City of Copperas Cove

CODE & HEALTH COMPLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure to once again present the Code and Health Compliance Annual Report. The purpose of this report is to provide information and statistical data on the functions and efforts of the Code and Health Compliance Department. It is also our objective to promote health and public safety through education as mentioned in our Mission Statement.

All Code Compliance Officers are trained and have received state certifications in code enforcement and health inspections. Our officers also maintain a high expectation of professionalism to meet the needs of the citizens of Copperas Cove. Their duties include responding to complaints received from citizens and other agencies relating to alleged violations of Federal, State, and City laws. Although our Department is very proactive in seeking out violations, we consider the City's residents and business owners an important resource in terms of reporting violations.

Highlights for 2017 included;

- The Code Compliance Department trained a total of 893 food handlers during the year including 11 on-site training classes for volunteer food handlers. The Code Compliance Department also taught six classes at Copperas Cove High School DECA and Culinary Arts classes.

- The Code Compliance Department obtained Instructor and Proctor Certification from the National Restaurant Association to teach ServSafe Food Manager training and testing which will bring additional revenue to the City.

- New Code Compliance Officer attended the Basic Code Enforcement Officer Course and was certified as a Registered Code Enforcement Officer by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

- The Code Compliance Department began working hand-in-hand with the Copperas Cove Police Department to identify and rectify code violations within the City and especially tackling blighted areas.

In 2017, the Code Enforcement section worked short staffed with one of the Officers being out for an extended period. Officers were able to continue their efforts in managing all of the community's health inspection needs and also provide public education through community events.

The support of City Council, City Administration, and our citizens continue to be invaluable to our success. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to serving the citizens of this great community.

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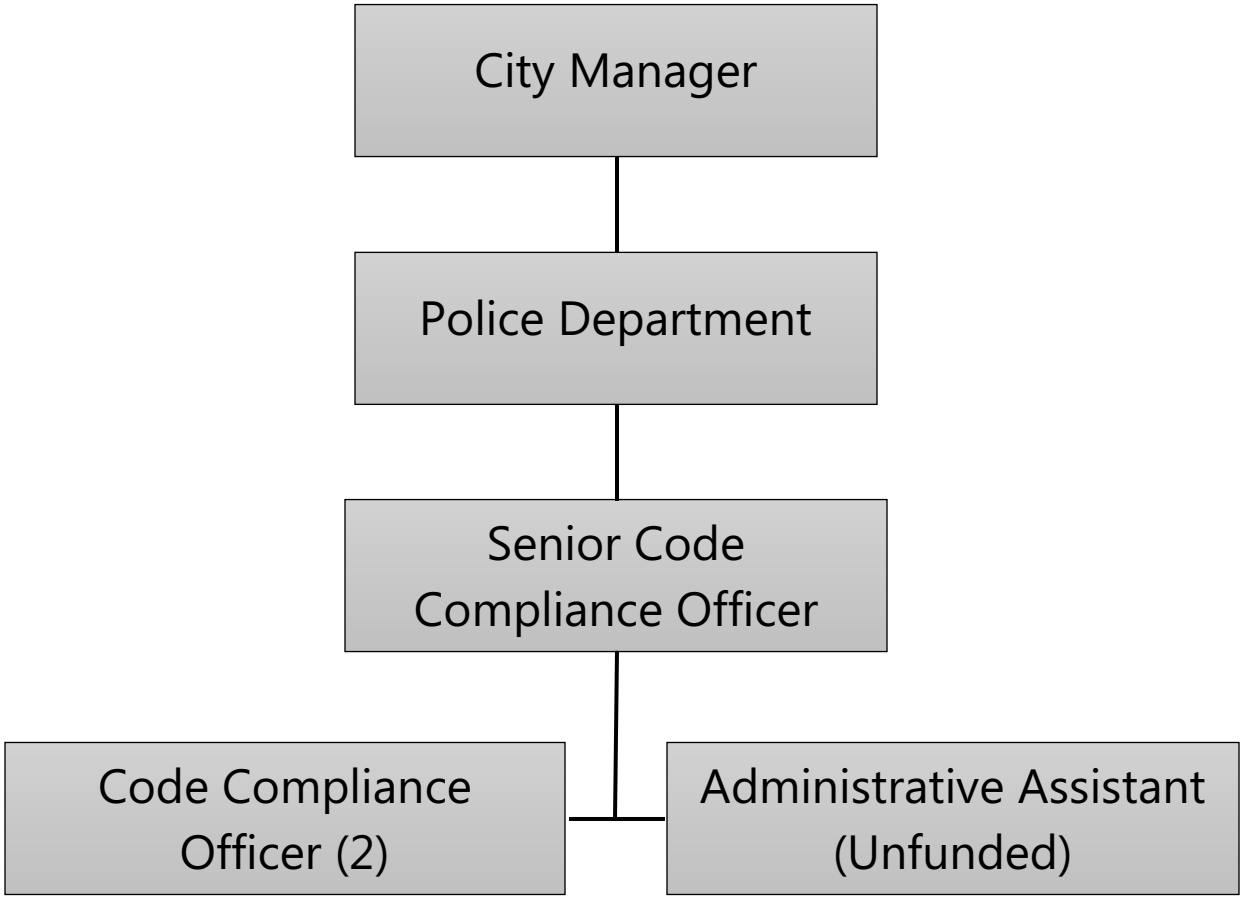
DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

