



Washoe County Code Enforcement Common Questions



Washoe County Code Enforcement Mission Statement:

Washoe County Code Enforcement provides sensitive, courteous, and efficient services designed to ensure quality of life for all residents and property owners. These services protect the health, safety and welfare of Washoe County residents through fair and impartial enforcement of the Washoe County Business, Liquor and Gaming License Code (Chapter 25), the Nuisance Code (Chapter 50), and the Development Code (Chapter 110). Enforcement emphasizes voluntary compliance, followed when necessary by proper legal procedures. The legal procedures are through the Administrative Enforcement Code, and may also include a misdemeanor criminal action.

1. Which County Codes does Community Development staff enforce?

Code Enforcement Officers (CEOs) are designated to enforce land use regulations within unincorporated Washoe County pursuant to Article 910 of the Washoe County Development Code (Washoe County Code [WCC] Chapter 110). CEOs are also designated to enforce business license regulations within the unincorporated County for both the Business License Ordinance (WCC Chapter 25) and the Liquor and Gaming License Ordinance (WCC Chapter 30) pursuant to WCC section 25.045. Finally, CEOs are authorized to enforce certain nuisance code regulations within the unincorporated County pursuant to WCC section 50.306.

Washoe County regulates land uses, businesses and nuisances to protect the public's health and safety. The County seeks to remedy any infractions of County Code by voluntary compliance whenever possible. To this end, a CEO will give notice of any Code infractions to a tenant, occupant, property owner and/or business owner with a time period to rectify or remedy any issues on a property or with a business. If compliance is not achieved by the time provided, the CEO will enforce the County's regulations through either the Administrative Enforcement Code or by issuing a misdemeanor criminal citation.

- *Administrative Enforcement Code.* The preferred method to enforce County regulations is through the administrative process enabled by this Code. The Code provides for administrative penalties and fines when a property or business does not comply with County regulations, balanced with opportunities for mediation and administrative hearings when warranted. See question 8 of this handout for more details on the administrative enforcement process.
- *Misdemeanor Criminal Citation.* When warranted, the CEO may issue a misdemeanor criminal citation when a property or business does not comply with County regulations. The Washoe County Commission is enabled by State Law (NRS 171.17751) to designate certain staff to prepare, sign, and serve written criminal citations. The County Commission has designated

the CEOs to issue citations within provisions of WCC Chapters 25, 30, 50 and 110. A misdemeanor criminal citation is normally only issued when all other administrative processes have failed to correct a Code violation. See question 9 of this handout for more details on the criminal citation process.

2. What types of County Code violations does Community Development staff enforce?

As noted earlier, Community Development code enforcement staff may only enforce land use (to include zoning) business license (to include gaming and liquor licenses) regulations, and certain nuisance regulations. The most prevalent land use (zoning) County Code violations investigated and enforced by the CEO's include:

- Outdoor storage of commercial vehicles and/or commercial equipment.
- Cargo and/or storage containers which do not meet placement standards or permit requirements.
- Living in a Recreational Vehicle or travel trailer (to include temporary camping on a property).
- Storage of an unoccupied manufactured or mobile home on a residential property.

Business license violations typically include:

- Operating a business without a valid County business license.
- Violation of a home-based business license restriction.

As noted, CEOs are authorized to enforce certain nuisance regulations. These regulations are:

- Maintenance of a property in such a state of disrepair or deterioration that could cause damage to other property or improvements, or cause or contribute to blight and a substantial reduction in the value of neighboring properties.
- Excessive foliage and/or other nuisance conditions on the exterior of any foreclosed residential property.
- Outdoor storage of building materials, appliances, debris and/or junk vehicles in public view.
- Presence of an attractive nuisance on a property.

3. I did not see my complaint on the types of Code violations enforced by Community Development. Who do I contact for other types of County Code violations?

Frequently, the Department receives complaints on other types of County Code violations of which the Department, and the CEOs, have no authority to either investigate or enforce. Some examples of these types of complaints (to include the appropriate County agency to contact on these complaints) are:

- Trash, debris, refuse, rubbish and/or garbage on a property (Health District at 328-2434).

