

FARMINGTON FIRE-RESCUE



"Serving Those in Need"

430 Third St.
Farmington, MN 55024
651-280-6940



Unsafe/Vacant Building Policy

Subject: Identifying and marking of unsafe/Vacant buildings

Statement of Purpose:

The Farmington Fire-Rescue Department recognizes the importance and need of identifying and marking of unsafe/Vacant buildings. Structures or existing equipment that are or hereafter become unsafe or deficient because of inadequate means of egress or which constitute a fire hazard, or are otherwise dangerous to human life or the public welfare, or which involve illegal or improper occupancy or inadequate maintenance, shall be deemed an unsafe condition. A vacant structure, which is not secured against unauthorized entry as required by Section 311 of the Minnesota State Fire Code, shall be deemed unsafe.

Guideline:

During the inspection of premises, a building or structure, or any building system, in whole or in part, constitutes a clear and inimical threat to human life, safety or health, the fire code official shall issue such notice or orders to remove or remedy the conditions as shall be deemed necessary in accordance with this policy.



Required buildings:

- All commercial occupancies.
- All multi-family residential.
- All single-family residential.

Marking of Vacant buildings:

Any vacant or abandoned building/s or structure/s determined to be unsafe relating to structural or interior hazards shall be marked as required.

- Placards shall be applied on the front of the structure and be visible from the street. Additional placards shall be applied to the side of each entrance to the structure.
- Placards shall be 24 inches by 24 inches (610 mm by 610 mm) minimum in size with a red background, white reflective stripes and a white reflective border. The stripes and border shall have a 2-inch (51 mm) minimum stroke.
- Placards shall bear the date of their application to the building and the date of the most recent inspection.
- The design of the placards shall use the following symbols:
 - This symbol shall mean that the structure had normal structural conditions at the time of marking.

-  This symbol shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist and interior fire fighting or rescue operations should be conducted with extreme caution.
-  This symbol shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist to a degree that consideration should be given to limit firefighting to exterior operations only, with entry only occurring for known life hazards.
- The following symbols shall be used to designate known hazards on the vacant building marker. They shall be placed directly above the symbol.
 - 4.1. R/O—Roof open
 - 4.2. S/M—Stairs, steps and landing missing
 - 4.3. F/E—Avoid fire escapes
 - 4.4. H/F—Holes in floor

Safeguarding vacant premises:

Any unoccupied buildings, structures, premises or portions thereof shall be secured and protected.

- Exterior and interior openings accessible to other tenants or unauthorized persons shall be boarded, locked, blocked or otherwise protected to prevent entry by unauthorized individuals. The fire code official is authorized to placard, post signs, erect barrier tape or take similar measures as necessary to secure public safety.
- Fire alarm, sprinkler and standpipe systems shall be maintained in an operable condition at all times.
- Fire-resistance-rated partitions, fire barriers and firewalls separating vacant tenant spaces from the remainder of the building shall be maintained. Openings, joints and penetrations in fire-resistance-rated assemblies shall be protected.
- Persons owning, or in charge or control of, a vacant building or portion thereof, shall remove therefrom all accumulations of combustible materials, flammable or combustible waste or rubbish and shall securely lock or otherwise secure doors, windows, and other openings to prevent entry by unauthorized persons. The premises shall be maintained clear of waste or hazardous material.
- Persons owning or having charge or control of a vacant building containing hazardous materials regulated by MSFC, chapter 50 section 5001.6 shall comply with the facility requirements.

Marking of Unsafe buildings:

Any building/s or structure/s determined to be unsafe relating to structural or interior hazards shall be marked as required.

- City of Farmington Placard shall be applied on the front of the structure/s and be visible from the street. Additional placards shall be applied to the side of each entrance to the structure/s.
- No persons shall occupy any portion inside or around of unsafe building/s or structure/s until a full inspection has been completed by either the Building Code Official/s and/or Fire Inspector/s.
- Exterior and interior openings accessible to unauthorized persons shall be boarded, locked, blocked or otherwise protected to prevent entry by unauthorized individuals. The fire code official is authorized to post signs, erect barrier tape or take similar measures as necessary to secure public safety.

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Exceptions:

Fire protection systems:

- When the premises have been cleared of all combustible materials and debris and, in the opinion of the fire code official, the type of construction, fire separation distance and security of the premises do not create a fire hazard.
- Where **approved** by the fire chief, buildings that will not be heated and where fire protection systems will be exposed to freezing temperatures. Fire alarm and sprinkler systems are permitted to be placed out of service and standpipes are permitted to be maintained as dry systems (without an automatic water supply), provided the building has no contents or storage, and windows, doors and other openings are secured to prohibit entry by unauthorized persons.

Removal of combustibles:

- Buildings or portions of buildings undergoing additions, alterations, repairs or change of occupancy in accordance with the International Building Code, where waste is controlled and removed.
- Seasonally occupied buildings.

Rationale: Minnesota State Fire Code

110.1 If During the inspection of a premises, a building or structure, or any building system, in whole or in part, constitutes a clear and inimical threat to human life, safety or health, the fire code official shall issue such notice or orders to remove or remedy the conditions as shall be deemed necessary in accordance with this section, and shall refer the building to the building department for any repairs, alterations, remodeling, removing or demolition required.
