. Can I operate an auto repair business out of my house?

A. No. According to the Zoning Ordinance, once repair activity has been verified, a violation notice will be issued ordering the responsible person to cease repair activity within 30 days or face legal action, fines or both. For more information, contact PSG at (301) 883-6130.

Q. My neighbor's grass is knee high. Who should I call to report this problem?

A. If the grass is higher than 12 inches, this is a Code violation, and you should notify PSG at (301) 883-6100.



Q. How many unlicensed vehicles can I keep on my property?

A. Only one unlicensed vehicle may be kept on private property, and it must be enclosed in a garage. Inoperable vehicles on residential property that are not enclosed in a garage may be ordered removed, and the owner may be subject to Court action. For more information, call PSG at (301) 883-6100.

Q. A house in my neighborhood is in disrepair and appears to be abandoned. Who should I call to report it?

A. Contact PSG at (301) 883-6100.



Q. Can I park my car in the front yard?

A. Cars and noncommercial trucks must be parked in an existing driveway or on the street. If you live on a lot that is less than one acre in size, you may not park on the

unpaved area of your property. In addition, the front yard of your property may *not* be used to construct a parking area.

Q. Who is responsible for exterminating rats, rodents and insects?

A. The property owner/occupant is responsible for extermination.

Q. How can I get bulky trash items picked up?

A. Bulky trash items such as washing machines, dryers, furniture, hot water heaters and other large items are collected by appointment only. When placing a refrigerator or freezer at the curb for collection, please remove the doors. In addition, please remove the gas tank and



drain the oil from lawn mowers before placing them at the curb. To schedule an appointment, call the Bulky Trash Office at (301) 952-7600, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. You may also schedule an appointment for bulky trash collection online by visiting our website at <http://bulkytrash.princegeorgescountymd.gov/>.

Q. Can I take my trash to the landfill?

A. Yes. The Brown Station Road Sanitary Landfill is available to County citizens and residents with proof of residency. The landfill has several recycling facilities

within the complex that include the Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site, Electronics Recycling Acceptance Site, and sites for yard waste, scrap tires and appliances. For further information, please call (301) 952-7625.



Q. Is there a fee for using the landfill?

A. Disposal is free for County citizens and residents on Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; the landfill is closed on Sundays. There is no charge for residential-use vehicles provided there are no modifications and all passenger seats are installed. Residential vehicles are described as passenger cars, station wagons, sedans, SUVs, XUVs, passenger vans and minivans, trailers no larger than 5' by 10' and pickup trucks with a gross vehicle weight of 10,000 pounds or less. Commercial customers and those exceeding residential limits will continue to be charged at the posted rate.

Waste restrictions apply. **Cash Or Accounts Only — No Credit Cards Or Checks.** For more information, call (301) 952-7625.

Standard Rate \$49.00 per ton



Q. My basement gets wet after it rains. Is this a stormwater management problem?

A. It may be. The natural flow of water from your home may need to be diverted. An inspection can be scheduled to make the

determination. If it is a homeowner problem, we can offer suggestions on how to correct it. To schedule an inspection, call (301) 883-5832.

Q. What type of pets am I allowed to have? Can I keep my pet in my yard?

A. For information regarding pets, pet adoptions, spaying or neutering, pet licenses, and any other pet or animal-related questions, please contact the Animal Management Group at (301) 499-8300.



