



# INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**Date:** May 1, 2014

**To:** Code Services Staff

**From:** Brad Claussen, Building Official

**Subject:** Procedure for Placarding Structures

The following procedure will be used for placarding of structures and equipment under both the construction codes and the property maintenance code. First, it is important to remember that the placard is only a mechanism to prohibit individuals on site from doing something prohibited, i.e. entering a building, or proceeding with construction. The actual documents that notify an owner of a violation or an order to do or refrain from doing something is a separate document and is the means by which official notification is made.

There are limited times in which we would placard a project under construction. One of those would be when we observe work being done without a permit and there is no one on site to notify immediately to cease that work. In that case, we may post the project with a “no building permit” placard when we cannot make contact with the owner or contractor to apply for the permit. The other new construction scenario would be where we have issued a stop work order and the work proceeds. There may be other ramifications from that but for the purposes of this memo we will not sidetrack into that.

Under the Property Maintenance Code, when a structure is found to be unsafe, unfit for human occupancy, or is found to be unlawful, the structure is to be “condemned”. Those terms are defined in Section 108 of the code so I will not reiterate those here. Whenever the Code Official has condemned a structure, notice is to be both posted and served on the owner in the manner prescribed by the code, usually personal service or certified mail. Upon failure of the owner to comply with the notice, that is the point in time which we would placard the structure. Once the defects cited in the notice have been corrected the placard shall be removed.

There is a mechanism by which we can immediately placard a building without the preceding notice procedure described above. That is, when in the opinion of the Code Official, there is imminent danger of failure or collapse of a structure or when there is actual or potential danger to occupants because of explosives, fumes, vapors or other materials, or when there is defective or dangerous equipment. Examples of the situations we might encounter which would necessitate immediate placarding are:

- Structural damage due to fire, flood, wind storms or other causes
- Flood waters inundating a structure
- Sewage backups into the structure
- Malfunctioning equipment such as furnaces, water heaters or electrical panels and devices
- Gas leaks
- High levels of carbon monoxide
- Occupancy by parties of people of rooftops not specifically constructed as decks or balconies when the occupants refuse to vacate that rooftop

As always, there will be cases that fall outside neatly defined boundaries and require a judgment call. When this occurs, staff should consult with the Building Official in order to reach a determination on a specific situation. If you have any questions regarding this memo, please let me know.

Revised 3/11/15 to add last bullet point regarding rooftops