

The Neighborhood Guide to the Official Code of the City of Great Falls

*What are the laws and who do I call
about neighborhood problems?*



The Neighborhood Guide
to the
Official Code of the City of Great Falls

Promoting Better Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the places where we live, shop, play and work. Like our homes and businesses, neighborhoods require care and upkeep.

In its efforts to restore the Original Townsite of Great Falls, NeighborWorks staff found that many residents didn't know the city codes or who to call when there was a problem. NeighborWorks frequently hears complaints about junk cars, trash on lawns, overgrown weeds and a variety of similar problems. These issues were seriously affecting property values and the image of the neighborhood and the complaints often ended with "There ought to be a law."

Indeed, there is a law in place for most chronic neighborhood problems. This guide provides a quick reference for city residents giving an overview of some of the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF). We hope this will help you to better the neighborhoods where you live.

This brochure was developed to provide information on commonly reported problems and who to call to obtain a particular service or receive additional information.

Go to greatfallsmt.net/city_codes for more detail.



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Buildings

VACANT: Unoccupied buildings must be properly secured to prevent unauthorized access.

CONDEMNED: The city may proceed against the owner of a structure that has been deemed unsafe because of damage, deterioration, sanitation, fire hazard and/or public nuisance.

OCCGF Section 8.51 & 15.04

Who do I call?

Community Development:
455-8532



Cats & Dogs

Unless you apply for and receive a multiple animal permit, you are limited to two dogs and two cats over six months of age on one premise.

Animals must be kept enclosed or on a leash.

Accumulation of excrement is prohibited. The animal owner is responsible for removal of feces from others' property and their own.

OCCGF Section 6.8 (Eff. 07/01/07)

Who do I call?

Animal Control: 454-2276

After Hours call Police/Non-emergency: 771-1180

Firewood

Firewood stored outside is required to be stacked, compact and orderly. If the woodpile is less than 6 feet in height, the storage is allowed as close as 3 feet to a property line. Otherwise, the firewood stack must be located 10 feet from a property line.

Uniform Fire Code: Section 1103.3.5.1

Who do I call?

City Fire Department: 727-8070

Garbage & Rubbish

Alleys must be kept free of garbage, weeds, wastes or spilled refuse.

Rubbish, junk materials and unused machinery are not permitted to accumulate on private property.

OCCGF Section 8.32, 8.50 & 8.51

Who do I call?

For Public Property: Public Works: 771-1401

For Private Property: Code Enforcement: 455-8574





Graffiti

Graffiti vandalism must be removed or covered within 72 hours by the owner, tenant or agent. If the graffiti is not removed, the City can remove it and charge the cost to the property owner.

OCCGF Section 8.51

Who do I call?

Code Enforcement: 455-8574

Home Businesses

Home occupations or home businesses are permitted if a member of the family in residence operates them. There may be no outside storage of equipment or materials, and no inconvenience to neighbors by excess traffic, parking or noise. The sale of items that are not produced on the premises is prohibited. Having a home business requires a certificate issued by the City of Great Falls.

OCCGF Section 5.02

Who do I call?

Planning & Community Development: 455-8414



Landscaping & Weeds

Trees & shrubs on private property that extend over any part of a public street or sidewalk must be trimmed so that the branches will not interfere with pedestrians or public travel. All weeds, grass and vegetation must be less than 8 inches tall. If taller than that, the City can remove it and charge the removal cost to the property owner. Untrimmed, dying, dead, or diseased trees, shrubs or plants are also code violations.

City Code Title 17.44, 8.44

Who do I call?

For Tall Grass & Weeds:

Public Works Partner Line: 727-8637 or 771-1401

For Trees & Shrubs:

Park & Recreation / Forestry: 771-1265



Noise

Excessively loud noises are prohibited. This includes sound amplification equipment (speakers), animal noise and construction equipment.



Permissible noise limits depends on the nature and location of the noise, and the time of day.

City Code Title 8.56

Who do I call?

Police (Non-emergency):
771-1180



Property Maintenance

The City's Property Maintenance Ordinance is intended to enforce safe, sanitary and aesthetic conditions on all properties within the city limits.

Some maintenance issues covered in the ordinance include abandoned buildings, boarded-up or destroyed buildings, buildings with peeling paint, improperly maintained landscaping, graffiti (which must be removed or covered within 72 hours) and any other conditions that are offensive to the senses.

OCCGF Section 8.51

Who do I call?

Code Enforcement: 455-8574



Refrigerators

Refrigerators & other similar appliances must be kept inside a secure building.

If used outside for any purpose whatsoever other than storage of perishables, the door, lid or locking device must be removed and a hasp and padlock installed.

OCCGF Section 8.60

Who do I call?

