

## Frequently Asked Questions about Exterior Maintenance

**Q: How does the Exterior Maintenance Code work?**

A: The Chief Building Official / Zoning Administrator, the Exterior Maintenance Officer, Building Inspectors and Housing Inspectors all serve in both inspections and enforcement of the Exterior Maintenance Code. When a property is found to be in violation, one of the above individuals will attempt to make contact with the property owner through in person communication, telephone or letter. The purpose of this contact is both to inform the property owner of the violation and to set a timeframe of repairing the violation. Should the exterior maintenance violation not be repaired, it is possible to issue a criminal citation against the property owner.

**Q: Who is responsible for exterior maintenance?**

A: The owner of the property is responsible for keeping the property in compliance with the Exterior Maintenance Code. However, both the owner and any adult residing on the property are responsible for yard maintenance and clean up.

**Q: When does peeling and flaking paint become a violation?**

A: All exterior surfaces have to be coated with paint or stain to prevent deterioration. Any spot that is bare, peeling, flaking and the like must be painted or stained. This is commonly referred to as a spot repair. However, when 15% or more of any exterior wall or wall segment is bare, peeling, flaking, pitted, corroded, unclean or otherwise deteriorated, the entire wall (both the 15% that is deteriorated and the 85% that is not deteriorated) must be repainted.

**Q: When do I need to repair or replace my roof?**

A: Individual shingles that are loose or missing must be replaced. However, when 25% or more of the shingles are missing or deteriorated, the entire roof (both the 25% that is deteriorated and the 75% that is not deteriorated) must be replaced. In addition, roofs must be kept clear of debris, including moss and mildew. All gutters must be properly attached, kept in good working order and free from rust and corrosion.

**Q: What are the requirements for gutters?**

A: Any structure within the City having gutters and/or downspouts shall have the gutters and downspouts properly mounted to such structure, maintained in good working condition and kept free of exterior rust and corrosion. If a gutter has plants growing in it or is full of leaves, storm water is not able to flow through the gutter to the downspout and as a result the gutter is not in good working order. When the weather turns cold, this storm water trapped in gutters can freeze and cause damage.

Also, during the winter months, ice freezes and thaws along the roofline and often times heavy ice jams rest on top of gutters. If gutters are not securely mounted to your home, these ice jams can cause gutters to pull away from the home and/or fall to the ground.

For minor gutter repairs no permit is necessary, but if you are replacing a gutter in its entirety, a building permit is necessary.

**Q: How high can grass get before I need to cut it?**

A: City code requires that grass and weeds be kept to a height of 6 inches or less. When grass and weeds have grown higher than 6 inches, the City Service Department is permitted to cut the grass and weeds at the property owner's expense.

**Q: May I store trash and debris in my yard?**

A: No. All exterior yard areas must be kept free of debris, trash, broken glass, stumps, dilapidated auto parts and similar items.

**Q: What materials can be used to construct a driveway?**

A: Driveways and parking areas may be constructed of concrete, asphalt or other suitable smooth, hard-surfaced material.

**Q: Are gravel driveways legal?**

A: Gravel is not a permitted substance for any new driveway or parking area. Gravel driveways and parking areas built prior to 1997 are permitted to remain.

**Q: Are there any restrictions on the width of a driveway?**

A: Any driveway or parking area that extends beyond the width the garage must be approved by the Berea Municipal Planning Commission.

**Q: Is a building permit required to install a driveway or a parking area?**

A: Yes. Before a driveway or parking area may be installed, a building permit must be obtained from the City Building Department. A pre-pour inspection is required once the forms are in place and before any concrete or asphalt is poured. A final inspection is required after the driveway or parking area has been completed.

**Q: What are the requirements for storage of firewood or wood piles?**

A: All wood that is stored outside must be put into stacks that are: not closer than 5 feet from any property line; not closer than 3 feet from the main structure; not higher than 5 feet in height; not stored in front of the front building line; and elevated at least 9 inches off of the ground, unless stored on a hard surface.