The Code & Health Compliance Department consists of three full-time employees; one Senior Code Compliance Officer and two Code Compliance Officers. A part-time Administrative Assistant position is currently unfunded. The Department is supervised by the Senior Code Compliance Officer. Code & Health Compliance operates under the responsibility of the Police Department and is managed by the Deputy Police Chief of Uniform Services.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

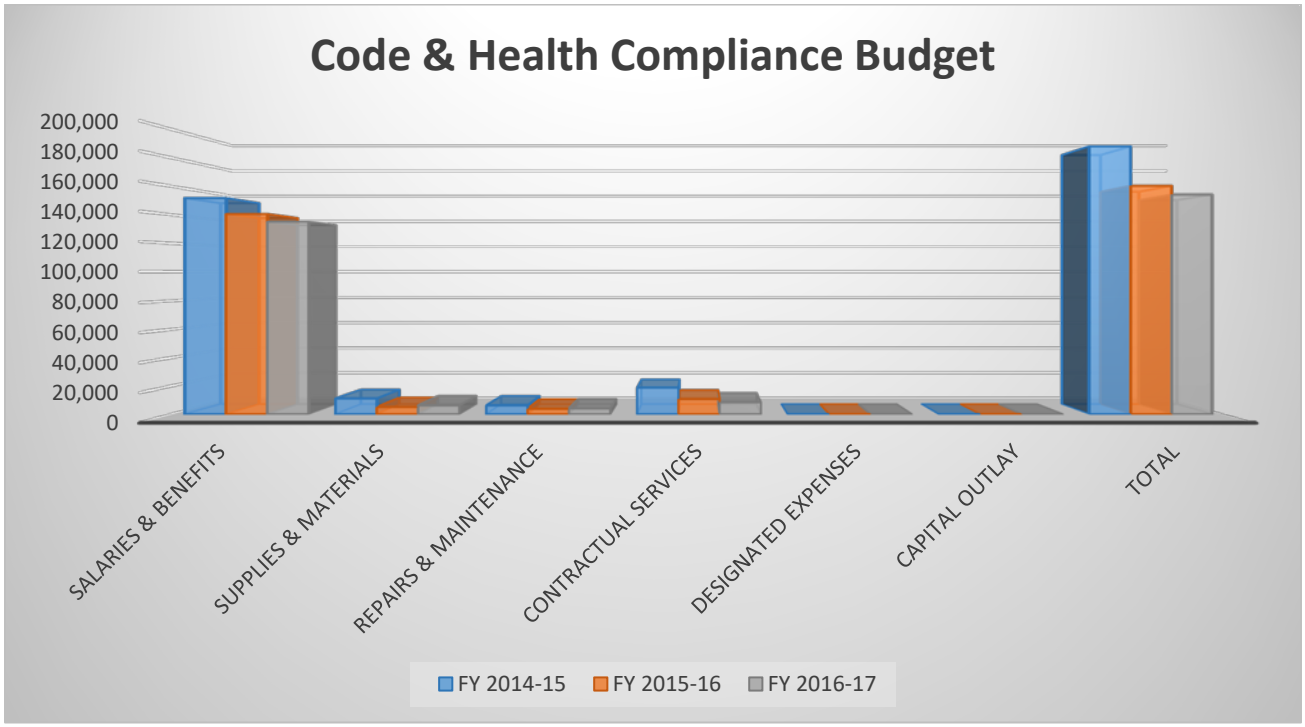
Code Compliance Officers work schedules that vary throughout the weekdays and weekend depending on the needs of the City. The Code Compliance Office located at 914 South Main Street Suite G is open during normal business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Citizens are welcome to ask questions or make complaints by calling the office at 254-542-8966, by email, through Facebook, or by walk-in.