- Vector problems (e.g., rodents or mosquitoes) on a property (Health District at 328-2434).
- Overgrown vegetation or weeds (local fire agency).
- Drainage or storm water issues from one property onto another (Engineering Division, 328-2040).
- Noise from off-road vehicles; or any off-road vehicle operating within 1,000 feet of a residence (Sheriff's Office at 328-3001).
- Trespassers on a foreclosed property (Sheriff's Office at 328-3001).
- Abandoned vehicles on public roads (Sheriff's Office at 328-3001).
- Obstructing a public road or trail (Sheriff's Office at 328-3001).
- Abandoned buildings or structures; or any structure that is dangerous or in disrepair (Building & Safety at 328-2020).
- Animals at large or noisy animals (Regional Animal Services at 353-8900).

When the Department receives such complaints, staff will inform the complainant of the appropriate County agency with enforcement authority for the alleged violation.

4. How do I report a potential violation of the County's land use, business license and/or nuisance regulations?

There are several methods to report a land use, business license code, or nuisance complaint:

- Call the Code Enforcement hotline at 328-6106;
- Visit the Community Development front counter (located on the second floor of Building A, Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street in Reno):
- Mail a letter to: Washoe County Department of Community Development, Attn: Code Enforcement, PO Box 11130, Reno, Nevada 89520-0027; **OR**,
- Send an e-mail to rschebler@washoecounty.us.

When reporting a potential Code violation, please provide the following information:

- Your name, address, and phone number;
- The address of the potential violation;
- The violator's name, if known;
- The type(s) of violation(s); and,
- Any details that might assist the CEO when investigating the complaint.

We prefer to have your name, address, and phone number to initiate an enforcement case. We will use your personal information to contact you if we have additional questions, to provide a status of the case, or if we determine that the complaint is not within our jurisdiction (e.g., falls within the City's boundaries) or not within our scope of authority.

Your personal information (specifically, your name, address, and phone number) becomes part of the public record pertaining to the enforcement case and will be

released as part of the case file when fulfilling a public records request from a citizen. In certain cases, your personal information may be treated as sensitive information if the enforcement case is being handled through the criminal enforcement process. In these cases, your information will not be released pursuant to a public records request until the case is closed.

5. How quickly will a Code Enforcement Officer respond to a complaint?

The Department's business standard requires a CEO visit the site of a potential violation within three business days after our offices receive the complaint. However, in the majority of complaint cases, the CEO will visit the property by the next business day.

6. How can I find out what action has been taken in response to my complaint?

Call the Code Enforcement hotline at 328-6106 and provide staff with the address of the potential Code violation or the complaint case number (if known). Renée Schebler provides administrative support to the code enforcement program and is usually able to provide information on the complaint based on the information entered into the code enforcement data base. Frequently, the CEO will also contact you directly to provide you with an update on the status or progress of the complaint case.

7. How do I know if the location of a potential Code violation is within unincorporated Washoe County?

Call the Code Enforcement Hotline at 328-6106 or the Planning Counter at 328-6100 with the street address and/or Assessor's Parcel Number of the potential Code violation. Community Development staff will help you determine the jurisdiction within which the location of the potential Code violation lies. If the property is within the City limits of either Reno or Sparks, we will provide you with phone numbers to contact those jurisdictions.

You can obtain the Assessor's Parcel Number by contacting the Washoe County Assessor's Office at 328-2277. You can also find the Assessor's Parcel Number through Washoe County's On-line Map Warehouse. The e-mail address is <http://wcgisweb.washoecounty.us/website/Map%5FWarehouse/viewer.htm>. Click on the Property tab to search the Assessor's files.

8. What is the County's administrative enforcement process and how does it work?

The Administrative Enforcement Code (WCC sections 125.120 through 125.315) allows a CEO to follow an administrative process to correct County Code violations, rather than issuing a misdemeanor criminal citation and taking the case to the Criminal Court system. Administrative enforcement allows a tenant, occupant, property owner or business owner to comply with County Code regulations without the potential for a conviction by a Criminal Court and a subsequent criminal history record. However, administrative enforcement also provides for a range of penalties and fines should a property or business not comply with regulations.

