

Guide to Neighborhood Services

March 1, 2001



Building and Neighborhood Services
City of Concord
1950 Parkside Drive
Concord, CA 94519

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Welcome from Neighborhood Preservation

March 1, 2001

Citizens of Concord:

Welcome to the City of Concord's first edition of the Guide to Neighborhood Services. As a manager for the City of Concord I take great pride in providing this information to you, the citizen. "Our mission is to join with our community to make Concord a city of the highest quality." We can only accomplish this together, as partners, if you become well informed about the community and the services available. Armed with information, you, the citizen can assess the options you have to partner with the City to make this community the best that it can be.

Within these pages you will find many topics that you can access to improve the quality of your own neighborhood, and assess how your neighborhood is doing. The guide covers services from various City Departments that serve the neighborhoods of Concord. We have supplied a community services telephone directory at the end to help you get more information on a variety of topics beyond the scope of this guide. This Guide is one step in Community Oriented Government. Please read our Mission, Vision, and Values to better understand how we feel about our commitment to Concord.

As an informed citizen we hope that you will communicate your expectations for Concord to us as well. As the Neighborhood Services Manager, I welcome input you may have that can improve our services to you. If you have ideas, comments or want further information on forming a Neighborhood Partnership with the City of Concord, please call me at (925) 671-3075.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Em Marlene Rojas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "E".

Em Marlene Rojas
Neighborhood Services Manager

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission Statement

Our mission is to join with our community to make Concord a city of the highest quality. We will achieve this mission by providing responsive, cost effective and innovative local government services.

Our Vision for the Future

We will be a customer based, performance driven, results oriented organization, focused on finding the answer, solving the problem, and achieving positive outcomes. To ensure that vision we will:

- partner with the Concord community to maximize resources, deliver high quality services, and be recognized as setting the standard for excellence.
- be trustworthy guardians of the public's resources.
- make Concord a premier business location.
- collaborate to provide "seamless" services that benefit both our external and internal customers, streamlining our work processes and removing barriers wherever they arise.
- accept the challenge of change and be committed to continually enhancing the safety, environment, quality of life, and economic vitality of our community.
- constantly look for new and better ways to deliver services. We will seek to be innovative, take reasonable risks, learn from our mistakes and always strive for excellence.
- welcome diversity in our community and our work place.
- conduct our work in an atmosphere of trust, respect and courtesy with open doors and open communication for our customers and each other.
- provide ethical, dynamic and effective leadership, establish clear direction and priorities, and model the mission and values in support of our common Vision.
- be accountable for our performance and our organization's success, and be recognized for our achievements.

Organizational Values

Integrity and Trust

We say what we mean and mean what we say. We honor our word and keep our commitments. We are worthy of the public's and each other's trust.

Commitment to Service

We put our customers first. We respond to our internal customers and treat them with the same courtesy and respect as our external customers. We facilitate, enable, and problem-solve.

Partnerships

We place a high value on building partnerships with members of our community to assure we understand their needs and continue to deliver the services they desire in the most effective manner possible.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

We strive for excellence in the quality and productivity of our work. We create a work environment in which we look for new solutions and experiment with innovative ways to do things-even if they

don't always work the first time. We recognize the need to be dynamic in meeting the community's changing needs. Each and every employee is given the opportunity to develop and grow.

Performance Accountability

We set measurable performance goals which support the priorities of the City and our individual work groups. We are given the necessary authority, training and resources to enable us to achieve these goals. Performance reviews are conducted in a timely and effective manner. Employee advancement and other incentives are based on performance. We are proud of the professionalism, competency and dedication that exist throughout the organization.

Long Range Planning

We conduct long range strategic and financial planning to maximize service delivery and build the economic stability of the City. We practice sound fiscal management to protect the public's resources.

Team Work

We respect each other as individuals, and we take the time and effort to show it. Although certain positions have more decision-making authority, we treat all members of the organization with the same consideration for their ideas and concerns. We really listen to, and give each other honest feedback. We recognize partnerships among work groups and employees as essential to effectively maximizing resources and delivering high quality services.

Individual Worth and Diversity

We recognize and appreciate the uniqueness of each individual. We value the contribution made and the synergy created by different experiences and perspectives. We are committed to treating each and every person within the organization and the larger community with respect and dignity.

Neighborhood Partnership Program

Helps Neighborhoods Organize

The Neighborhood Partnership Program is an effort by the City to help organize self sustaining neighborhood associations in various neighborhoods. Neighborhood associations can help marshal the resources of neighborhood and, combined with city resources, improve and stabilize the neighborhood. Partnerships have been successfully put together in single family neighborhoods and with apartment owners and residents in multiple family areas. The goals of the program are to:

- improve and stabilize the character of the neighborhood,
- improve the condition of the housing stock in the neighborhood,
- improve the delivery of municipal services, and
- build a strong sense of community in the neighborhood.

An intent of the Partnership Program is to teach and promote community building in partnership with the City. The associations conduct community building activities in their neighborhood to improve civic awareness and community identity and to take positive action to improve and protect existing housing stock.

Since the program began in 1995 program neighborhoods have worked with the City to accomplish a number of improvements, including:

- Neighborhood cleanups
- Neighborhood street fairs, holiday pot lucks, Easter egg hunts, and many other social events
- Over 20 houses repaired under the Christmas in April program
- Park improvements such as trails, fencing and landscaping
- A traffic signal at Sunshine & Meadow Lane
- Sidewalk repair project, including new sidewalk along Meadow Lane
- Directed Housing rehabilitation loans and grants that fixed up dozens of homes
- Reduced crime and improved communications with the Police Department
- Started Neighborhood Watch programs in several neighborhoods
- Improved street lighting in neighborhoods
- Street tree replacement assistance planted over 70 trees
- Proactive code enforcement cleaned up over 300 properties

The Neighborhood Preservation Division facilitates the Neighborhood Partnership Program by working with the community, offering a variety of tips and techniques to assist neighborhoods in becoming organized, informed and involved. To find out whether you are currently located in an organized neighborhood association or to learn how to organize a neighborhood association for your neighborhood, please call Neighborhood Preservation, (925) 671-3454.

Managing Nuisances

Neighborhood Problem Solving

The loud music next door is keeping you up all night. A neighbor parks a car across the sidewalk so your child has to walk on the lawn or in the street. The people across the street park their old car on the front lawn.

All these are typical problems that can create a nuisance, and make it difficult to enjoy your neighborhood. Before you do something rash, or resign yourself to living within such problems, consider this 6-step approach to neighborhood problem solving.

Step 1. Talk to the Neighbor

Try to resolve any differences by talking with the neighbor calmly and in person. Your neighbors might not even know they are causing a problem. Most people don't intend to cause a problem and they may be the last to know that they have.

If you can help solve the problem, offer your assistance. If the yard hasn't been picked up because the neighbor is elderly or has been hurt, offer to help with the work, or offer to help find someone else who can.

If you feel uncomfortable talking to your neighbor, ask a friend to accompany you. A cooperative, friendly approach can resolve most neighborhood problems and may gain you new perspectives and a new friend.

Step 2. Research Your Case

If talking to your neighbor does not solve the problem, do some research into the issue. The problem could simply reflect cultural differences of which you may not be aware. While this may not make the matter go away, you will be more sensitive to the cause of the situation, and more understanding of your neighbor. Usually a little information can make us more tolerant. Sometimes whatever is annoying us is against the law. In Concord, the Municipal Code is designed to protect the peace and safety of the community. Problems such as junk cars, parking on the lawn, accumulating trash and debris are all violations of the Municipal Code. Knowledge of the law, as it pertains to your neighbor dispute, can help you deal with an uncooperative neighbor. The City has a handy booklet about codes that apply to residential areas. Call (925) 671-3454 for a copy of The Citizen's Guide To Residential Ordinances.

Step 3. Make Your Request to Your Neighbor in Writing

If the problem persists, make your request to your neighbor in writing. If you learned through your research that the matter is a violation of the Municipal Code, mention that in your letter. The letter should carefully state the situation and possible actions to correct the problem. If it is a recurring problem, you may wish to keep a log of the occurrences.

Step 4. Contact your Neighborhood Association

Your neighborhood or home owner's association is interested in preserving the peace and quality of your neighborhood. It is likely that they will share your concern about your neighbor. Talk with the directors of the association and attempt to enlist their help in mediating the problem. Often an offending neighbor will correct a problem once they realize it bothers the whole neighborhood, not just one neighbor.

If your neighborhood does not have an association, you may want to work with your neighbors to form one. The City of Concord's Neighborhood Preservation Division can provide you with information on organizing your neighbors. You can contact the Neighborhood Preservation Division at (925) 671-3454.

Step 5. Try Outside Mediation

If your neighborhood does not have an association, or if the problem persists, a neutral third party may be able to help. In Concord you may consider contacting the Contra Costa Conflict Resolution Panel at (925) 798-6132 or the City's Human Relations Commission at (925) 671-3374, to seek a solution to the dispute with your neighbor.

Step 6. Call Neighborhood Preservation

If the problem worsens or cannot be resolved any other way, you may have to contact the City and ask for help. One responsibility of the Neighborhood Preservation Division is to assist people with neighborhood problems that involve violations of the Municipal Code. If the Municipal Code is not involved, Neighborhood Preservation staff may be able to facilitate a solution or they can direct you to the appropriate agency to handle your complaint.

For More Information

Neighborhood problems are best solved in the neighborhood by neighborhood residents. But that is not always possible or practical. You can always feel free to call Neighborhood Preservation for help. We have a 24-hour complaint line for your calls. Just call (925) 671-3454 and we will help. If you leave your name, phone number and address we can send you status reports regarding our progress on your complaints, but we will always take your anonymous complaint as well.

