Code enforcement overview

State and local governments enact housing and building codes to require that residential properties meet minimum health and safety standards.

To ensure compliance with their housing and building codes, cities, towns, and counties will need to engage in code enforcement activities. Housing and building code enforcement not only helps to ensure the habitability of specific properties that are in violation of the code, but also helps to keep surrounding homes safe. A home that shows clear signs of abandonment and neglect, for example, may be a target for criminal activity that compromises the safety of neighboring residents. Local jurisdictions take different approaches to code enforcement depending on local circumstances. Some jurisdictions rely primarily on residents to report possible violations, while others take a more proactive approach and conduct windshield surveys or other inspections on a regular basis. Building code enforcement is undertaken by a local department of buildings, and is typically carried out by reviewing design plans and issuing permits when new construction or renovation is going to be undertaken.