Code Enforcement: 455-8574

Sidewalks

Sidewalks must be kept in good, safe and substantial condition.

Property owners shall see that all sidewalk breaks and unsoundness are repaired.

It is the duty of the owners and tenants to remove ice & snow from sidewalks within 24 hours.

OCCGF Section 12.28 & 12.32

Who do I call?

For Sidewalk Repair:

Public Works/ Engineering:
771-1258

For Snow & Ice Removal:

Police/ Non-Emergency:
771-1180



Vehicles

No abandoned, wrecked, inoperable, or unlicensed vehicles, machinery, trailers or parts are allowed on public property or private property.

A vehicle may not be parked on any boulevard area (unless a permit is obtained.) A boulevard within the city is an area within any street, avenue or highway that isn't occupied by pavement.

OCCGF Section 10.60, 10.61 & 12.04

Who do I call?

For Vehicles on Private Property:

Code Enforcement: 455-8574

For Vehicles Parked on Boulevards:

Public Works: 771-1401

For Vehicles Parked on Streets:

Police/ Non-Emergency: 771-1180



Fair Housing

The City's Fair Housing Specialist, through funding from a Community Development Block grant, assists residents with questions of fair housing. The specialist provides:

- ◆ Education about fair housing to include *Fair Housing Act of 1968 and as Amended in 1988, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and Americans with Disabilities Act.*
- ◆ Education about the *Montana Residential Landlord & Tenant Act of 1977.*
- ◆ Mediation services for tenants and landowners, to reconcile disputes dealing with landlord/tenant relationships.
- ◆ Detailed training & assistance to individuals and community groups.
- ◆ Referral services to city, state & federal agencies.

If you suspect you are being discriminated against in your search for housing, contact the City's Fair Housing Specialist.

Who do I call?

City of Great Falls Fair Housing Specialist
Planning & Community Development:
455-8418

On the web:

Go to greatfallsmt.net and click on *Departments*, then click on *Planning and Community Development*, then find *Fair Housing* under *Community Services*.



Neighborhood & Youth Councils

Great Falls Neighborhood Councils provide a means for the citizens of Great Falls to actively participate in local government through a formal organization working at the neighborhood level. The Neighborhood Councils provide advice and counsel to the City Commission on a variety of neighborhood issues. Community entities also utilize the Neighborhood Councils as sources of community outreach and education.

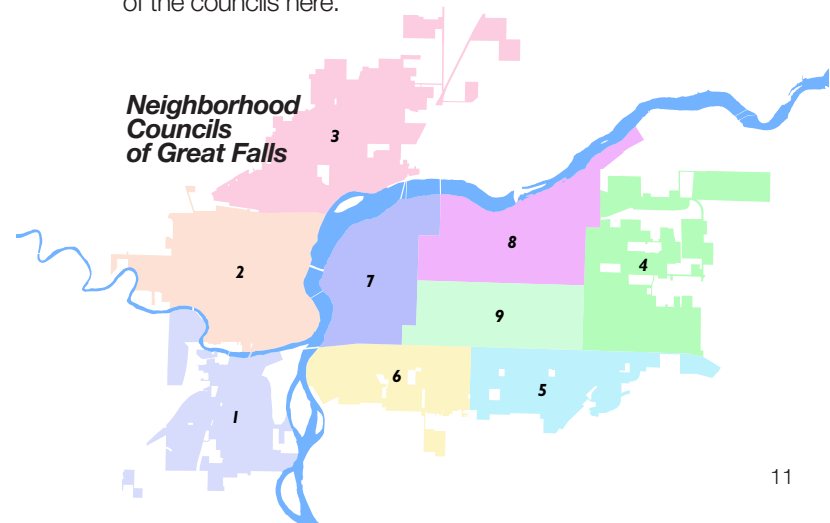
The Youth Council is dedicated to making the voice of the Great Falls Youth heard. Their goals include bettering the community as a whole; making Great Falls safer and more enjoyable; and providing chances for youth to express themselves, become familiar with City government and showcase their contributions. It "serves as a forum for discussion, a catalyst for action, and a center for forward thinking and progressive thought that will harbor positive change for Great Falls youth and empower the young citizens of Great Falls to serve and contribute to the vitality, diversity, and habitability of our city."

Who do I call?

Neighborhood and Youth Council Coordinator
Planning & Community Development: 455-8496

On the web:

Go to greatfallsmt.net and click on *Departments*, then click on *Planning and Community Development*, and find *Neighborhood Councils* under *Community Services*. You can find descriptions and maps of the boundaries of the councils here.





Neighborhood Watch

Cascade County Neighborhood Watch is a group of concerned citizens, in partnership with the Police Department, dedicated to actively seek, educate and involve residents, neighborhoods and communities in crime prevention through the development of crime awareness, observation, skills training and reporting.