Neighborhood Preservation Code Compliance

Procedure

The City of Concord has in place a procedure for the code compliance program. The process is usually a response to complaints or through our own proactive efforts. We attempt to achieve voluntary compliance through education and hope that it is unnecessary to rely on punitive measures. The compliance process begins with a Courtesy Notice to let people know there is a Neighborhood Preservation or Building code problem on their property. Frequently, the matter is taken care of and the Courtesy Notice is all that is necessary. However, if no progress is made toward code compliance, a second letter is sent. If progress is being made we will generally grant a reasonable extension. Therefore, the time frames shown below are approximate. We are

required by law to give everyone due process (notice and a chance to respond), and we want to encourage cooperation and voluntary action. This means that it can take several weeks to resolve a problem. If efforts to obtain voluntary compliance fail, the City will take forceful action, either legal action (typical on a Building Code violation) or through an abatement action (typical on a Neighborhood Preservation Code violation). Through the court process the City seeks an order for the violation to be corrected. Abatement is an administrative procedure and is described below.

The schedule below outlines approximate time frames for the process.

Day	The Process	Our Actions
0	Receive Complaint	Information on the complaint is noted into our computer system and a neighborhood preservation specialist is assigned the case.
1	Inspect Property	The property is inspected. If the complaint is confirmed and a violation exists, a Courtesy Notice is hung on the door giving them five days to correct the violation. If there is no violation, the complainant is notified accordingly. The first inspection is typically made within two business days of receipt of a complaint.
6	Inspect and Close or,	The property is re-inspected after 5 days. The case file is closed if the problem has been corrected. If the problem is not corrected a violation notice is sent.
6	Send Notice of Violation	A Notice of Violation is sent to the owner and resident informing them that the problem is a violation of the Concord Municipal Code and ordering it to be corrected. The letter spells out the consequences of the failure to correct the problem such as administrative citation, abatement or court action, and emphasizes the costs of either approach.
15	Inspect and Close or,	The property is re-inspected after 7 days. The case is closed if the problem has been corrected. If the problem is still not corrected, the City determines what type of further enforcement action would be most appropriate to gain compliance.
15	Send Abatement Letter	For an abatement action, a letter is sent to the owner and resident informing them that the property is considered a public nuisance. They are given 5 days to request a hearing before the City Hearings Officer. The letter also states that, if they do not request a hearing the City will declare the property a public nuisance and abate the nuisance (clean up the property) after 10 days.
15	Issue Administrative Cite and /or abatement	The neighborhood preservation specialist and the neighborhood services supervisor determines what type of enforcement action would be the most appropriate to gain compliance. If an administrative citation is issued the fine will be \$100 for the first citation, \$200 for the second citation and \$500 for the 3 rd citation. Cases involving citations will be reviewed every 5 days or sooner for compliance. An abatement order can also be requested from the City Attorney's Office.
25	Hearing on Abatement	A hearing is held if requested by the property owner or resident. The hearing officer may grant an extension, may order abatement, or dismiss the case if appropriate. If there is not a request for a hearing, the

Day	The Process	Our Actions
		Hearings Officer issues an abatement order. If abatement is ordered, the City will hire a contractor to clean up the problem and bill the property owner for the expense, including administrative fees. If the owner does not pay, the City Council will place a tax lien on the property equal to the cost of abatement plus administrative and re-inspection charges. In some circumstances, where abatement of the problem is not the most expeditious or appropriate approach, the City will refer the matter to court for a misdemeanor infraction and a fine.

Public Nuisance Ordinance

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The City of Concord Neighborhood Services staff has a new weapon in the war against public nuisances. In April, 2000, the City Council adopted a Public Nuisance Ordinance which has become a part of the municipal code. The list of public nuisances includes 34 items. A public nuisance can be a junked car, a building in disrepair, a dead or diseased tree, a stagnant swimming pool or any of a number of other conditions.

One important feature of the new ordinance is an Administrative Citation, which is similar to a parking ticket. Citations will be issued in cases where a property owner has failed to voluntarily take care of or abate a public nuisance. Because the citations do not involve the judicial system, they are more efficient and effective than bringing the matter to court. The fine for first time offenses is \$100, second offense is \$200 and subsequent offenses are \$500.

Checking the Status of a Complaint

If you have made a complaint to Neighborhood Preservation and want to check the status of the case you can call our office at (925) 671-3454. Our secretary will put you in touch with the Neighborhood Preservation Specialist working on the case. If you know which Specialist has your case you may also call that person directly for a status report.

Debris, Trash & Litter - Promoting A Healthy Community

Accumulations of trash and litter on a property or throughout a neighborhood detract from its appearance and can create serious health and safety hazards for the residents of the community. Litter attracts flies, rats and other pests. Uncontained litter and trash, scattered through the neighborhood by the wind or animals, is a potential fire hazard which can threaten people, property and lives.

The visual blight created by litter affects the way people perceive their neighborhood. It can be an invitation to vandalism and crime when a property appears unmaintained. This unsightly

condition negatively affects property values and the willingness of property owners to invest in maintenance and improvement projects.

You can help by making sure all trash and litter is picked up and placed in containers with tight-fitting lids. The City requires that all trash containers when filled should not weigh more than 75 pounds. By placing your trash in proper containers you help reduce the number of insects and rodents in the area. Good containers also reduce the amount of litter in the neighborhood and helps keep Concord looking great.

Composting

Compost piles can provide an inexpensive source of organic soil amendments. Combining leaves, grass clippings, plant matter and vegetable waste from the kitchen can make a good compost pile if maintained properly.

There are commercial containers available designed for creating compost, or a container can be made from slatted materials or mesh wire. You may want to visit the library or a bookstore to obtain detailed information on how to construct a container. The City of Concord offers home composting classes every spring and fall. The two-hour workshop provides hands-on instruction on how to produce successful backyard and worm compost. Free booklets are provided for attending the class. The City subsidizes the purchase of the biostack composting bins making them more affordable at \$55 (retail price is \$99). Call (925) 671-3394 for class schedule and registration.

How Long It Takes To Disintegrate

Paper	2-4 weeks
Cotton Rag.....	1-5 months
Degradable Polyethylene Bag.....	2-3 months
Unpainted Wooden Stake.....	1-4 years
Railroad Cross Tie.....	30 years
Tin or Steel Can.....	100 years
Aluminum Cans.....	200-500 years
Plastic Six-Pack Holder.....	450 years
Glass Bottle	Unknown

Compiled by the Mansfield-Richland County, Ohio Litter Control Program.

Off the Wall Anti-Graffiti Program

Graffiti is a blighting influence on our entire City. The cost of removing unwanted and unauthorized vandalism results in a significant outlay of public funds. The City of Concord operates the Anti-Graffiti Program to assist property owners in discouraging and removing graffiti vandalism on private property.

The City cannot be effective acting alone. Private citizens are encouraged to take active steps toward maintaining their individual property, and organizing neighborhood clean-up efforts.

What is the "Anti-Graffiti Program"?

It is a program designed to discourage and remove graffiti within the City of Concord.

Who participates in this program?

The City works with the community's assistance.

Who is responsible for removing the graffiti?

Any person owning, leasing, occupying, or having permission to maintain property in Concord.

Why should I remove the graffiti? I did not put the graffiti there.

Permitting or allowing graffiti to remain on your property is a public nuisance. Graffiti not only makes our residential neighborhoods and our business communities look unattractive, it affects our property values, business sales, and the community's image. It will take the awareness, support, and participation of all to combat the increasing problem of graffiti.

How can I assist in the clean up of the City?

Call the Concord Graffiti Hotline at (925) 671-3080 to report graffiti within Concord city limits. Always give address/location of the graffiti, business and/or property owner's name, and your name and telephone number so that City personnel can contact you if further information is needed.

What happens after graffiti is reported?

City workers will contact and inform property owners, in person, of our Anti-Graffiti Program by handing out packets containing this brochure, an informational letter, and a Graffiti Waiver form. In order for City workers to perform graffiti removal on private property under this program, it is necessary that the property owner sign the waiver form. If the property owner elects to perform the graffiti removal and has not done so within a reasonable period of time, a letter of notification will be sent to the property owner requesting the graffiti be removed within 10 days.

How can I keep Concord graffiti free?

- Remove graffiti from your property immediately.
- Plant shrubs or vines in areas that have graffiti problems.
- Report graffiti offenders to the Concord Police Department at 671-3333. Graffiti vandalism is a misdemeanor offense. If apprehended, violators will be prosecuted.
- Report graffiti to appropriate agencies.

Is graffiti a Municipal Code Violation and against the Law?

Yes.

- The City of Concord Municipal Code Section 3122 prohibits any graffiti from remaining on any building, wall, fence, or structure.
- Graffiti vandalism is a criminal offense punishable by fines and imprisonment for any person committing the act of graffiti by defacing private property.
- Penal Code Sec. 594.1.(1) "It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation, except a parent or legal guardian, to sell or give or in any way furnish to another person, who is in fact

under the age of 18 years, any aerosol container of paint that is capable of defacing property."

- Penal Code Sec. 594.1.(b) "It shall be unlawful for any person under the age of 18 years to purchase an aerosol container of paint that is capable of defacing property."

The City is actively involved in:

Educational Programs

Working with Concord Police and local schools to educate children about their community
Joining together with students in the fight against graffiti

Enforcement of

- The City of Concord Municipal Code Section 3122.
- Penal Code Sec. 594 - Vandalism

Removal of Graffiti

- Performed by Maintenance Services Department's Graffiti Eradication Crew
- Graffiti Hotline - (925) 671-3080

Vehicles & Streets - Doing Your Part

When vehicles are parked properly everyone benefits. Parking regulations are designed to promote safety and enhance the appearance of the community. Due to the increasing number of vehicles, the location and manner in which vehicles are parked or stored on the street and on private property has become a primary concern to the community.