Overview of the administrative enforcement process:

The CEO will send a correction notice when a property owner or business is in violation of County regulations. The correction notice provides an opportunity for voluntary compliance and will be sent to any appropriate tenant, occupant, property owner and/or business owner. The correction notice outlines the Code infraction, provides information on how to correct the issue, and sets a time frame for correction. The CEO will allow at least 30 days to correct the infraction. A person may request, in writing, an extension of time to correct the issue(s). The CEO will evaluate the request and grant or deny the extension in writing.

The CEO will include a form to request mediation with the correction notice. Mediation may provide an opportunity for two parties to reach a mutually acceptable solution to resolve the issue without involving the County or its enforcement agencies. The County itself, however, cannot be a party to any mediation. Enforcement action will be suspended during mediation. Successful mediation will result in a written mediation agreement containing specific steps or actions to correct the issue and bring the property or business into compliance with County regulations. Unsuccessful mediation will trigger the enforcement action to continue.

If a code infraction creates a serious risk to public health, safety or welfare, the CEO will immediately issue a notice of violation without sending a correction notice. If warranted, the CEO may then proceed with summary abatement to correct the problem.

If the infraction is not corrected within the time provided, the CEO will send a notice of violation. A notice of violation outlines the Code violation, provides recommendations on correcting the violation and sets a time period of no more than 20 days to correct the violation. The notice of violation will also establish administrative remedies which will be enforced if the violation is not corrected. These remedies may include one or more of the following:

- Administrative penalties ranging from \$100 to \$400 for subsequent notices of violation. Penalties of between \$500 and \$2,500 will be assessed for conducting a business without the proper license or performing work (e.g., grading) without the proper permit.
- Record the notice of violation against the property. A recorded notice clouds the title on a property and could adversely impact any property transactions such as refinancing or sale. Fees will be collected for recording the notice. The recorded notice will be removed only when the violations on the property are corrected.
- Withholding approvals of permits and/or licenses. Approvals include initial applications and renewals (such as renewing a business license).
- Abatement of the violations by the County. Abatement permits the County to enter the property or business and correct the violations. Administrative fees and costs associated with the abatement (such as clean-up costs, staff time, vehicle costs) will be collected.
- Administrative fees will be collected. Fees are collected for second and subsequent re-inspections of a property or business, for recording a notice

or lien, for posting any notice or lien, and for certified mailing of any notice or lien.

All administrative penalties and fees must be paid in full. Failure to pay the total cost of penalties and fees will result in the County charging interest on the total amount and also recording a lien against the property. Any recorded lien will be removed only when all penalties and fees are paid.

Administrative Hearings:

A person has the opportunity to request an administrative hearing with the notice of violation or when abatement is ordered. The Washoe County Commission may elect to conduct an administrative hearing, or they may appoint an administrative enforcement hearing officer. The Commission or the hearing officer will consider the evidence submitted at a hearing and render a decision called an administrative order. The order may affirm, modify or dismiss the remedies set within a notice of violation. The order can also establish additional remedies as a tool to gain compliance with County regulations. The order will also set the amount of any penalties and fees to be paid if the violation remains uncorrected, to include the required \$50 administrative hearing fee. Failure to obey an administrative order is a misdemeanor criminal offense.

9. How does the County enforce regulations through the Criminal Court system?

When a violation of the County Code remains uncorrected or when an administrative order is not followed, the CEO may issue a misdemeanor criminal citation to the tenant, occupant, property owner and/or business owner. The citation requires the violator to appear in the appropriate Washoe County Justice Court at a specific date and time. Failure to appear will result in the Court issuing a warrant for the violator's arrest.

When the violator appears at Court, the Court will allow the violator to enter a plea on the case. A plea of Not Guilty will result in the Court setting a date and time for a Justice of the Peace to hear the case. A plea of Guilty results in the Court setting an appropriate punishment for the violation, usually a monetary fine. If the case proceeds to a hearing, the Judge will hear the case using standard criminal court proceedings (for example, representation by legal representatives, admission of evidence, witness testimony). The Judge will render a decision at the conclusion of the case. Failure to follow the Judge's order will result in additional criminal punishment. Conviction of a misdemeanor criminal offense results in a criminal history record for the violator.

