

Panel Discussion: City Codes & Nuisance Ordinance

There are several parties involved in enforcing city codes, including the nuisance ordinance. The most obvious may be the police officer, but there others that might be involved, such as the Public Information Office and the City Prosecutor's Office.

The Public Information Office, or PIO, offers many services to the residents of Springfield. The service that pertains most to this panel discussion is availability and routing of service requests. Concerned citizens can use this service to report potential ordinance violations. The PIO logs the details of the request and routes the information to the appropriate department for resolution. They will also notify you of the status of the complaint/request.

This could be important to landlords because, as property owners, you yourself or your tenant may create an occasion where a nuisance violation occurs. It is possible that someone could fill out a request concerning a property that you own, whether the nuisance was caused by you or your tenant, or whether it is unfounded or not. For example, a service request could be filled out stating that there is a car parked in the front yard of one of your properties, or that the grass has grown too long. Both of these examples would be city ordinance violations.

The City Prosecutor's Office may become involved in ordinance violations as well. If a complaint comes to their office, they will review all the facts and information available to them and make a decision about how to proceed. Often they will charge the violator because it will have a deterrence effect and validate the work other departments put into the case. Fines are a frequent punishment for city code violations as it pertains to landlord/property owner violations.

For more information on service requests and the PIO, visit www.springfieldmogov.org/egov/pio/index.html , call Claudia Crighton at (417) 864-1011.

To view the City of Springfield Code, visit: <http://www.municode.com/resources/gateway.asp?pid=11598&sid=25> (Chapter 74 is the Nuisance and Housing Code)