BUDGET

The mission of the Code and Health Compliance Department is to promote public health and safety through education and training ensuring compliance with Federal, State, and City laws.

Budget Expenses	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
Salaries & Benefits	151,724	140,527	**135,114**
Supplies & Materials	11,200	5,138	**6,294**
Repairs & Maintenance	6,302	3,861	**4,118**
Contractual Services	18,819	10,798	**8,568**
Designated Expenses	0	0	**0**
Capital Outlay	0	0	**0**
Total	188,045	160,324	**154,095**



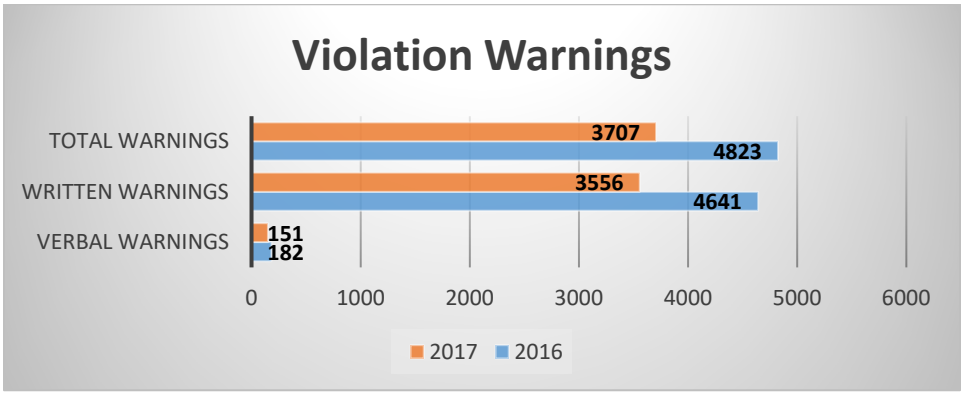
CODE VIOLATIONS

The Code & Health Compliance Department responds to complaints received from citizens and other agencies relating to alleged violations of state and local laws. Our three Code Compliance officers provide services to 17.84 square miles within the incorporated city limits of Copperas Cove. These officers are professionally trained to meet the needs of the citizens and provide these services. Last year, 377 complaints were received from citizens and other agencies with 227 of the complaints being unfounded. It is the goal of Code Compliance to address complaints within 48 hours of receipt.

The majority of the 3707 investigated code violations in 2017 were generated by Code Compliance officers through proactive enforcement. Proactive enforcement entails a regular patrol of all streets and alleyways within the City. In most cases, a written warning is generated giving a ten day time period for a violation to be corrected. An attempt to serve the warning in person is always made to provide an opportunity to educate the citizen. In many cases, the violator is unaware of the City ordinance and a higher degree of success is achieved when getting to interact with a citizen. Some violations require a citation to be issued immediately in gaining compliance.

If contact cannot be established with a violator, the warning is posted at the location and a violation letter is sent to the property owner on record or any person having care or control over the property. These letters are sent within one to two business days.

In some instances and at the discretion of the officer, some violations are managed with a verbal warning. Of the 3707 violations, 3556 written warnings were issued and 151 were managed with a verbal warning.



ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

The following chart represents a breakdown of the 3707 warnings along with the State laws and City ordinances that were violated.

Violations	2016	2017
Alleyway Obstructions	155	155
Unsafe Appliances	44	53
Basketball Goals	48	65
Bulk/Brush on Curb	89	32
Care of Premise	6	6
Construction Debris	1	2
Dumping	1	2
Fence Maintenance	24	20
Fluid Spills	7	11
Graffiti	0	8
Handbills	15	10
Health Code	17	5
High Grass	1727	1229
Home Occupations Code	10	12
House Numbers	148	60
International Property Code	15	2
Junk Vehicles	98	99
Junk Vehicle Parts	73	106
Junk/Rubbish/Trash	700	542
Right of Way	689	464
Rodents/Vector	22	15
Sewage	18	15
Signs	87	46
Smoking	1	0
Stagnant Water	26	23
Swimming Pools	38	24
Trash Can-Early/Late	294	239
Vehicle on Grass	219	270
Visual Obstructions	24	22
Water Connections	44	17
Yard Sales	27	11
All Other Violations	156	142
Totals	**4823**	**3707**