Punishment for conviction of a misdemeanor criminal offense is set according to WCC section 125.050 (a maximum fine of \$1,000 and/or a maximum jail sentence of six months). Each day that the violation persists is a separate violation and the CEO may issue a written misdemeanor criminal citation for each day the violation remains uncorrected

10. Why does the County follow an administrative enforcement process and not take all code violations to Criminal Court?

Conviction of a misdemeanor criminal offense does not guarantee that the violation has been corrected. The punishments allowed pursuant to County Code (jail time and/or fines) may provide an incentive for a person to correct a code violation, but they do not by themselves remedy or rectify the actual violation. Often at the conclusion of a criminal court case, the violation remains uncorrected and the CEO must start a new case on the violation, to include mandated minimum notice times to comply with County Codes.

Additionally, conviction of a misdemeanor criminal offense leaves the violator with a criminal history record. The County prefers to avoid following an enforcement path that may result in a criminal history record for these types of County Code violations; therefore, the administrative enforcement process is the preferred enforcement process.

The administrative enforcement process provides for remedies that will ensure that a Code violation has been corrected. The most direct remedy is abatement, where the County is empowered to enter a property if required to perform the minimum actions necessary to correct a violation. A less direct approach is achieved by recording a notice of violation, which clouds the title for a property until the violation is corrected and the recorded notice is cancelled. At some time, a property owner will correct the violation to cancel the recorded notice. Similarly, the imposition of penalties and fines, or the withholding of permits or licenses, provides a strong incentive for a person to correct a Code violation. The goal of the administrative enforcement process is to enable voluntary compliance through a series of notices that explain the code violations, provide recommended actions to correct the violations, and then outlines possible administrative action should the violations remain unresolved.

11. How long does it take to resolve a violation of the County's land use, business license or nuisance regulations?

Administrative Enforcement Code:

County Code requires that a CEO initially allow a person at least 30 days to correct an infraction of County regulations with the issuance of a correction notice. If the infraction remains uncorrected, Code requires the CEO to provide no more than 20 days to correct the issue with the issuance of a notice of violation.

These time frames may be extended by a CEO upon a written request from the tenant, occupant, property owner or business owner. If a case moves to mediation from a correction notice, then the time frame for compliance will be extended until the mediation is either successfully or unsuccessfully concluded. The Code requires various notices for certain administrative remedies (such as recording a notice of violation or abating a code violation) and these notices will extend the initial time frames. Finally, if the case is moved to an administrative hearing, then the time frames will be extended by up to 60 days for the hearing to be held and a decision rendered.

Criminal Court:

The County's Development Code (WCC Chapter 110) mandates that a CEO allow at least 20 days for a person to correct a land use (zoning) code violation before issuing a misdemeanor criminal citation. The Department's policy, however, is to allow a person with a first-time violation to have a minimum of 30 days to correct the matter. The CEO provides the violator with a written notice of violation/order to comply and specifies the time allowed to correct the violation within the written notice.

Historically, the majority of land use (zoning) violations are resolved within 60 days of sending a written notice of violation (90% of all complaint cases). Over 96% of all complaint cases are resolved within 90 days of the written notice. Only a small minority (between 1% and 2%) of all complaint cases are resolved through the Justice Court system by the issuance of a misdemeanor criminal citation.

There are no County Code regulations which require a notice period for a business license code violation before a CEO issues a written misdemeanor criminal citation. However, a CEO will typically allow a business owner conducting business without a proper business license three (3) business days to apply for the correct license or to stop conducting business. Failure to apply for a license or to stop conducting business will cause a CEO to issue the citation.

Likewise, there are no noticing time frames within the Nuisance Code before a CEO can issue a misdemeanor criminal citation. Since most citations will likely result from the failure to obey an administrative order, the CEO may issue the citation once non-compliance with the order is verified.