**Q: When should garbage cans be placed on the tree lawn for pick up?**

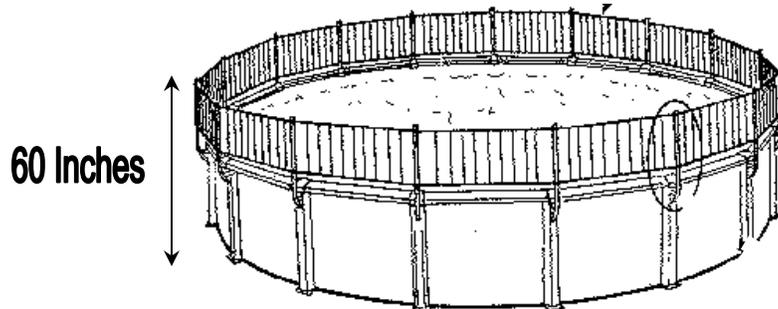
A: Garbage cans and waste receptacles are not to be put out for collection before 4:30 p.m. on the day before the collection day. All garbage cans and waste receptacles must be removed from the tree lawn or collection area within 24 hours after collection. In addition, garbage cans and waste receptacles are not to be stored in front of the front building line.

**Q: Are there requirements for swimming pools?**

A: You will need to obtain a Building Permit before installing a swimming pool. You may also need a Residential Electrical Permit as well. Please check the Building Department to determine which permits are necessary. Permit applications are available online or at City Hall.

Swimming pools are only permitted in the rear yard and must be positioned at least 10 feet from any property line.

In order to prevent children from entering unsupervised swimming pools, all swimming pools must be enclosed by a fence or wall, of sturdy construction, that is at least 60 inches in height. The three most common methods of meeting this requirement are to install a fence or wall in the yard area immediately adjacent to the swimming pool; to install a fence or wall around the entire yard in which the swimming pool is located; or to install a fence or wall to the top of an above ground pool, see diagram below. Each gate, which is a part of the wall or fence, must be constructed so to automatically close to a locked position. Please note that fences require a building permit.



When covering a pool at the end of the season, the pool cover must be constructed so as to prevent standing water from collecting on the surface of the cover, see picture below.



In recent years, many local discount stores have started selling portable or inflatable swimming pools. The above regulations do apply to these portable or inflatable swimming pools, if the swimming pool is either more than 24 inches high or capable of containing more than 100 cubic feet of water. If you have any questions about whether these regulations apply to a particular portable or inflatable swimming pool, please contact the Building Department at 440-826-5812 prior to installing or purchasing the swimming pool.

**Q: Where am I not allowed to park my motor vehicle?**

A: Among other parking requirements, motor vehicles cannot be parked on a lawn, tree lawn, over a sidewalk, within 10 feet of a fire hydrant, within 30 feet of a stop sign or a traffic signal or on a cul-de-sac. Vehicles are not permitted to be parked on any City street from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. Likewise, abandoned vehicles and vehicles without a current license may only be stored in a garage or accessory building. An abandoned vehicle is a vehicle that is dismantled or inoperative.

**Q: What items do I need to prevent from becoming damaged or dilapidated?**

A: The following is a list of exterior items that must be replaced or repaired when damaged or dilapidated:

|                |             |          |        |
|----------------|-------------|----------|--------|
| Barns          | Fences      | Railings |        |
| Chimneys       | Floors      | Roofs    |        |
| Decks          | Foundations | Sheds    |        |
| Doors          | Garages     | Steps    |        |
| Driveways      | Gutters     | Window   | Frames |
| Exterior Walls | Porches     | Windows  |        |

Please note this is a partial list of the most common items. Specific questions should be referred to the Exterior Maintenance Department at 440-826-5802.

**Q: What happens if my property is in violation?**

A: It is the City's intent to work with residents to bring all properties into compliance with these Codes. Nevertheless, violations of the above sections are criminal violations which could result in criminal penalties for the offender.