Vehicles parked on the street cannot be left in one location for more than 120 consecutive hours (5 days).

These hours are established to allow a reasonable amount of time for parking while discouraging people from storing their vehicles outside or on the public streets.

Inoperable vehicles parked on private property cannot be left for longer than 72 consecutive hours.

After 72 hours the vehicle must be stored in an enclosed building or repaired. These requirements apply to all zoning districts throughout the City.

Vehicles left on the public streets also hinder street cleaning operations. When cars block the street, the street sweeper is not able to clean the street properly. Debris and dirt accumulate near the curb, which is unsightly and creates pools of water and debris.

When people use their lawns for parking, dirt is carried on to the street which accumulates and which eventually has to be scraped off the street.

This increases the cost to taxpayers, as City crews have to make special stops to remove the compacted dirt and mud the sweeper is unable to remove. For this reason vehicles, including

trailers and boats, are required to be parked on a paved surface to reduce these problems. Every effort should be made to park in the garage or driveway. Parking on a permanent, paved surface as required helps prevent oil and fluids from seeping into the ground and creating potential environmental concerns. It also helps by keeping the street free of dirt and grass. Some people may find it necessary to increase the amount of pavement in their front yard to accommodate more vehicles. This is allowed without obtaining a permit as long as not more than 50% of the required front yard is paved, including the driveway. The 50% restriction helps prevent our neighborhoods from becoming a sea of concrete by preserving landscape areas.

Inoperable and/or unlicensed vehicles must be kept in an enclosed building such as a garage.

Any major vehicle repairs, which would make a vehicle inoperable for more than 24 hours, must also be conducted in an enclosed building. This helps prevent the accumulation of junk vehicles and parts that detract from the appearance and quality of the community. The presence of these unsightly vehicles in many instances affects property values in the neighborhood. They become an attractive nuisance for children and an invitation to thieves looking for car parts.

You can help by making sure you park appropriately and consider the effect your vehicles and their location has on your neighbors and the community. Safe and attractive neighborhoods require everyone's participation and help.

Weeds - Why They Are a Hazard

Negative Effects

Weeds detract from a neighborhood and are the source of a number of problems.

- They pose a fire hazard, which not only threatens your property but your lives as well. In the past year alone over one third of the fires reported in the City were outdoor fires, most of which involved weeds.
- Weeds also provide a breeding ground and home for insects, rats and other rodents. The proliferation of these pests can create a serious health hazard for you and your family.
- Land values are also affected by the presence of weeds. They detract from the appearance of the property, reducing the value of the property, which in turn affects the values of the other properties in the neighborhood.
- A safe, healthy, attractive community can be maintained and improved by making sure the growth of weeds is checked and they are removed on a regular basis. Well-maintained landscapes enrich the character of your home and neighborhood.

Eliminating and Controlling Weeds

There are a variety of methods available for controlling weeds. For large areas, rototilling or disking are effective means of eliminating weeds. This also adds nutrients to the soil as the weeds decay.

Weeds can be destroyed by a variety of commercially available chemicals.

This is probably the least desirable means due to the potential health problems, which can occur when you come in contact with these materials. There is also the possibility of affecting the water supply and damaging plants, so extreme care should be taken if chemicals are to be used. Consulting a lawn care company or nursery is suggested to help in selecting the appropriate chemicals to be used. Any excess or unused chemicals should be disposed of properly. For information on the proper disposal of these chemicals call the household hazardous waste hot line at (800) 646-1431.

An effective method for controlling weeds and increasing the look and value of your property at the same time is by landscaping.

Planting ground covers and a variety of plants close together helps shade out weeds. Most mulches also retard weed growth. Landscaping can also be an inexpensive solution to protecting your home from fire, rain, sun and wind. With the periodic drought problems in California, planting drought-resistant vegetation reduces the amount of water and maintenance required, while creating an attractive yard. A good source of information on native, drought-resistant plants is your local nursery or landscaping company.

Weeds in small areas can be contained by picking them by hand or by using a variety of hand tools such as scuffle hoes, garden hoes, and cultivator forks.

These tools can be utilized to remove the weeds while protecting the root systems of the surrounding plants. Weeds are easiest to eliminate when they are young and small because their root systems have not developed fully and they can be pulled from the ground more easily.

Reducing the Rat Population

There are a few things you can do to reduce the rat population and protect your home. Make sure all the screens on your roof vents are in place and in good repair. Seal all holes that are one-half inch or larger in diameter. Gather all fruit and nuts which have fallen from the trees and remove any pet food from the yard area. Trim any trees, ivy and trellises that may come into contact with the roof. Containers which catch water should also be removed.

Algerian Ivy and Star Jasmine are perfect homes for rats. They provide plenty of shelter for rodents and snails. The stems of the plant are an excellent food source. Planting alternative ground covers can help contain the rat problem by reducing their food supply.

Maintaining Your Property in Great Condition

How Is My Property Doing?

The following checklist is designed to help you evaluate your own property for potential health, safety, and maintenance conditions you may have overlooked. Well-maintained properties and neighborhoods increase the value of your property and make your neighborhood a special place to live.

Exterior

Where to Look	What to Look For
Yard Areas	Weeds; holes in the ground; standing water; junk, furniture, appliances, or debris; vegetation or fences which obstruct vision or sidewalks; dead trees or bushes; vehicles parked on unpaved surfaces; animal feces
Fences and Gates	Sagging leaning damaged or missing wood members; missing hinges and latches; condition of paint or stain
Landscaping	Bare spots; dead or missing plants; needs weeding, pruning, or watering; maintained
Garbage Cans	Stored out of public view except for the day of and the day before curbside collection. Containers in good condition with tight-fitting lids
Lighting and Irrigation	Adequate and in good working order
Driveway	Cracking cement; damaged asphalt; potholes
Vehicles	Inoperable vehicles or parts visible to neighbors; parked on unpaved surfaces
Fruit Trees and Gardens	Fruit and vegetables allowed to rot on trees or ground
Swimming Pool	Fences around pool in good repair with gates; pool properly maintained; equipment baffled to reduce noise
Roof and Gutters	Leaks, missing shingles; holes; gutters filled with leaves or growth
Foundations and Vents	Crumbling or cracks; termite damage; missing screens and covers
Porch and Steps	Broken, cracked, missing
Siding	
Windows	Broken or missing; torn screens

Interior

Where to Look	What to Look For
Basement / Under House	Damaged/leaking pipes; frayed wiring; trash, debris; combustibles; evidence of insect or rodent infestation
Interior of House	Cracked walls, holes; electrical, plumbing and heating systems in good working order
Security Bars	Must have inside quick release at bedroom windows. A building permit is required for installation of all security bars.
Garage / Garage Door	Broken windows; missing or torn screens; faulty springs; missing handles; missing or broken locking devices

Home Repair - Why Rehabilitate and Reinvest?

Home repairs and improvements can make your property safer, more liveable and attractive, and possibly increase its value. Even if your home was in perfect condition when purchased, sooner or later many items will need to be repaired or replaced. There are hundreds of mechanisms, from doorknobs to water heaters, in the average house. With regular care and maintenance their useful life can be extended, and they usually will operate more efficiently. If you wait until an item is broken, the results can be worse and more costly to repair.

Generally, home maintenance and improvements increase the family's enjoyment of the home. Larger and more involved improvements such as; new doors and windows, remodeled bathrooms, and updated kitchens can increase the family's enjoyment as well as increase the market value of the house. Keep in mind that not all improvements will pay for themselves. Also, when remodeling you should remodel up to the neighborhood standard but not beyond it; the most expensive house in the area is the hardest to sell.

No matter who does the repairs or improvements, the proper approvals and permits should be obtained prior to any construction. This will properly document the improvements and helps prevent the installation of illegal or unsafe structures or improvements that might not meet the building, zoning or other regulations of the City.

The City has several programs available to assist qualified property owners with repairs to their homes. These programs are indicative of the City's commitment toward investing in and preserving quality neighborhoods. By utilizing low interest loans, qualified owners can repair and preserve the appearance and living conditions of their properties.

Home Repair Programs and Loans Available through the City

Conventional Home Repair Loans

Low interest and no interest rate loans and, in certain cases, deferred payment loans, are available to qualified Concord property owners to correct code deficiencies and make necessary home repairs.

Income Limits

The annual family income must be less than:

Persons in Family	Income Limits
1	\$47,300
2	\$54,100
3	\$60,850
4	\$67,600
5	\$73,000
6	\$78,400

In addition to annual income, household assets must not exceed \$20,000 for a single homeowner or \$30,000 for a household of 2 or more. Assets are defined as: savings accounts, time certificates of deposit, equity in stocks or bonds, real property, or any other capital investments. Assets exclude your principal residence and other personal effects such as furniture, appliances and automobiles.

Adjustments to Income

You may deduct the following from your gross annual income:

- \$480 for each dependent 18 years of age or younger, a full-time student or a handicapped person
- Child care expenses for working parents in certain cases
- Medical expenses that exceed 7 ½ % of gross annual income
- \$400 for a family with a member over the age of 60

Borrower Eligibility

- Occupant must be the owner of record, and have owned the property for at least one year.
- Property equity and all existing liens will be evaluated to determine if the property can be used as security for the loan.
- To be considered for a deferred payment loan, an applicant must be determined by the City to be ineligible for an installment payment loan.

City Services and Assistance

Within this program City housing staff are available for assistance with determining eligible work items, writing project specifications, collecting bids from contractors, executing City-provided contracts and documents, project supervision, payment coordination and other assistance to help assure proper completion of your project.

