

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****June 7, 2022**

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SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO HIGH GRASS AND WEEDS

The purpose of this Informal Report is to provide information about the high grass and weed abatement program for private property conducted by the Code Compliance Department.

By city ordinance, grass and weeds may not exceed a height of 12 inches. When grass and weeds on private property exceed a height of 12 inches, a notice of violation is issued to the property owner. Only one violation notice per owner per property is issued each calendar year.

Below is the timeline for abatement:

- 4 days – delivery of certified mail
- 10 days – granted for property owner to abate violation
- 14 days – mowing ticket issued to city contractor for abatement
- 10 days – city contractor mows the property if in violation
- 24 days – total cycle after notice is issued

If the property is in violation, the city contractor submits before and after photographs with the cost for the mow. A Code Compliance Officer verifies the correct property was mowed, that the photographs clearly show the property was in violation at the time of the mow, and that the appropriate cost was charged according to the size of the property.

If a property is vacant (vacant lot or vacant structure), the property goes into a recurring mow status. This means a mowing ticket is generated every 28 days for the city contractor to mow as long as the grass and weeds exceed 12 inches at the time of the mow. If the property does not exceed 12 inches, the mowing ticket is closed as “mowed by owner” and the recurring mow cycle stops until a Code Compliance Officer identifies it as being in violation again.

With limited resources, proactive efforts to identify high grass and weeds are focused on central city neighborhoods (inside Loop 820), but all Code Compliance Officers proactively identify violations while in route to other cases on their daily agenda. Code Officers also investigate citizen-initiated complaints.

Owners with property exceeding two acres are required to maintain the grass and weeds within 100 feet of any adjacent street or any structure or other improvement on any adjacent property under 12 inches. Outlying large acreage is addressed on a complaint basis only due to an average contractor cost of several hundred dollars per mow. A typical city lot within a neighborhood averages \$70 per mow.

Last fiscal year, Code Compliance issued 7,824 mowing tickets:

- Mowed by contractor – 1,919 (25%)
- Mowed by owner – 5,905 (75%)

So far this fiscal year as of May 31, 2022, Code Compliance has issued 2,918 mowing tickets:

- Mowed by contractor – 591 (20%)
- Mowed by owner – 1,795 (62%)
- Pending Mowing Tickets – 532 (18%)

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Code Compliance currently has five mowing contractors. Both code officers and mowing contractors are assigned work based on patrol beats that match the Police Department. Contractors were assigned by code district based on capacity to mow and low bid meaning the contractor with the lowest bid was assigned to the area with the largest workload.

Below are the mowing contractors assigned to each district:

- Central District – New Era Contract Services
- East District – Prestige Worldwide Services, LLC
- North District – Civilian Division, LLC d/b/a GI Mow
- Northwest District – MJJ Construction
- South District – New Era Contract Services
- West District – Presbyterian Night Shelter of Tarrant County

Staff has made reporting high grass on any property within the city limits of Fort Worth is as simple as 1-2-3-4!

1. Text Grass to 817-835-MyFW (6939).
2. On the MyFW App, select Private Property or Public Property under the category Grass. If you're not sure, choose one and staff will figure it out.
3. Chat with a representative on the Fort Worth website at fortworthtexas.gov/MyFW
4. Call 817-392-1234 to report the high grass.

For questions regarding this information, please contact Brandon Bennett, Director of the Code Compliance Department, at 817-391-6322.

David Cooke
City Manager