12. Why does the County allow so much time for a person to correct a Code violation?

There are two principal reasons to allow a person to voluntarily correct land use, business license and/or nuisance code violations:

- Many people are not aware that they are in violation of a County Code. Part of the CEO's duties is to educate the public concerning the County's regulations. Often, people quickly and voluntarily correct any violations when the matter is brought to their attention.
- Often it takes time for a person to correct a Code violation, such as removing excess material from a property, and providing such time demonstrates good faith on part of both the County and the violator to resolve the matter. It is only after the violator does not demonstrate good faith by taking no steps to correct the violation that the County is forced to take further administrative or legal actions in order to remedy or rectify the violation.

Historically, the County averages about a 98 to 99% voluntary compliance rate with County Code violations of land use, business license or nuisance regulations. This demonstrates that the vast majority of people will correct Code violations when these are brought to their attention and when provided a realistic time frame to remedy or rectify the violations.

13. I received a notice in the mail from your offices, but I am renting the property to tenants. Since they are occupying the residence, aren't they the ones responsible for correcting any violations?

No. Even though you may be renting or leasing the property to tenants, you are directly responsible as the property owner for ensuring the property is in compliance with County regulations. A notice is generally mailed to both the current resident (tenant or occupant) and the property owner so that both are aware of the violation(s), but the property owner is ultimately responsible to correct any violation(s).

14. Are there rules for storing vehicles on my residential property?

Yes. Generally, there are no land use regulations concerning the storage of operable, registered vehicles owned by you on your residentially zoned property. However, the storage of a large number of operable, registered vehicles may constitute a violation of County Code, since such storage is limited to non-residentially zoned property. A CEO will determine whether the storage is of such magnitude to cause a potential violation. Additionally, commercial vehicles of any type are prohibited from being stored on residentially zoned property.

WCC section 50.304(11) defines a junk vehicle as “a street-legal or non-highway vehicle, including component parts, which is ruined, dismantled or inoperable for any reason, or otherwise unused for its original purpose; or, a street-legal vehicle that does not possess a current, valid vehicle registration”. A vehicle is further defined as:

Any self-propelled instrument of conveyance designed primarily for the transportation of persons or goods.

a. “Street-legal Vehicle”. Any instrument of conveyance which can be lawfully licensed or registered for use on public highways, streets, roads, or other public ways. Examples include, but are not limited to, automobiles, trucks, vans, trailers, motor homes or recreational vehicles, campers, motorcycles, and mopeds.

b. “Non-highway Vehicle”. Any instrument of conveyance or off-road vehicle which cannot be lawfully licensed or registered for use on public highways, streets, roads, or other public ways. Examples include, but are not limited to, dune buggies, all terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, boats, and personal water craft.

Junk vehicles are not allowed to be stored in public view on any property in the unincorporated County. There are three exemptions to this regulation:

- Junk vehicles enclosed and visually obscured within a structure, or stored within a lawful screen, are not considered to be in public view. A lawful screen provides physical separation and visual obscuration on all sides (total enclosure) and in all seasons. Screening must be at least 6 feet high can be accomplished by erecting a fence or decorative wall, constructing an earthen berm, planting dense landscaping, or using a structure to screen. A property owner must obtain a permit from the Washoe County Department of Building and Safety before constructing a fence, wall, berm, and/or

structure (contact the Building Department at 328-2020 for more information).

- Junk vehicles used in a properly licensed business of vehicle storage, vehicle dealer, vehicle manufacturer or distributors, vehicle repair shop, rebuilder of vehicles, or automobile wrecking service. The junk vehicles must be stored on the property licensed for business operations.
- Junk vehicles authorized for display by a valid County Junk Vehicle Display Permit.

There is no limit on the number of junk vehicles enclosed and visually obscured within a structure or stored within a lawful screen. However, the storage of a large number of junk vehicles may constitute a violation of County land use regulations, since such storage is limited to industrially zoned property. A CEO will determine whether the storage is of such magnitude to cause a potential violation.