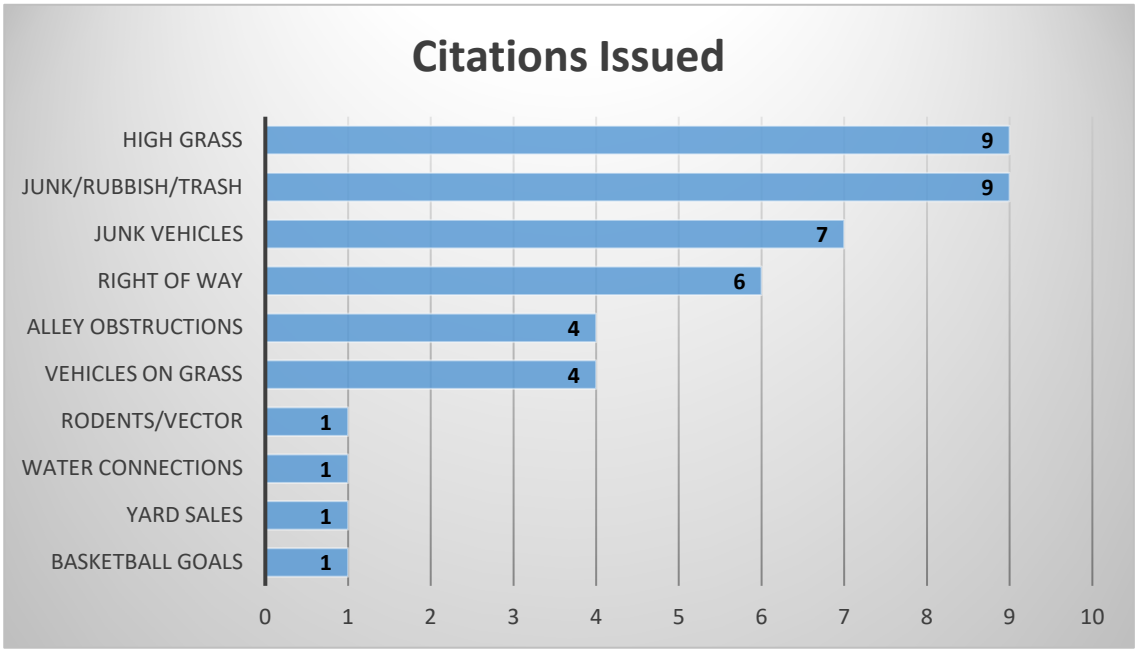
2017 Top Five Most Common Violations

1. High Grass
2. Junk/Rubbish/Trash in Yard
3. Vegetation in Right of Way
4. Vehicle Parked on Grass
5. Trash Can Left Out Early/Late

An abatement is performed at the City's expense when all other means of getting a violation corrected fails. The City provided abatement services for 45 properties in 2017 at a cost of $2,736. Of the 45 abatements, 30 liens were filed against properties where the expenses could not be recovered.