Loan Terms

- The interest rate is fixed at below market rate.
- The maximum loan is generally \$30,000.
- The maximum loan term is 15 years. In some cases, for senior citizens, the terms can be until sale or transfer, or the owner no longer occupies the property.
- Title and recording fees may range from \$375 to \$450. These fees can be included as part of the loan.
- Loans are due in full if the property is sold, refinanced, no longer owner-occupied or transferred to another owner.
- Generally, there is no pre-payment penalty.
- Additional restrictions may apply.

Security Required for Loan

Loans will be secured by a First, Second, or in some cases a Third Deed of Trust on the property. All existing liens will be evaluated to determine if the property can be used as security for the loan.

Insurance and Property Taxes

Fire insurance in an amount to cover all property debt must be maintained over the term of the loan. Flood Insurance will be required if the property is located in an identified flood hazard zone. Property taxes for the property must be maintained over the term of the loan.

Eligible Improvements and Expenditures

- Attic insulation is recommended to a minimum standard of R-38
- Repairs/improvements to structural, plumbing, electrical, heating and mechanical systems
- Painting (exterior and interior)
- Improvements to building security
- Termite damage repair
- Curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and drainage improvements
- Repairs or replacement of roofing and fencing
- Abatement of septic tanks
- Improvements and modifications to the residence for physically disabled persons
- Removal of blighting conditions on property
- Architectural, engineering, survey, termite inspection, or drafting services in conjunction with eligible improvements
- Building permits fees and title fees
- General improvements with City approval (not to exceed 40% of loan amount) with emphasis on exterior work which will improve the overall neighborhood appearance
- Other restrictions may apply

Ineligible Expenditures

- Additions to existing structure (except when severe overcrowding is determined, or for handicap modifications)
- Materials, fixtures, or landscaping that substantially exceed the quality of the surrounding properties
- Purchase or repair of furnishings
- Air conditioning equipment (except when there is existing equipment)
- Purchase of land/real property
- Refinancing any existing property debts
- Construction/repair of swimming pools, hot tubs or decks
- General improvements exceeding 40% of the loan amount
- Repair work covered by insurance or warranty programs
- Other restrictions may apply.

For more information and an application please call (925) 671-3364.

Mobilehome Repair Loans

Low interest and no interest rate loans and, in certain cases, deferred payment loans, are available to qualified Concord property owners to correct code deficiencies and make necessary home repairs.

Income Limits

The annual family income must be less than:

Persons in Family	Income Limits
1	\$35,150
2	\$40,150
3	\$45,200
4	\$50,200
5	\$54,200

In addition to annual income, household assets must not exceed \$20,000 for a single homeowner or \$30,000 for a household of 2 or more. Assets are defined as: savings accounts, time certificates of deposit, equity in stocks or bonds, real property, or any other capital investments. Assets exclude your principal residence and other personal effects such as furniture, appliances and automobiles.

Adjustments to Income

You may deduct the following from your gross annual income:

- \$480 for each dependent 18 years of age or younger, a full-time student or a handicapped person
- Child care expenses for working parents in certain cases

- Medical expenses that exceed 7 ½ % of gross annual income
- \$400 for a family with a member over the age of 60

Borrower Eligibility

- Occupant must be the owner of record, and have owned the property for at least one year.
- Property equity and all existing liens will be evaluated to determine if the property can be used as security for the loan.
- To be considered for a deferred payment loan, an applicant must be determined by the City to be ineligible for an installment payment loan.

City Services and Assistance

Within this program City housing staff are available for assistance with determining eligible work items, writing project specifications, collecting bids from contractors, executing city-provided contracts and documents, project supervision, payment coordination and other assistance to help assure proper completion of your project.

Loan Terms

- The interest rate is fixed at below market rate.
- The maximum loan is generally \$10,000.
- The maximum loan term is 10 years. In some cases, for senior citizens, the terms can be until sale or transfer, or the owner no longer occupies the property
- Title and recording fees may range from \$50 to \$150. These fees can be included as part of the loan.
- Loans are due in full if the property is sold, refinanced, no longer owner-occupied or transferred to another owner.
- Generally, there is no pre-payment penalty.
- Additional restrictions may apply.

Security Required for Loan

Loans will be secured by a Primary or Junior Lien on the mobile home. All existing liens will be evaluated to determine if the property can be used as security for the loan. The mobile home serving as security for the loan must meet the definition of a manufactured home in the State of California Health and Safety Code, Section 18007.

Insurance and Property Taxes/Mobile Home Registration

Fire insurance in an amount to cover all property debt must be maintained over the term of the loan. Flood Insurance will be required if the property is located in an identified flood hazard zone. Property taxes/mobile home registration for the property must be maintained over the term of the loan.

Eligible Improvements and Expenditures

- Attic insulation is recommended to a minimum standard of R-38
- Repairs/improvements to structural, plumbing, electrical, heating and mechanical systems
- Painting (exterior and interior)

- Improvements to building security
- Termite damage repair
- Curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and drainage improvements
- Repairs or replacement of roofing and fencing
- Abatement of septic tanks
- Improvements and modifications to the residence for physically disabled persons
- Removal of blighting conditions on property
- Architectural, engineering, survey, termite inspection, or drafting services in conjunction with eligible improvements
- Building permits fees and title fees
- General improvements with City approval (not to exceed 40% of loan amount) with emphasis on exterior work which will improve the overall neighborhood appearance
- Other restrictions may apply

Ineligible Expenditures

- Additions to existing structure (except when severe overcrowding is determined, or for handicap modifications)
- Materials, fixtures, or landscaping that substantially exceed the quality of the surrounding properties
- Purchase or repair of furnishings
- Air conditioning equipment (except when there is existing equipment)
- Purchase of land/real property
- Refinancing any existing property debts.
- Construction/repair of swimming pools, hot tubs or decks
- General improvements exceeding 40% of the loan amount
- Repair work covered by insurance or warranty programs
- Other restrictions may apply

For more information and an application please call (925) 671-3364.

Emergency Home Repair & Access Rebate Program

Rebates are available to qualified Concord property owners to make emergency repairs and accessibility improvements.

Income Limits

The annual family income must be less than:

Persons in Family	Income Limits
1	\$35,150
2	\$40,150
3	\$45,200
4	\$50,200

In addition to annual income, household assets must not exceed \$20,000 for a single homeowner or \$30,000 for a household of 2 or more. Assets are defined as: savings accounts, time certificates of deposit, equity in stocks or bonds, real property, or any other capital investments. Assets exclude your principal residence and personal effects such as furniture, appliances, and automobiles.

Property Owner Eligibility

- Applicant must be over the age of sixty (60) or disabled of any age.
- Occupant must be owner of record of the property.
- Inspection and pre-approval of work must be received from the City before commencement of work.
- Submittal of all original receipts or invoices to City.

Rebate Terms

- Pre-approval from City required prior to commencement of work.
- Work must be completed within 30 days of City approval. (Extensions may be granted.)
- Upon completion and approval, a rebate in the amount of your approved expenditures to a maximum of \$1,500 will be made to you or your contractor within 30 days.
- This program may be used for one work item one time per program year. Program year is July 1 through June 30.
- This is a grant and does not have to be repaid.

Emergency Repairs Which May Qualify

- Mechanical, electrical, plumbing and structural systems which show obvious signs of deterioration or require emergency repair
- Drainage improvements to correct flooding of structures
- Roof, if due to water leakage, damage or severe deterioration
- Building security
- Stoves or refrigerators if existing equipment is unusable or unsafe
- Replacement of fencing or tree removal if damage could result to structures
- Repair work caused by flooding, fire, vandalism, accidents or other unpreventable occurrences
- Improvements and modifications to the residence for physically disabled persons

Projects That Do Not Qualify

- General home repairs, cleaning, regular or seasonal maintenance
- Exterior or interior painting; any interior improvement such as wallpaper or paneling
- Regular replacement or upgrading of household appliances
- Landscaping, including tree pruning or cleanup of weeds
- Replacement of carpet or linoleum
- Insulation

- Purchase of equipment used to make home repairs
- Any work covered by insurance or warranty
- New construction, expansion or remodeling
- Pool, sauna or hot tub installation or repair
- Other restrictions may apply

For more information and an application please call (925) 671-3364.

Exterior Enhancement Rebate Program

Rebates are available to qualified Concord homeowners to make specific exterior repairs and improvements to their personal residence.

Income Limits

The annual family income must be less than:

Persons in Family	Income Limits
1	\$35,150
2	\$40,150
3	\$45,200
4	\$50,200
5	\$54,200
6	\$58,250

Property Owner Eligibility

- Occupant must be owner of record of the property.
- Inspection and pre-approval of work must be received from the City before commencement of work.
- Submittal of all original receipts or invoices to City.

Rebate Terms

- Pre-approval from City required prior to commencement of work.
- Work must be completed within 60 days of City approval. (Extensions may be granted.)
- Upon completion and approval, a rebate in the amount of your approved expenditures to a maximum of \$2,000 will be made to you or your contractor within 30 days.
- If home is sold within three years of receiving rebate, rebate must be repaid to City, plus 3% interest per annum.
- Property owner(s) must sign a 3-year Promissory Note for the Rebate.

Eligible Improvements

- Exterior painting
- Replacement of existing fencing
- Roof repairs or replacement
- Improvements to front yard landscaping

- Driveway repair or replacement

For more information and an application please call (925) 671-3364.

Weatherization and Home Security Rebate Program

Rebates are available to qualified Concord homeowners to make specific weatherization and home security repairs and improvements to their personal residence.

Income Limits

The annual family income must be less than:

Persons in Family	Income Limits
1	\$35,150
2	\$40,150
3	\$45,200
4	\$50,200

Property Owner Eligibility

- Applicant must be over the age of sixty (60) or disabled of any age.
- Occupant must be owner of record of the property.
- Inspection and pre-approval of work must be received from the City before commencement of work.
- Submittal of all original receipts or invoices to City.