15. A vehicle has been abandoned on my property without my consent. Can you tow it away?

No. However, if the vehicle is on your property, you can legally have it towed. Simply call any automobile towing company to have them remove the vehicle. The automobile towing company will have you complete paperwork concerning ownership of the vehicle and you will be responsible to pay any towing charges.

16. A junk vehicle has been abandoned on a street near my house. Can you remove it?

If the junk vehicle is on a County-owned roadway and has been parked for more than 72 hours, the vehicle is considered abandoned pursuant to NRS 484.397. Contact the Sheriff's Office at 328-3001 to report the abandoned vehicle. The Sheriff's Office will post a notice requiring removal on the vehicle and tow the vehicle if it remains abandoned on the roadway for an additional 72 hours.

If the junk vehicle is parked on a publicly accessible and privately owned roadway, the property owner is responsible for removing the vehicle. You may call the Code Enforcement hotline at 328-6106 to file a complaint.

17. I would like to place a cargo container or a similar storage container on my property (such as a Portable On-Demand storage unit). Are there any rules or regulations on such containers?

Yes. The regulations depend as to whether you intend to permanently place the cargo or storage container on your property, or if the container will only be temporarily placed on the property.

Rules to place cargo or storage containers on any property vary with the zoning and existing use on the property. Please call the Department's Zoning and Development Information hotline at 328-6100 for information if you wish to place these containers on this type of property.

Temporary location of a cargo or storage container:

A cargo or storage container may be temporarily placed on a property to support on-going construction activity on the property. The property owner must possess a

current, valid building permit and the County must approve a site plan showing the location of the temporary cargo or storage container. The container must be located adjacent to the construction activity. The container must be free from damage and severe rust with no exposed metal, and must not be structurally altered. The container must be removed within 30 days of the final inspection of the construction (e.g., when the Certificate of Occupancy is issued) or when the building permit expires or is revoked.

18. Can I store building material on my residential property?

Building material may be stored outdoors on residentially zoned property only if the material is not in public view. The only exception is the temporary outdoor storage of building material used in conjunction with a valid building permit.

Permanent outdoor storage of building material can be accomplished by placing the material within a lawful screen. A lawful screen provides physical separation and visual obscuration on all sides (total enclosure) and in all seasons. Screening must be at least 6 feet high can be accomplished by erecting a fence or decorative wall, constructing an earthen berm, planting dense landscaping, or using a structure to screen. A property owner must obtain a permit from the Washoe County Department of Building and Safety before constructing a fence, wall, berm, and/or structure (contact the Building Department at 328-2020 for more information).

19. I want to move a new mobile/manufactured home on my property. Can my current mobile/manufactured home remain on the property after the new home is installed?

No, unless granted permission by a special use permit to retain the second home as a detached accessory dwelling. The ability to have such a second dwelling depends upon the size and zoning of the residential lot. For more information, contact the Department's Zoning and Development Information hotline at 328-6100.

Unoccupied mobile/manufactured homes may not be stored on residentially zoned property. CEOs will inspect a property 30 days after the final inspections for a new mobile/manufactured home to verify that the previous mobile/manufactured home has been removed from the property.

20. I am building my home and would like to reside on my property during construction. Is this allowed?

Yes. You are allowed to live in a mobile home, manufactured home, travel trailer, commercial coach, or recreational vehicle on your residentially zoned property provided you have a valid building permit to construct your primary residence. However, you are limited to a time period of either 30 days from the date you receive your certificate of occupancy or 18 months from the date of the original building permit for your primary residence (whichever is earlier), at which time you must vacate your temporary quarters.

You may be granted a single extension of 18 months, provided you still have a valid building permit for your primary residence. In no case, however, will you be

allowed to live in the temporary quarters after 37 months from the date of the original building permit for your primary residence.

If you choose to temporarily live in a mobile home, manufactured home, or commercial coach, you must obtain a valid set-up permit before occupying the temporary quarters. You will be required to post a \$2,000 bond to cover costs of removing the temporary quarters at the time you apply for your set-up permit. Additionally, these types of temporary quarters must be completely removed from the property by the time frames noted in the preceding paragraph. If you remove your temporary living quarters by the time frames established in County Code, then your \$2,000 bond will be returned to you.

