



# Vacant Property Registration

The purpose of requiring the registration of all vacant buildings, including dwellings, and the payment of registration fees is to assist the Township in protecting the public health, safety and welfare, to monitor the number of vacant buildings in the Township, to assess the effects of the condition of those buildings on nearby properties and the areas in which they are located, particularly in light of fire safety hazards and unlawful, temporary occupancy by unauthorized individuals, and to promote substantial efforts to rehabilitate such vacant buildings.

## Definitions.

"Boarded" - Some or all of the building's doors or windows have been covered with plywood, wood or metal sheeting, paneling or other similar materials, for the purpose of preventing entry into the building or damage by persons, animals or the elements of weather.

"Occupied" - Any building or structure shall be deemed to be occupied if one or more persons actually conducts a lawful business or resides in all or any part of the building as the licensed business-occupant, or as the legal or equitable owner/occupant(s) or tenant(s) on a permanent, nontransient basis, or any combination of the same.

"Occupancy ready" - Any building that is vacant but has been recently rehabilitated and a certificate of occupancy has been issued by the Township allowing the building to be lawfully occupied, or if the property has not been recently rehabilitated, the property meets all minimum code requirements and may be immediately occupied.

"Owner" -Any person, agent, operator, entity having a legal or equitable interest in the property; or otherwise having control of the property, including a mortgage holder foreclosing upon the property, the guardian of the estate, or the executor or administrator of the estate that holds title to the property.

"Unsecured" - A building or portion of a building which is open to entry by unauthorized persons without the use of tools or ladders.

"Vacant" - A building or structure shall be deemed to be vacant if no person or persons actually, currently conducts a lawfully licensed business, or lawfully resides or lives in any part of the building as the legal or equitable owner(s) or tenant-occupant(s), or owner-occupants, or tenant(s) on a permanent, nontransient basis.

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## DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING & LIFE SAFETY

**Raymond Stackhouse, Director**

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## Evaluation, Applicability and Registration.

(1) Initial Evaluation. The Codes Department is authorized to evaluate all buildings in the Township believed to be unoccupied and shall make a determination for each as to whether the building is vacant.

The Township shall send notice of his written determination to the last owner of record listed on the most recent Chester County tax roll. Said notice of determination shall be sent to the owner or designated agent by certified mail, return receipt requested. However, if the address of the owner or designated agent is unknown and cannot be ascertained by the Codes Department in the exercise of reasonable diligence, copies of the notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place on the property affected and serve as proper notice.

(2) Applicability. The requirements shall be applicable to any owner of any building that has been vacant for more than 45 consecutive days. The registration fee(s) as required shall be billed by the Township and shall be paid by January 1 of each year.

(3) Registration Statement and Fees. Registration shall be required for all vacant buildings, whether vacant and secure, vacant and unsecured, vacant and boarded, or occupancy ready and shall be required whenever any building has remained vacant for 45 consecutive days or more. The owner of the vacant property as of November 1 of each calendar year shall be responsible for the payment of the non-refundable yearly registration fee, except buildings deemed "occupancy ready" by the Township and actively for sale or lease shall be exempt from imposition of the annual registration fee. However, buildings deemed "occupancy ready" by the Township shall only be exempt from imposition of the annual registration fee for no more than one billing cycle.

Duty to amend registration statement. If the status of the registration information changes during the course of any calendar year, it is the responsibility of the owner, responsible party or agent for the same to contact the Township within 30 days of the occurrence of such change and advise the Codes Department in writing of those changes.

Exceptions. This Chapter shall not apply to any building owned by the United States, the Commonwealth, the County, the Township, nor to any of their respective agencies or political subdivisions."

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