Rebate Terms

- Pre-approval from City required prior to commencement of work.
- Work must be completed within 60 days of City approval. (Extensions may be granted.)
- Upon completion and approval, a rebate in the amount of your approved expenditures to a maximum of \$2,000 will be made to you or your contractor within 30 days.

Eligible Improvements

- Insulation for attic and wall
- Weather-stripping for doors and windows
- Security lighting
- Security doors and security screen doors
- Energy efficient windows
- Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors

For more information and an application please call (925) 671-3364.

Multi-Family Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program

Properties to receive repair must be located within the legal boundaries of the City of Concord. This program is targeted to residential properties consisting of multiple housing units.

Application Fees

- Application submittal - \$150.00
- Prior to initial inspection - \$ 50.00 per unit up to a maximum of \$750.00 (Remainder of inspector fees may be financed out of loan proceeds.)

Borrower Eligibility

- Applicant must be the owner of record.
- Applicant and Property Manager must take advantage of Property Management Training opportunities as they arise.
- Applicant and Property Manager must show participation in the Neighborhood Watch Program
- A credit check, employment and income verification, title search, and verification of property insurance, including fire and liability coverage , are required as part of the application review.

Loan Terms

- Loan will carry fixed interest rate of 3% below market with a minimum of 3%, amortized over a 15 year term
- The maximum loan-to-value ratio shall not exceed 105%
- Loan payments may be deferred for five (5) years if it is determined that the property can not service additional debt
- The maximum loan amount shall not exceed \$7,500 per unit, with a high cost waiver for code items up to \$10,000 per unit
- No minimum loan amount required
- No prepayment penalty
- Loans are due in full if the property is sold, transferred to another owner or refinanced
- Loans are assumable provided that the subsequent owner meets all loan assumability requirements
- Maintenance Agreement which includes all exterior items for life of property
- Additional restrictions may apply

Security Required for Loan

Loans will be secured by a First or Second Deed of Trust on the property and a Regulatory Agreement and Restrictive Covenants.

Affordability Restrictions

- Tenant income limits on restricted units; combined household income cannot exceed:

Persons in Family	Income Limits
1	\$28,400
2	\$32,450
3	\$36,500
4	\$40,550

- Rent Restrictions - Maximum rent and utilities on the regulated units will set at 30% of 60% of median income as reported annually by HUD. Other restrictions may apply.
- Affordability Period - will apply to the property for 20 years even if the entire loan is paid in full.

Insurance and Property Tax

- Fire insurance in an amount to cover all property debt must be maintained over the life of the loan.
- Property Taxes must be maintained over the life of the loan.

Priorities for Improvements and Expenditures

- Work must be completed by an insured State licensed contractor
- Any items identified in the inspector's deficiency list and/or work write-up
- Repairs/improvements to mechanical, heating, plumbing, structural and electrical systems, and replacement of roofing
- Improvements to building security including fencing and gates
- Termite damage repair
- Curbs, gutters, sidewalks, parking lot and drainage improvements
- Improvements and modifications for physically disabled persons
- Removal of blighting conditions on property
- Building permit fees and other loan related fees as approved by the City
- Painting (exterior and interior)
- Air conditioning equipment and repair
- Attic and wall insulation
- Repair of swimming pools or decks

Ineligible Expenditures

- Additions to existing structure (except for handicap modifications)
- Purchase or repair of furnishings
- Purchase of land/real property
- Refinancing of existing property debts
- Construction of swimming pools, hot tubs or decks

For more information and an application please call (925) 671-3364.

Permits

Where Do I Go To Get A Permit?

The Permit Service Center

When considering any alteration or addition to your property, it is a good idea to check with the City to determine if building permits are required prior to beginning any work. If permits are required, your plans will be reviewed to ensure that your project will be safe and meet the requirements of City ordinances and building codes. The ordinances were enacted in an effort to maintain a healthy, safe, and attractive community, and to guide the overall development of the City.

The Permit Center is open from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday except for legal holidays. Applicants are seen on a first come, first serve basis. More information can be obtained by calling (925) 671-3454. You can also call this number if you wish to make an appointment with a specific member of the City staff.

Work Without a Permit

The California Building Code requires that building plans be submitted to the local Building Official and building permits be taken out prior to constructing, altering or enlarging a building. The purpose of preparing and reviewing plans and issuing building permits is to provide City inspectors with approved plans in order to inspect the subsequent construction. Occasionally, individuals undertake remodeling work or small additions and fail to take out building permits or obtain necessary inspections. When such work is performed without required permits, it is said that the construction is substandard and illegal.

Since almost all building alterations do require permits, one should assume permits are required for any alteration work and obtain those permits before beginning work.

If you own a building where work without a permit has occurred, you may be able to legalize that work by following the steps listed below. Note that all steps are required and none may be skipped.

Before you begin this process, however, you may wish to consider other alternatives. For example, if you have a garage that has been converted, without permits, to living space, it may be simpler, more economical and much quicker to return it to a garage than to attempt to legalize the space. If you choose this alternative, remember to get a simple over-the-counter permit to convert the space back to a garage.

To legalize substandard space or work constructed without permits, the following steps are necessary.

Step 1

Architectural or engineering plans are required for most construction. As a minimum, a plot plan, floor plan and related details are required. These drawings should be to scale. The building permit applicant may prepare most types of drawings or retain an architect, engineer, or, in some cases, a draftsman. The City may have sample drawings you can follow if you need some guidance; but the City cannot draw plans or provide design services for you. State law mandates that plans for some types of buildings be prepared by architects or engineers.

Step 2

At least three sets of plans are required to be submitted for plan check. The Planning Division will review the plans and determine if you need a variance, will approve the plan, or will provide comments. Covered parking is required for almost all residences. Contact the Planning Division directly at (925) 671-3454 for requirements.

Step 3

If the plans are approved, building permits and related electrical, plumbing and mechanical permits are required. If you have purchased your property with the illegal construction existing, normal fees are required. If your citation is for ongoing construction without permits, your fees will be doubled in accordance with the City fee schedule.

Step 4

Where an illegal residential building addition of 500 square feet or more has been added, the applicant must pay applicable school district fees prior to issuance of a permit.

Step 5

After permits have been secured, inspections may be scheduled for the project. For existing construction only, expose the following:

- Depth and width of spread footings, and both required rows of rebar in one location.
- Slab floors: Open one location to determine slab reinforcing.
- Wood floors: Open one 4' x 4' section in the middle of the project for access and inspection.
- Plumbing: All underfloor or underslab piping or connection shall be exposed for inspection.
- Framing: One side of each wall shall be opened up from floor to ceiling for inspection.
- Ceiling: Open one 4' x 4' section in the ceiling center for inspection access.
- Tests: All normal water, waste and gas tests are required.

Proceeding as above, one may be able to secure a list of corrections in one or two inspections. Once those corrections are completed and sign-offs made, the project can be completed by requesting final inspections.

Once final inspections are completed and signed off, a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued. The structure is then considered to be legal and no longer must be listed in a disclosure statement.

Garage Conversions

Usable Space

A Building Permit is required to convert a garage to living space. By obtaining the necessary Building Permits from the Building Division at the Permit Center in City Hall, you can be assured that the garage conversion is done properly because the work will be inspected to see that it meets standards of the California Building Codes and City ordinances.

In 1988, the City adopted an ordinance for garage conversions to insure that adequate parking is provided on the property. Covered parking spaces which are lost as a result of a new garage conversion must be provided elsewhere on the property. This ordinance was enacted in part as a result of the growing concern throughout the community with the number of vehicles that are being parked on the streets and the storing of unsightly and inoperable vehicles in driveways.

If you are planning on converting your garage, contact the Planning and Building Divisions at the Permit Center at City Hall.

Accessory Buildings

What Are They?

What if I want to build a shed/gazebo/playhouse/greenhouse/workshop/animal shelter/detached garage?

These and other similar detached structures are known as accessory buildings, and are regulated by the City in order to maintain safe and attractive residential neighborhoods. The focus of the City regulations is to promote health and safety, promote a quality community and maintain property values.

What do I need to know?

Front Yards

No accessory building is allowed in the front yards.

Linear Measurements

When measuring the distance from a property line or between buildings, the measurement is taken between the closest points.

Height Measurements

The height of a structure is measured as defined in the Uniform Building Code.

Lot Coverage Limitation

The combined area covered by the house and any accessory buildings cannot be greater than 20-35% of the net lot area depending on which single family residential zoning district you reside in. For further information, call the Planning Division at (925) 671-3454.

Square Footage Limits

No single accessory building can exceed 450 square feet in total floor area. If the total floor area of all accessory buildings exceeds 450 square feet, the property owner must maintain covered parking on the property for at least two cars.

What are the requirements for accessory buildings?

If a small accessory structure has an area of less than 120 square feet. The requirements for such a structure are:

- It must be least 5 feet from any side or rear property line and not be located in the front yard setback area.
- There may be no more than one accessory building located on the property.
- Building plans are not required for structures of this size but electrical and/or plumbing permits must be taken out if electrical power or water is provided to the building.

What are the requirements for larger accessory buildings?

A larger structure has an area of more than 120 square feet. The requirements for such a structure are:

- It must have 5 foot setbacks (the setback is the minimum required distance between any structure and the property line in any rear, or side yard).
- It must have a valid building permit.
- It must maintain at least a 6 foot clear area from the main building on the property.
- It must be built in the rear one-half of the lot.