21. I would like my guests to stay on my property in an RV. Is this allowed?

Yes, however, your guests may only stay in a self-contained travel trailer or recreational vehicle on your property subject to the following provisions:

- The temporary visit does not extend beyond 14 consecutive days;
- The guests or relatives cannot pay you to stay on your property;
- You must provide written permission to your guests (subject to inspection by County officials) clearly stating that the visit is authorized by you without any form of compensation;
- No discharge of any litter, sewage, effluent, or other material will be allowed on your property (this discharge must be into sanitary facilities designed to dispose of such material); and,
- No water or sanitary sewer connections are allowed from the travel trailer or RV to any buildings on your property.

Finally, you are limited to four visits (regardless of duration) each year by any guests on your property.

22. Are there rules for placing accessory structures such as sheds or playhouses on my property? How about rules for setbacks from my property line for these types of structures?

Regulations for accessory structures and their required setbacks from your property lines vary depending on the zoning of your property. If you have specific questions about these uses, please call the Department's Zoning and Development Information hotline at 328-6100 for more information.

23. My neighbor is conducting activities that are prohibited by our neighborhood CCRs. Can you help me?

No. Codes, Covenants, and Restrictions (CCRs) are a private contract between you and another party (typically the builder who developed your subdivision or perhaps a homeowners association). As such, any disputes regarding the CCRs must be settled between you, your neighbor, and the other party to the contract (e.g., the homeowners association). Washoe County cannot interfere in these types of civil matters.

24. When do I need a Washoe County business license?

You will need a Washoe County business license to conduct business within unincorporated Washoe County. You will need a business license if:

- Your place of business (either from a commercial location or from your home) is located within unincorporated Washoe County, **OR**
- You physically come into unincorporated Washoe County to conduct your business.

You will need a Washoe County business license to conduct business within Washoe County even if you have a business license from another city or county. Please contact the Washoe County Business License staff at 328-3733 for more information.

25. What is considered as “conducting a business”?

You are “conducting a business” if you engage in any business, trade, calling, industry, occupation, or profession in Washoe County outside of the incorporated areas of the Cities of Reno or Sparks. You must obtain a business license if you (or your agent, employee, or partner):

- Engage in the business, trade, calling, industry, occupation, or profession.
- Solicit patronage for the business, either actively or passively.
- Perform, or attempt to perform, any part of a business, trade, calling, industry, occupation, or profession.
- Rent, lease, or sub-lease:
 - any commercial or industrial property or
 - three or more residential units on a single parcel of land.
- Conduct a garage and/or yard sale longer than 72 hours in duration or occurring on the same property more than twice in any 6 month period.
- Breed 5 or more litters of cats or dogs in a calendar year.

26. Are there businesses that don’t require a business license?

The following businesses do not require a Washoe County business license:

- Providing childcare in private homes to six or fewer children.
- Garage and/or yard sales which are less than 72 hours in duration and/or do not occur more than twice on the same property in any 6 month period.
- Telecommuting from home by employees of a business located elsewhere.
- Informal, casual, or seasonal work performed by minors (for example, babysitting, lawn mowing).
- Parades or processions.

27. Can I operate a business from my home?

Yes. You will need to obtain a home-based business license. Home-based businesses are allowed in any residentially zoned area, provided that the business

activities do not alter the character or appearance of the residential neighborhood. The Washoe County Business License Ordinance contains specific restrictions on the type of businesses and activities that qualify as a home-based business. You should contact Washoe County Business License at 328-3733 if you are interested in operating a business from your home. Also, consult your neighborhood's CCRs as some private restrictions prohibit home businesses.

28. I did not see my question, now what?

Please contact the Code Enforcement hotline, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time at 328-6106. We will be happy to help you.

Code Enforcement Officers

Lora Barretta	328-3630 (Cold Springs, North Valleys, South Reno, Spanish Springs, Warm Springs, Washoe Valley)
Bert Bracy	328-6191 (Gerlach, Incline Village, Sun Valley, Verdi, Mogul, Wadsworth)