Contact Information

Housing Enforcement (301) 883-6100

Abandoned Vehicles (301) 952-1873

Adopt-a-Road (301) 499-8502

Animal Management (301) 499-8300

Building Code Violations (301) 883-3820

Bulky Trash Collection (301) 952-7600

Commercial Property

Maintenance Complaints (301) 883-6080

Construction-Related Complaints (301) 883-3820

Construction Inspection Requests (301) 883-5390

Household Hazardous Waste (301) 883-5045

Leaf Collection (301) 499-8576

Permit Office (301) 883-5776

Pot Holes (301) 499-8520

Recycling Bin Request (301) 952-7630

Recycling, Refuse and

Yard Waste Collection (301) 952-7630

Residential Drainage Complaints (301) 883-5832

Requests for Use &

Occupancy Inspections (301) 883-6043

Snow Removal (301) 350-0500

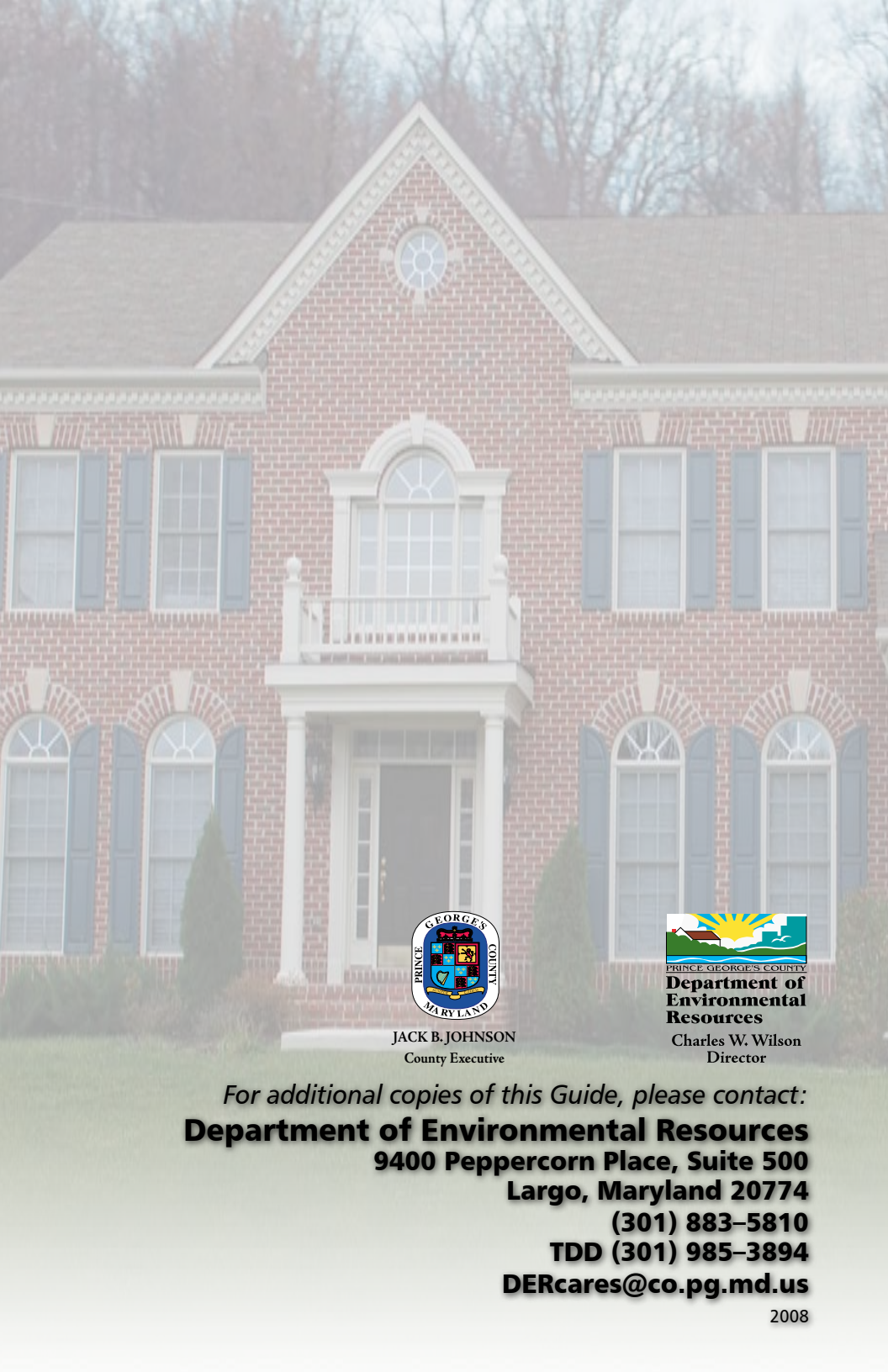
Storm Drain Maintenance (301) 499-8520

Volunteer Neighborhood Cleanup (301) 883-5822

Volunteer Storm Drain Stenciling (301) 883-5822

Water Pollution Hotline (301) 95-CLEAN

Zoning Complaints (301) 883-6130



JACK B. JOHNSON
County Executive



**Department of
Environmental
Resources**

Charles W. Wilson
Director

For additional copies of this Guide, please contact:
Department of Environmental Resources
9400 Peppercorn Place, Suite 500
Largo, Maryland 20774
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