Home Business

Guidelines and Requirements

To have a home business you must obtain a Business License which can be obtained from the Finance Department at City Hall. A business license is also required for all rental housing units. In order to qualify as a home occupation a business must be incidental to the home. The business must be located in the house and cannot be conducted in the garage, yard or any accessory building. Only permanent residents of the home can work at the house for the business. In addition, the house cannot be used as a meeting place for related business activity.

There cannot be any structural alterations to the interior or exterior of the home not consistent with the residential nature of the house.

By adhering to the guidelines, people can obtain the benefits from their home occupation without disturbing their neighbors. They should not impact the neighborhood with an increase in traffic or by creating parking problems. A home business should be conducted in such a manner that the neighbors are not aware that it exists. For more information about home occupations you can call the Planning Division at (925) 671-3454 or visit the Permit Center at City Hall.

Fences

Where to Place Them

The guidelines contained in the City's fence ordinance allow fences that provide security and privacy while maintaining an attractive and open appearance when viewed from adjacent streets and sidewalks. High, solid fences built next to the sidewalks give the neighborhood a walled fortress appearance that can detract from the quality of the community.

What do I need to know?

Front Setback Area

Determined in most cases by measuring 20 feet toward the house starting at the front property line and running from side property line to side property line.

Reducible Front Yard

A front yard more than 20 feet deep is considered a reducible front yard.

Front Property Line

The property line at the front of a parcel.

Face of Curb

The side of the curb next to the street.

Setback

The minimum required distance between any structure and any front, rear or side yard property line.

What if I want to build a fence taller than 6 feet?

All fences taller than 6 feet require a building permit and a Zoning Administrator permit. A building permit is required to ensure that strong, safe fences are constructed. The fence must be designed to accommodate the added weight and increased wind load that result from the additional height. Usually a fence taller than 6 feet must be based upon significant grade changes (hillsides).

Fence height is also a concern to Public Safety personnel in performing their duties. A fence higher than 6 feet makes it more difficult for fire personnel to reach the side and rear of a property. Although a fence taller than 6 feet might add a little more privacy, it also provides criminals with more cover. For further information, call the Planning Division at (925)-671-3454.

Are there any restrictions on building fences in the front yard?

Fences up to 3 feet in height

A fence 3 feet or less in height is allowed in the front setback area to ensure that the fence does not block visibility and access to sidewalks and driveways.

Fences between 3 and 6 feet in height

Front yard fences between 3 and 6 feet in height are allowed only in the area located more than 10 feet from the front property line.

I own a corner lot. Do the same requirements apply to me?

Fences up to 3 feet in height in the front yard and up to 6 feet in the exterior side yard

If you wish to construct a fence up to 3 feet in height in a front yard and up to 6 feet in height in the exterior side yard, you must comply with the fence ordinance. Fences cannot exceed 3 feet in height in any safety/visibility triangle.

Corner and driveway vision triangles

Vision triangles were created to maintain a clear line of vision near corners and at driveways to promote safe pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Only fences, hedges, shrubs or other natural objects 3 feet or less in height can be placed in such visibility areas. Single stem plants or trees can be located in a vision triangle as long as any foliage between 3 and 8 feet above grade is removed.

15 foot driveway vision triangle

The 15 foot driveway vision triangle is defined by measuring 15 feet along the length of the driveway and 15 feet along the sidewalk from a point where the driveway and the sidewalk meet. Connecting these two points with a diagonal line completes the triangle and forms the vision triangle.

40 foot corner vision triangle

The corner vision triangle is formed by measuring 40 feet along each curb face from the point where the extension of two curbs meet. Connecting these two points with a diagonal line completes the triangle forming the corner vision triangle.

Can I build the fence to the sidewalk?

In areas where there is a landscape strip between the sidewalk and the curb, fences may be built to the edge of the sidewalk in most cases. Fences can be built to the property line in other areas. When fences are built to the sidewalk, a portion of the fence may be located in the public right-of-way. The City assumes no responsibility for the fence, and if a fence must be removed to make repairs to public facilities or utilities, the cost of replacing the fence may be the responsibility of the property owner.

How is the height of a fence measured?

The height of fences located in a front or exterior side yard is measured from the top of the curb in the public street. Fences along interior side or rear yards are measured from the highest adjoining finished grade.

Who is responsible for fence maintenance?

Where common fences or "good neighbor" fences exist on a property line, the maintenance and repair of the fence is the responsibility of both adjoining property owners. If a fence needs to be fixed or is creating a safety hazard, abutting owners should work toward an agreeable solution to

make the necessary repairs. If you are unable to reach an amicable solution, you may have to seek assistance.

In most instances, the City does not require fences in single family neighborhoods; however, the City does require that fences be maintained to prevent them from sagging, leaning or becoming a safety hazard. The City requests that property owners repair, replace or remove dilapidated fences in order to maintain a safe and attractive community.

Are barbed wire fences allowed?

Barbed wire and electrical fences are not allowed in or next to residential areas or near public rights-of-way in the City of Concord.

Additional requirements may apply to your property. Permit applications and more information can be obtained by visiting the One Stop Permit Center at City Hall.

Other City Programs

Recycling

Give Trash A Second Chance

Why Recycle?

Recycling Conserves Resources

Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees and 390 gallons of oil. It creates 74 percent less air pollution and 35 percent less water pollution than making paper from virgin fibers.

Recycling glass can save 32 percent of the energy needed to manufacture glass from original resources. It also creates 20 percent less air pollution.

It takes only one gallon of used oil to yield the same 2.5 quarts lubricating oil provided by 42 gallons of crude oil.

Recycling Conserves Landfill Space

Recycling reduces the amount of trash entering the landfill, potentially doubling its life expectancy. This will reduce the City's disposal costs and delay the need to purchase new landfill space. That saves ratepayer dollars!

Curbside Recycling

Residents in single family homes are provided curbside recycling for the following materials as a part of the garbage rate.

- aluminum cans
- tin/steel food and beverage cans
- glass bottles and jars, clear or colored
- California Redemption Value (CRV) glass bottles
- PETE plastic bottles and containers (#1)
- HDPE plastic bottles and containers (#2)
- newspaper

Blue and white plastic containers are provided for curbside recycling. Place newspaper into the blue container and all other recyclable materials listed above into the white container. Curbside recycling is provided on the same day a regular garbage service. Place all containers at curbside by 6:00 a.m. or the evening before your scheduled pick-up day.

Residents of multi-family homes and mobile home parks can arrange for curbside recycling by calling Concord Disposal Service at (925) 682-9113

Plastics

There are many types of plastic resins in use today. However, there are few recycled uses for all these plastics. Look on the bottom of plastic containers for a number inside a triangle of chasing arrows. This number indicates the type of plastic resin.

Here are examples of two plastic types and their primary uses:

- PETE (polyethylene terephthalate) #1 - All 2-liter soft drink bottles and many other containers formerly made of glass
- HDPE (high-density polyethylene) #2 - Milk jugs, water bottles, detergent bottles and liquid bleach containers

Theft of Recyclables

Unauthorized removal of materials from recycling bins is punishable by fines up to \$1,000 and/or up to six months in jail. The money the City receives from recycling aluminum helps keep your garbage bill from climbing higher by defraying the costs of collecting the less valuable recyclables. If you see someone other than a Concord Disposal Service employee removing recyclables from your bins, call the City of Concord at (925) 671-3000.

Buy-Back Recycling Centers

Private buy-back recycling centers are located in Concord. Materials accepted include aluminum, glass, bi-metal, and plastic containers imprinted with the words "CA Redemption Value" and cardboard.

For locations and more information on buy-back recycling, call the Contra Costa Recycling Hotline at (800) 750-4096.

Precycling

"Precycling" means making intelligent, environmentally-sound decisions at the store. By cutting down on the waste you bring home, you will throw away less.

Many beverages, food, soaps and other items are sold in recyclable containers or in ones made from recycled materials. Look for the chasing arrow symbol on the container and the words "made from recycled material." Buying products in recycled packaging supports and encourages manufacturers to use recycled materials.

Beware of products that are overpackaged. Single-serving packages can especially wasteful and expensive.

You can reduce waste by using reusable containers: send the juice to school in a thermos, take a coffee cup to work, use a lunch box or cloth lunch bag, and use cloth napkins and kitchen towels instead of paper.

To reduce waste you can also: reuse household articles such as bags, boxes and plastic food containers; maintain and repair items to ensure a longer life; rent instead of buying items that you only use occasionally (e.g., power tools); stop unwanted mail. Write or call companies and ask to be removed from their mailing lists. And use rechargeable batteries in toys, radios, etc. You'll help the environment and save money, too.

Questions and Information

Mt. Diablo Recycling • (925) 682-4518

Community Policing

Community policing is a philosophy, a management style and organizational strategy that promotes proactive problem solving and police community partnerships to address the causes and fear of crime. Community Policing works to enhance public safety and improve the quality of life within the community.

Community policing redefines the roles and relationships between the police and the community. It requires shared ownership, decision making and accountability, as well as a sustained commitment from both the police and the community.

Police agencies traditionally spend only 20% to 30% of their time responding to actual crimes. The remaining 70% to 80% of time is spent on civil and social issues. The philosophy of community policing does not abandon the strategies of traditional policing, but increases the tools available to officers to develop long-term solutions to those civil and social issues of the community that affect the quality of life.

In Concord, community policing has meant dividing the City into three geographical areas, to create a new level of service—the Community Policing Districts. The purpose of the districts is to coordinate police services and other city resources to deal with that area's problems and issues. Each district has a Field Office designed to decentralize police services and bring them closer to the customers in the district and its neighborhoods. A police lieutenant is assigned as District Commander to each district and is responsible for delivery of all law enforcement services in that district.

Another change made to move toward community policing is the establishment of smaller "sub-beats" for territory assignment of police officers. The sub-beats are more manageable areas that allow the assigned officer to take an active role and become familiar with problems, residents and businesses in the officer's beat.

