

Frequently Asked Questions about Blight and the Blight Ordinance

1. What determines if a property is considered a Blighted Premises under the ordinance?
 - A. It is attracting illegal activity as determined by the Police Department
 - B. It is a fire hazard as documented by the Fire Marshal or a local fire department
 - C. It is, or is becoming, dilapidated or unsafe as determined by the Town Building Official
 - D. It constitutes a threat to the general health, safety or welfare as determined by the Director of Health
 - E. A property may also be considered a Blighted Premises if at least two (2) of the following conditions exist in the Public View:
 - missing, broken or boarded-up windows or doors;
 - collapsing walls or roof;
 - seriously damaged, missing or loose: siding, gutters, leaders, shingles or roofing;
 - significant fire or water damage that has not been repaired;
 - persistent and excessive amounts of garbage, trash, or construction debris on the property;
 - inoperative or unregistered motor vehicles or mechanical equipment parked, kept or stored on the premises unless garaged or appropriately covered or screened;
 - vacant buildings or structures left unsecured or unguarded against unauthorized entry;
 - unsightly or excessive amounts of debris, fallen trees (except within six (6) months of storm damage), refuse, or excavated material unless incidental to activity pursuant to a lawful building permit;
 - collapsing or dilapidated structures on property;
 - overgrown brush and/or overgrown grass or weeds of at least one foot in height covering a significant portion of a property's front yard (excluding ornamental grass as part of a landscaped property), unless identified as Inland Wetlands;
 - structures that are significantly covered with invasive non-ornamental weeds and/or vines, including but not limited to poison ivy, sumac, burning bush, bittersweet, or similar invasive plants;
 - overrun by rodents or other pests;
 - any other condition which alone or in combination with another of the above substantially interferes with the reasonable and lawful use and enjoyment of other space within a building, structure, other premises or rights of way within the neighborhood.
2. What do you mean by "in the Public View"?
 - A. The blight conditions must be visible from a public right of way (road) or from the ground floor of any other property.
3. How do I report a blighted property?
 - A. Review the list under question 1 and the information in question 2. If you feel the property meets the conditions and is in the Public View, contact the Blight Officer using

the Town's [QAlert](#) system. You must either provide your contact information when reporting.

4. Why do I have to provide my contact information or photographic evidence?
 - A. Unfortunately, since the Blight Ordinance was enacted, over 50% of the reports the Town has received have not been blight. This information will help us ensure that the reports are legitimate. We do not share your information.
5. What happens when I make a report?
 - A. The Blight Officer will log the report, inspect the property, take photographs and make a determination as to whether or not the property is blighted. If he finds that it is blight, a letter is sent to the responsible party or parties informing them of his findings, directing them to correct the blight conditions by a certain date, usually 30 days from the date of the letter.
6. What if they don't correct the blight by the deadline in the letter?
 - A. The Blight Review Board may take further action, including but not limited to fines.
7. What if someone cannot afford to correct the blight conditions?
 - A. The Town may be able to assist property owners who, due to age, disability or income restrictions, are unable to correct the blight conditions.
8. How long does it usually take for the blight conditions to be corrected?
 - A. The timeline is heavily dependent on the property owner's willingness to correct the conditions. Depending on conditions, it may be corrected within 30 days, however, cases can take longer due to the amount of work involved in correcting the violations. If the Town has to compel cooperation, it may take several months.
9. Who makes up the Blight Review Board?
 - A. There are five (5) members of the Blight Review Board. The membership is limited to representatives serving on the following boards or commissions: Planning & Zoning Commission; Human Services Commission; Commission on Aging; Board of Selectmen; Representative Town Meeting.