Neighborhood Watch remains the most successful crime prevention program in the world. By encouraging Great Falls and Cascade County residents to practice crime prevention techniques and to report crime or suspicious activity to law enforcement, they are taking back control from the criminals. Through the dedicated commitment of the City, the Great Falls Police Department and the concerned citizens of Great Falls and Cascade County, Neighborhood Watch has made a significant impact on neighborhood crime.

Who do I call?

Neighborhood Watch Coordinator: 454-6987

On the web:

cascadecountyneighborhoodwatch.org

Voices of Hope: Crisis Line & Community Referral Services

The Voices of Hope / 211 Directory connects people in need with community services. Their Crisis Line and Community Resource Directory provide information on services available throughout Cascade County. Specially trained advocates are available to provide immediate crisis intervention 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They answer the Crisis Line and provide support and crisis intervention services to all who call, helping people deal with suicide, domestic violence, sexual assault, eating disorders, relationship problems and mental health issues.



Who do I call?

Dial 211 (Available 24/7) **Dial 911 for Emergencies!**

NeighborWorks® Great Falls



Through an active partnership of residents, financial institutions, the business community, and governmental and non-profit agencies, NeighborWorks Great Falls (NWGF) rebuilds historic Great Falls neighborhoods and creates home ownership opportunities for hard-working families.

NWGF is a member of the national NeighborWorks® Network and one of more than 200 community-based organizations nationwide dedicated to creating healthy communities. Led by neighborhood residents, NeighborWorks® organizations work tirelessly to revitalize communities, reclaim abandoned and distressed properties, and promote homeownership. They provide loans for owner rehabilitation projects and emergency loans, as well as foreclosure prevention and homebuyer education.

Who do I call?

Neighborworks Great Falls: 761-5861

On the web:

nwgreatfalls.org

Great Falls Weed & Seed



Weed and Seed is a community revitalization strategy, created by the U.S. Department of Justice, that encourages communities to *weed* out crime in their highest crime neighborhoods and *seed* in much-needed human services, including prevention, intervention, treatment and neighborhood revitalization. Designated in 2007, Great Falls Weed and Seed is the only such site in Montana. The site includes the Lower Northside bounded by First Avenue North, the Missouri River and 38th Street, plus the community of Black Eagle.

The mission of Great Falls Weed and Seed is to create safe, livable and vibrant neighborhoods.

Who do I call?

Site Director, Great Falls Weed & Seed: 216-3526

On the web:

gfweedandseed.org

I Can Be A Good Neighbor If...

I get to know my neighbors, I'm friendly, and introduce myself and my family, including our pets.

I keep the noise down, especially at night, and try not to interrupt the peace of the neighborhood. I let my neighbors know when I am going to have a party, so that if it gets loud, they are not afraid to come and let me know.

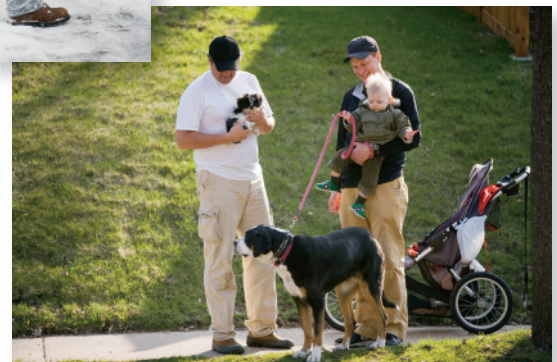
I keep my house and property maintained and clean.

I keep my yard safe by fencing and covering swimming pools, trampolines and anything that could be a hazard to adults and children.

I ensure my address number is readable from the street.

I pick up after my animals in my yard and if they go in a neighbors' yard, I will pick that up.

I watch my neighbors' back. I report suspicious activity to the appropriate agency. I keep my eyes and ears open; I want my neighbors watching my back.



I talk with my neighbors if there is a conflict. I should not spread rumors or gossip.

I look at my place from my neighbors' perspective. How does my place look through their eyes?

I drive slowly when there are children and pets around.

I don't hog the parking on the street. I won't block the sidewalks or driveways.

I keep my sidewalks clear, removing fallen tree limbs, grass and snow as soon as possible.

I recognize that people are different. Diversity is a strength for my community.

I am appreciative of my neighbors. If I like what I see—that new flower garden, holiday decorations—I will let them know.

I truly listen to what my neighbors are saying. We must communicate.



This brochure was produced with the cooperation of Neighborworks Great Falls, Great Falls Weed & Seed, the City of Great Falls, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Great Falls Police Department.

See page 3 for phone numbers. Correspondence may be addressed to: Site Director, Great Falls Weed & Seed, 509 First Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405.