Field Offices

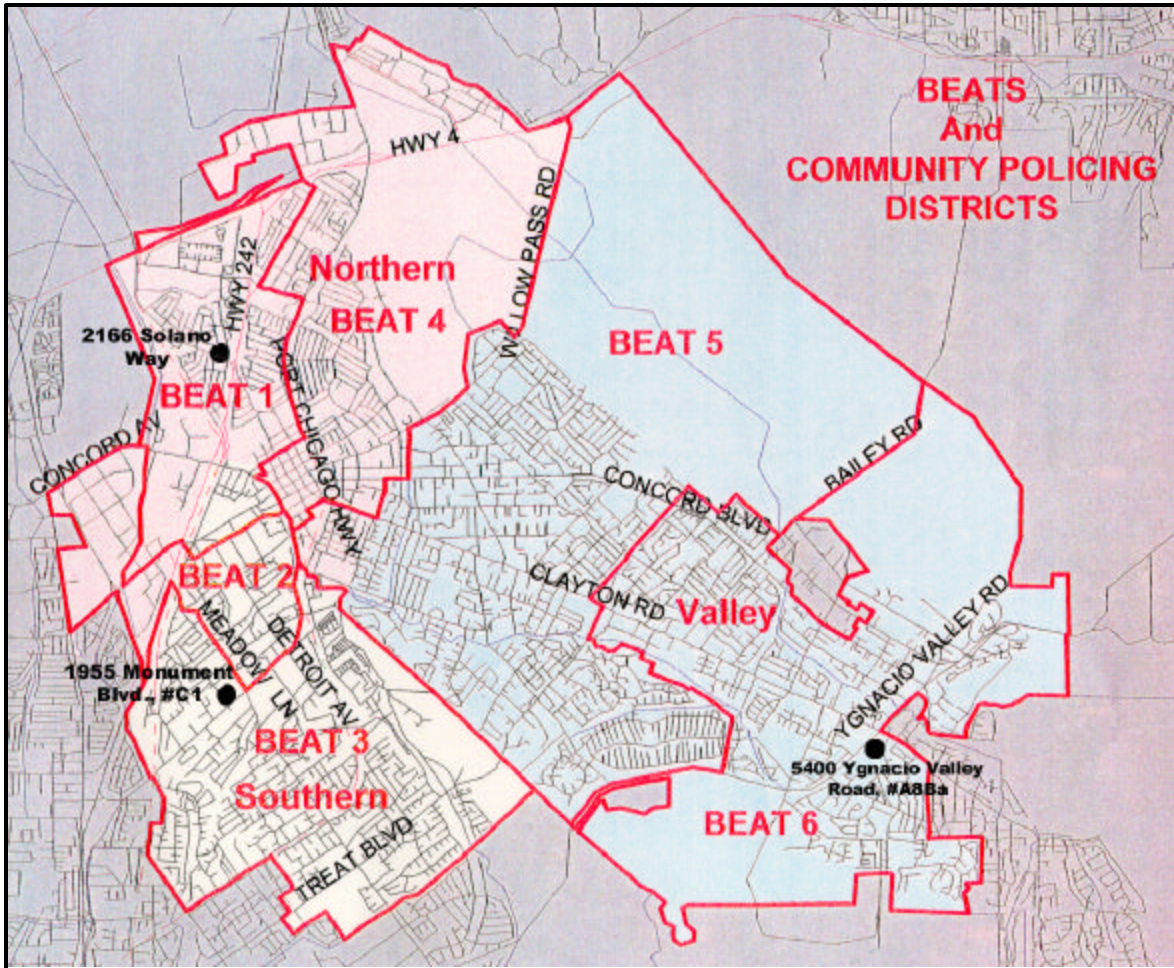
To serve the three community policing districts, Field Office Centers have been located in each district. Community Service Officers and Community Specialist Officers staff the field offices. A police lieutenant is assigned as a District Commander, and also works out of the field office.

The purpose of the field offices is to reach out into the community and provide access to a broad spectrum of City services. The field office staff is able to provide information on services and

assist those who need to access other community resources. Area residents and businesses are encouraged to contact their field office to inform officers of issues impacting their area.

Each field office contains a small meeting room, which is available to residents for scheduling Neighborhood Watch meetings or other community gatherings. Field offices are open Monday through Saturday, with office hours being determined by the needs of the area it serves.

Map of Community Policing Districts and Beats



Street Maintenance and Sidewalk Repair Programs

The City's annual Street and Sidewalk Maintenance Programs aim at providing well maintained streets and sidewalks for use by the public. The City has developed cost effective strategies for providing, evaluating and maintaining streets in an acceptable serviceable condition. The goal is to employ the most economical strategy on each street at the appropriate time to extend the life of street pavements for as long as possible before reconstruction is required. Each \$1.00 spent on properly timed street pavement preventive maintenance programs saves the \$4.00 to \$5.00 cost which would be required if no maintenance was done and the pavement failed.

The Street Maintenance Program includes:

- Crack sealing as a primary routine maintenance
- Patching of potholes as they appear
- Providing slurry seal as preventive maintenance on a seven-year cycle
- Providing cape seal (combination of chip and slurry seal) on local streets to extend the pavement life instead of costly overlays.
- When street pavements finally reach the end of their useful life, the City also has a program that either patches the failed pavement and overlays it with a new pavement, or reconstructs the pavement entirely, depending on which strategy is more cost effective.
- The City's cost effective Sidewalk Repair and Replacement Program includes:
- Grinding sidewalks instead of reconstructing where the offset is one inch or less
- Proactively ramping larger offsets in preparation to their replacement
- City Sidewalk Improvement and Neighborhood Sidewalk Repair Programs for replacement of ramped sidewalks and installation of handicap ramps at intersections to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. These proactive programs are coordinated with the City's Neighborhood Preservation Program in the various partnership areas within the City.
- Implementation of these Street Maintenance and Curb, Gutter and Sidewalk Programs maximize street pavement life, maintain safe walking surfaces and provide efficient surface runoff. Call (925) 671-3228 to report potholes that need repair. Call (925) 671-3050 to report offset sidewalks.

Street Sweeping Program

The City recently began sweeping residential streets more often - every two weeks instead of every eight weeks as was done in the past. Recommendations from a recent study improved service primarily by changing the sweeper routes, without increasing the number of workers. "Now that we have established new routing for street sweeping, we can publish a regular schedule for our customers," says Maintenance Services Director Mike Vogan.

"With a regular schedule, residents can help improve our street sweeping efforts by moving vehicles, basketball backboards, garbage bags and other obstructions before the sweeper comes."

City workers clean and maintain three miles of streets in the downtown core; 86 miles of major streets and industrial parks; and 262 miles of residential streets, for a total of 351 miles.

"The downtown area is currently swept weekly, and major arterial streets are swept monthly. This service level will remain the same: the sweeping of residential streets is where big improvements are being made," says Vogan.

Past street sweeping schedules were inconsistent and unpredictable. The sweepers were often diverted from their regular work to assist with street maintenance activities or to clean up such emergencies as a broken water line or debris from vehicle accidents.

"We developed a completely new street routing plan, with 30 residential and 20 arterial/industrial zones, including City owned parking lots," says Vogan. "We trained backup operators, and assigned each sweeper ten specific residential zones to complete on a bi-weekly rotation."

The new, two week cycle was tried and adjusted for a number of weeks in late 1997. An additional sweeper machine was purchased as a backup to assure the new two-week cleaning cycle can be met while other sweeper vehicles are out of service for periodic maintenance. This is another example of a study that has led to long-term cost savings, more efficient and effective programs, and enhanced service levels in Concord.

The new schedule has been published. It is also available on the City's Web site at <http://www.ci.concord.ca.us/streets/sweepingdays.htm>. For more information call (925) 671-3147.

Preventive Programs

Neighborhood Watch and Problem Solving

What Is Neighborhood Watch and Problem Solving?

Neighborhood Watch and Problem Solving is a shared responsibility and connection between the police and community. The goal is to make Concord a safer, more livable city through crime prevention and problem solving strategies. It is part of the overall philosophy of Concord's Community Policing.

It involves:

- Neighbors getting to know each other and working together.
- Implementing crime prevention techniques and strategies in homes and neighborhoods.
- Helping to solve neighborhood problems through a partnership between you and your police department.
- Learning about other public and private agencies that can be resources in helping to solve neighborhood problems.

How Do I Get Involved?

If you know your neighborhood has an active Neighborhood Watch and Problem Solving group already formed, join it!

If there is no such group, become a leader in your neighborhood and start one! Simply call the Community Action and Awareness line at (925) 671-3237 to schedule a meeting.

What Happens in a Meeting and How Often Do Meetings Occur?

Usually a meeting consists of 10-20 neighbors. A typical meeting lasts about two hours. They can be scheduled for any time of the day or evening-it's up to you. A police officer will attend and talk about crime prevention and problem solving strategies that you and your neighbors might use in your neighborhood. Crime prevention brochures and problem solving resource materials will also be handed out at the meeting.

You and your neighbors can then hold future meetings when you feel it is necessary; usually it's every couple of months. A police officer can attend future meetings if you desire, or it can be only the neighbors.

Resource Information Line

Call the Community Action and Awareness Information line at (925) 671-3237:

- To schedule a Neighborhood Watch and Problem Solving meeting.
- To obtain a summary of crime statistics for your neighborhood.
- To have crime prevention and problem solving resource material mailed to you.

Call our Residential Burglary Information line at (925) 671-3065 to hear about burglaries that occurred the previous week, throughout the city.

Safe Streets Now!

Safe Streets Now is an Oakland-based organization pioneered in 1989. The program was created to help citizens fight back against entrenched drug activity without relying on the criminal justice system to make results stick.