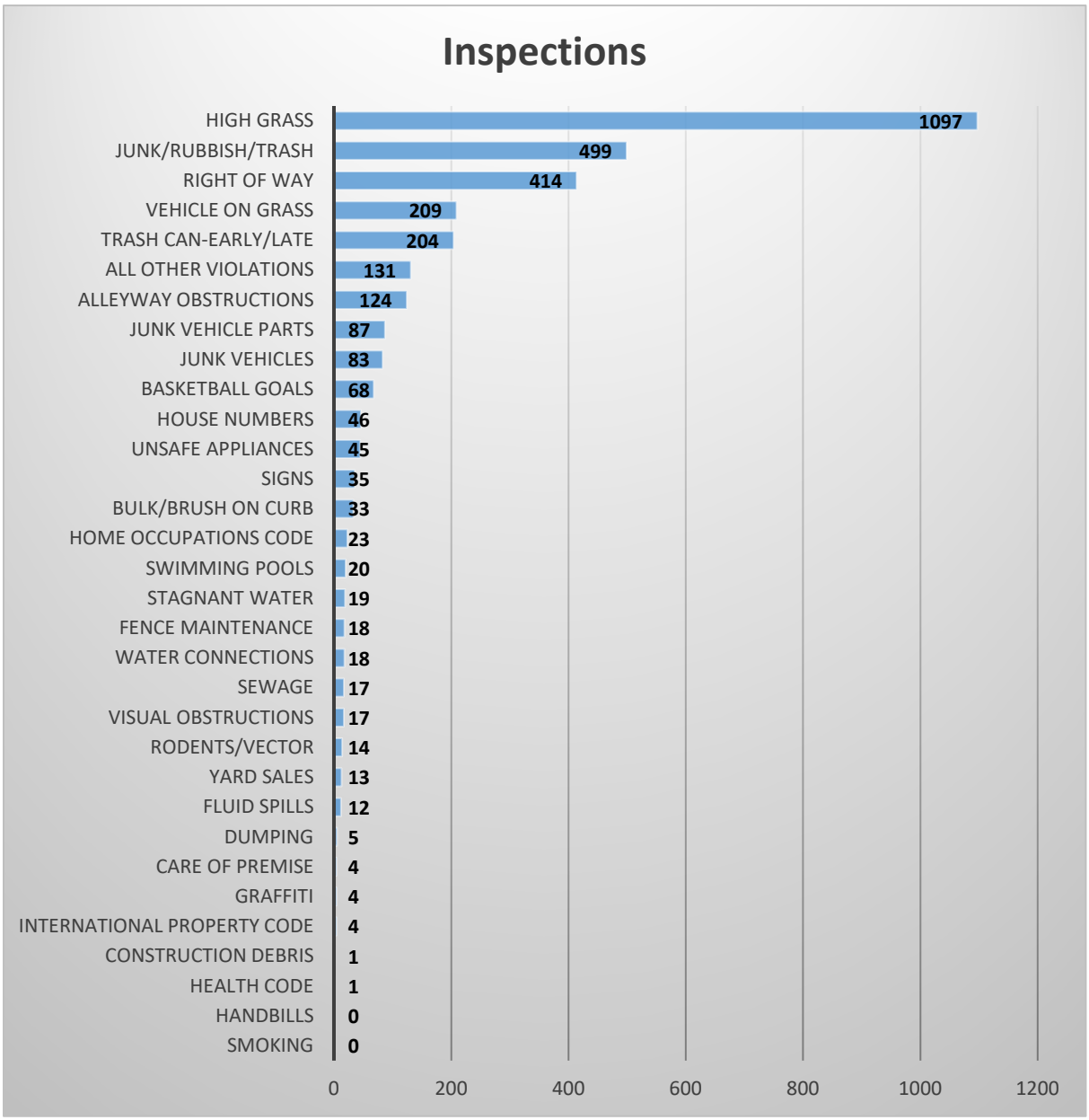
CITATIONS ISSUED

Voluntary compliance is the ultimate goal in resolving violations of State and local laws. Code Compliance officers must resort to issuing citations in extreme cases of code violations or in cases when voluntary compliance cannot be achieved. In 2017, 43 citations were issued in these cases. The following graph reflects which violations were cited and their frequency.



INSPECTIONS

In most cases, ten days will be given to make the necessary correction(s) and comply with the ordinance once a violation has been established. After ten days, a Code Compliance Officer will return to the property of the violation and conduct an inspection to determine if further enforcement is necessary. Some violations may require multiple follow-up inspections. A total of 3265 inspections were performed in 2017 with the most common being for high grass and trash.



FOOD SANITATION

In accordance with Chapter 8, Article II of the Code of Ordinances, the Code & Health Compliance Department is tasked with handling the inspections of all food establishments, mobile food vendors, schools, and foster/adoption homes. The inspection sets forth a weighted point value for all requirements which is subtracted from 100 to determine an overall score.

When the rating score of the establishment is less than 70, the establishment shall initiate corrective action on all identified violations within forty-eight (48) hours. One or more re-inspections will be conducted at reasonable time intervals to assure correction. In the case of temporary food service establishments and mobile food vendors, all violations shall be corrected within twenty-four (24) hours. If violations are not corrected within twenty-four (24) hours, the establishment shall immediately cease food service operations until authorized to resume by the regulatory authority.

363 health inspections were conducted in 2017 with 21 inspections being conducted for foster/adoption homes.

Any person working or employed as a food manager or food handler must obtain a certification. It is unlawful for any food handler or manager to work in a food establishment after their certification has expired.

The Code & Health Department is responsible for the regulation and issuance of certifications for volunteer food handlers, food handlers, and managers. Certification for food handlers and volunteers are obtained through training conducted by the Code Compliance officers and food managers can obtain certification online through the City's website.

- ✓ 450 Food Handlers certified by Code Compliance staff.
- ✓ 1 Food Managers certified by online web service.
- ✓ 554 volunteer Food Handlers trained by Code Compliance staff.
- ✓ 15 Blue Plate Awards presented to local businesses.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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City of Copperas Cove

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