Molly Whetzel, founder and executive director of Safe Streets Now, provides training for law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

The program was developed to treat neighborhood crime as a problem of private property management. The program creates a step-by-step formula for demanding better management from landlords whose properties attract drug activity and other crime.

Here's How the System Works

Neighbors discreetly monitor a property, keeping logs of possible illegal activity. When enough evidence has been gathered, neighbors send a demand letter to the property owners asking them to clean up the property and evict the problem tenants.

If the property owners fail to comply or fail to resolve the problems, the people go to small claims court and argue that the owners are maintaining a public nuisance by allowing illegal activity to occur on their property.

Under the rules of small claims court, each neighbor on the claim is eligible for up to \$5,000 in damages. The judge has no power to close down a home, but the threat of huge financial penalties often compels the owners to step in and take care of the problems.

Concord Police implemented the Safe Streets Now program in January 1993. The first case brought to small claims court against the owners of an apartment complex resulted in a successful judgment for the neighbors!

Community Workshop

Concord Police Department's Community Action and Awareness Bureau has developed a community workshop for citizens: How to remove a "drug house" from your neighborhood. The workshop is designed to provide neighborhood groups with a safe, fast and effective step-by-step approach that will help rid a neighborhood of a drug/gang house and prevent it from coming back.

The workshop covers the following topics

- The "business" of drugs
- How to organize a neighborhood
- How to safely and legally document a drug related nuisance
- How to go to small claims court, win, and close down the drug house
- How to collect a judgment.

Steps to Begin a Safe Streets Now Program

1. It takes just one call from a citizen to activate the program.
2. A Safe Streets Now Workshop is scheduled for the neighborhood. A neighborhood team is formed and an action plan is developed.
3. Neighbors document drug dealing or suspicious actions via an activity log
4. Team sends a letter and activity logs to property owner requesting action.
5. Property owners join the team and work together with neighbors to make the neighborhood clean, safe and healthy, or property owners don't take any action at all.
6. If property owners don't respond, neighbors go to small claims court.

The Concord Police Department wants to work with you to improve the quality of life in our community. For additional information on the Safe Streets Now Program, contact Safe Street Sgt. at (925) 671-3237

Services Directory

Community Service Numbers

All area codes are 925 unless otherwise specified.

Automobiles

Automobile Business Verifications..... (800) 288-0975
Bureau of Automotive Repair..... 671-0415
DMV..... 671-2876

Court and Legal Services

Children's Legal Services (415) 863-3762
Caltrans Highway Information (800) 427-7623
CHP (California Highway Patrol)..... 646-4980
Clerk of Court 646-2440
646-2692
Contra Costa Bar Association 686-6900
Contra Costa Legal Svcs. Foundation 372-8209
Criminal Court 372-8209
District Attorney 646-5335
Lawyer Reference Panel 439-9166
Parole Office 602-6550
Probation Office 313-4000
Public Defender 646-2481
Recorder..... 646-2360
Sheriff..... 228-8282
Small Claims 646-5410
State Bar Legal Services (415) 561-8200
Traffic Court 646-5404

General

ABAG..... 464-7900
ABC - Alcohol Beverage Control (510) 622-4970
Acme Landfill..... 228-6525
Aging, Area Agency on Aging..... 313-1720
Agriculture Dept..... 646-5250
AIDS Information 313-6770
Air Pollution (800) 334-6367
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council..... 932-8100
Alcoholism and Rehab. Information..... 932-8100
Animal Control..... 646-2995
Assessor's Office..... 313-7400
Association of Realtors 938-1144
Baldwin Park Child Care 798-5021
Bankruptcy Court (415) 556-2250
BART Administration..... 464-6000
BART Information..... 465-2278
Battered Women's Alternatives (888) 215-5555
Bay Area Air Quality Management..... (415) 771-6000
Bees 646-5250
Better Business Bureau..... 238-1000
Bike Trails- East Bay Regional Park 562-7275
Board of Realtors (CC)..... 938-1144
Board of Supervisors 646-2371

Brenden Theatre 677-0450
Buchanan Field (Airport)..... 646-5722
Bureau of Indian Affairs (916) 978-4691
Bus Routes/Schedules 676-7500
Calif. Board of Equalization (800) 400-7115
Calif. Dept. Employment..... 820-2614
Calif. Dept. of Insurance (800) 927-4357
Calif. Dept. of Motor Vehicles 671-2876
Calif. Dept. of Parks & Recreation (415) 330-6300
Calif. Highway Patrol..... 646-4980
Calif. Waste Management..... (800) 952-5545
CALTRANS..... 926-6112
Cambridge Community Center..... 798-1078
Camping Facilities (415) 330-6300
Car Pooling for Commuters (RIDES)..... (800) 755-7665
Center for New Americans..... 798-3492
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District..... 228-9500
Charities - Fraud..... (916) 445-2021
Child Care Services 676-5437
Child Support Enforcement..... 313-4200
Citizenship 556-2070
Community Food Coalition..... 676-7543
Community Resource Center..... 934-0901
Concord Airport (Buchanan Field) 646-5722
Concord American Little League 686-6750
Concord Health Center..... 646-4715
Concord Nature Park 680-0464
Conflict Resolution Panels 798-6132
Consumer Affairs (916) 445-1254
Contra Costa Agency on Aging 939-2600
Contra Costa Child Care Council 676-5442
Contra Costa Community Recycling (800) 750-4096
Contra Costa Food Bank..... 676-7543
Contra Costa Times 935-2525
Contractor's State License Board (800) 321-2752
Convention Bureau 685-1184
Copyright Information 556-6600
County Clerk..... 646-2950
County Hospital 370-5000
Crisis Hotline 472-0999
Crossing Guard Bud Wasson..... 671-3261
Department of Corrections 602-6550
DMV..... 671-2876
Dump Site (Acme Fill-Martinez) 228-6525
Dump Site (Keller)..... 458-9800
East Bay Regional Park District..... 562-7275
EEOC 637-3230
Elections Office 646-4166
Fair Employment..... (800) 884-1684

Farmer's Market Information.....	426-5420	Rape Crisis	798-7273
Farmers Market	(800) 949-3276	Resale License.....	687-6962
Federal Employment & Housing Comm.....	(800) 884-1682	Restraining Orders (City Clerk in Martinez).....	646-2950
Fictitious Business Names.....	646-2976	ROP (Regional Occupational Program)	942-3465
Fire Department.....	930-5500	Salvation Army	676-6180
Flea Market	825-1951	Secretary of State.....	(916) 653-6575
Flood Zones	671-3425	Sellers Permit	(800) 400-7115
Food Bank.....	676-7543	Senior Employment AARP	676-7586
Food Stamp Information.....	313-1827	Senior Information and Referral.....	313-3120
Graffiti Hotline.....	671-3080	Senior Scams	(877) 839-4347
Hazardous Materials	646-2286	SHARE (Food).....	827-4273
Health Department Environmental Health	646-5225	Shennum Detox Center.....	676-2580
Help for Elderly - Sr. Information.....	313-1720	Small Business Loans Information.....	646-5249
Historical Society.....	939-9180	Social Security.....	(800) 772-1213
Homeless (Donation).....	827-3598	Social Services	646-5224
Horsemen's Association.....	682-9123	Veterans Assistance Center.....	372-2000
Household Hazardous Waste.....	(800) 750-4096	Veterans Information Center.....	680-4526
Housing Authority	687-8988	Volunteer Center of CC County.....	472-5760
Immigration & Naturalization	(415) 705-4411	Voter Registration.....	646-4166
Labor Commission	(415) 557-7878	Waterworld USA Job Hotline.....	609-9283
Landlord/Tenant Disputes.....	439-1056		
Library (Contra Costa County).....	646-5455	Recycling Information	
Loaves and Fishes	682-7212	County Information/Recycling.....	(800) 750-4096
	439-9900	Household Hazardous Waste Hotline.....	(800) 646-1431
Marriage License	646-2956	Mt. Diablo Paper Stock.....	682-4518
Meals on Wheels	937-8311	Pleasant Hill/Bayshore Disposal.....	685-4711
MEDI-CAL.....	646-2623	Reynolds Aluminum.....	825-1885
Merrithew Hospital & Clinic	370-5000		
Mosquito Abatement/Vector Control.....	685-9301	Tax Information	
Mt. Diablo Adult School.....	685-7340	Employment Tax District Office.....	977-8265
Mt. Diablo Child Care Advocates	798-5021	Franchise Tax Board.....	(800) 852-5711
Mt. Diablo Medical Center.....	682-8200	IRS.....	(800) 852-5711
Mt. Diablo Unified School District.....	682-8000	Sales Tax Information	(800) 400-7115
Mt. Diablo Women's Club.....	680-9653		
National Guard Armory	682-9391	Transportation	
Naval Weapons Station	246-2000	BART	465-2278
New Connections (Alcohol & Drug).....	676-1601	County Connection.....	676-7500
Nursing Home Complaints	(800) 554-0352	Senior Transportation Information-LINK.....	676-7500
Pacific Community Services (Pittsburg).....	439-1056		
Passport Information	646-2957	Utility Companies	
Pixieland Park.....	689-8841	Concord Cable TV.....	(800) 222-0300
Police Academy	676-1837	Concord Disposal.....	682-9113
Post Office.....	(800) 275-8777	Contra Costa Water District.....	688-8000
Private Industry Council	646-5239	Pacific Bell.....	(800) 310-2355
Public Health Clinic.....	646-5260	PG&E.....	(800) 743-5000
Public Health Nurse for Homeless	646-5637		
Radio Action (KCBS)	(415) 765-4000	Vital Statistics	
Radio Action (KGO).....	(415) 954-8100	Birth Records.....	646-2517
		Death Certificates	646-2516