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# ANC 4B: Vacant Properties and Tenant Rights

DC Department of Buildings (DOB)

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# DOB's Mission and Vision

## Mission

- ▶ DOB's mission is to protect the safety of the built environment.

## Vision

- ▶ Ensure the safety of the District's built environment
- ▶ **Green** the City
- ▶ Catalyze **economic development** by reducing friction



# What Is a Vacant Property?

- ▶ DC Code Section 42-3131.05 defines a vacant property as:  
**“... a building, or part of a building, which contains a dwelling or commercial unit ... which ... has not been occupied continuously.”**
- ▶ In the District, properties that are classified as vacant or blighted are taxed at a higher rate to incentivize property owners to bring the property back into productive use. Questions can be directed to [vacantbuildings@dc.gov](mailto:vacantbuildings@dc.gov).





# Vacant Properties Dashboard

AGENCY PERFORMANCE	PERMIT OPERATIONS	INSPECTIONS	VIOLATIONS AND ABATEMENT	ENFORCEMENT	VACANT PROPERTIES	DOB INDEX	CUSTOMER SERVICE
4,382	3,006	290	406	680			
TOTAL VACANT	VACANT BUILDINGS	VACANT BLIGHTED	VACANT EXEMPT	VACANT LOTS			

To select a specific or multiple ward(s), neighborhood(s), anc(s), smd(s), psa(s), ssl(s) and/or address(es):  
 Select dropdown, uncheck "ALL", enter/select ward(s), neighborhood(s), anc(s), smd(s), psa(s), ssl(s) and/or address(es), click checkbox(es) and click "APPLY"

Select Ward: (All) | Select Neighborhood: (All) | Select ANC: (All) | Select Single Member District: (All) | Select Police Service Area: (All) | Select SSL: (All)

Search Address: (All) CLEAR ALL FILTERS

\* If you suspect a property to be vacant and it does not appear on the Vacant Building Map, please [click here](#) to Report an Inspection online so that its occupancy status may be confirmed.

Address:	712 KEARNY ST NE
SSL:	3653 0004
Neighborhood:	Brookland
ANC:	5C
SMD:	5F02
First Tagged Vacant:	3/5/2021
Years Vacant:	2.2
Last Confirmed Vacant:	3/5/2021
Status:	VACANT BUILDINGS
Registration Start Date:	10/01/2020
Registration Expiration Date:	09/30/2021
Registration Tax Year:	FY2021
Next Survey Scheduled:	

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Click the Vacant Types to view the details

DC DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS WASHINGTON, DC

On our [Public Dashboard](#), we have a Vacant Building Map with built-in search features including address, ward, neighborhood, ANC, SMD and Police Service Area.

The map is also color coded to help users distinguish between vacant property types.

# Vacant Property Determination Process

- ▶ Filing a complaint via 311 or our [online complaint form](#) is the best way to resolve occupancy/maintenance concerns. If DOB's inspection provides evidence that the property is vacant, notification is made to the owner. Email correspondence will keep you updated on the status of your complaint.
- ▶ The owner **must** [register their property online](#) or pay the registration fee within **30 days** and continue to do so annually.
- ▶ Our Service Level Agreement (SLA) is to investigate and confirm status of occupancy within 30 business days of a complaint being received.
- ▶ A property is determined to be either (a) **Occupied**, (b) **Vacant**, or (c) **Vacant and Blighted**.

# Vacant Property Registration Process

- ▶ Owners of vacant properties must maintain and register their properties within 30 days after it becomes vacant.
- ▶ Vacant properties must meet certain criteria. Some may qualify for exemptions based on a variety of factors; visit [dob.dc.gov/vacantbuildings](https://dob.dc.gov/vacantbuildings) for more information to see if a property is eligible.
- ▶ If the owner fails to register and comply with the provisions of the DC Code, the owner is subject to denial or revocation of their registration and penalties in the amount of \$2,358.00.



# Inspections – Tenant Rights

- ▶ DOB enforces the District's property maintenance code in both vacant and occupied properties. [DC's housing standards](#) set the requirements for all units.
- ▶ DOB responds to tenant complaints by scheduling in-person inspections and issuing Notices of Infraction (NOIs) with fines if code violations are found.
- ▶ **Call us if your major systems are not working**
  - Plumbing
  - Fire Alarm
  - Electrical
  - Appliances
  - Heating and Air Conditioning (if provided)
  - Anything else that is broken in your unit





# Filing a Complaint

- ▶ **Step 1:** Report your problem to your landlord or property manager to fix.
- ▶ **Step 2:** If the issue is not fixed within 10 days, file complaint with DOB using our online form at [dob.dc.gov](https://dob.dc.gov) or calling (202) 671-3500.
  - The form provides automatic updates for inspection activity.
- ▶ **Step 3:** DOB will schedule an inspection within 15 business days or less for non-emergency issues; emergency issues are inspected the next business day.



# What to Expect For Your Inspection

- ▶ DOB will notify the landlord and/or property manager of the impending inspection.
- ▶ If DOB's inspector finds a housing code violation, a Notice of Infraction (NOI) will be issued.
  - Three types of NOI: Emergency (NOI-E) Routine (NOI-R) Sanitation (NOI-S)
- ▶ NOI-E: required to be fixed in **24 HOURS**.
  - Fire Alarm, backed up sink, issues impacting life safety, etc.
- ▶ NOI-R: required to be fixed within 60 days.
  - Peeling paint, broken cabinets, cosmetic issues.
- ▶ NOI-S: Reinspected, if not abated, DOB fixes and bills landlord.
  - Grass and weeds, trash.

# If a Landlord Refuses to Fix the Issue...

- ▶ A landlord who does not abate the issue is subject to fines.
- ▶ Once the abatement period has ended with no fix, DOB may refer the case to the **Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH)**.
  - OAH is an administrative court that hears cases involving government fines.
- ▶ DOB's lawyers go to court to argue the case as to why the landlord should be fined.
- ▶ If OAH decides in favor of DOB, the owner receives a court order to pay the fines.



# What DOB Needs From Tenants

- ▶ Inform your landlord/property management first by phone or in writing of issue(s)
- ▶ Provide your landlord/property management's contact information.
- ▶ Give DOB your contact information when submitting a complaint so DOB can keep you updated with what is going on with your complaint.
- ▶ Allow DOB inspectors to access and inspect your unit.
- ▶ Allow the landlord access your unit to fix the issue.



# Connect with DOB



Website

[\*\*dob.dc.gov\*\*](https://dob.dc.gov)



Social Media

[\*\*x.com/DC\\_DOB\*\*](https://x.com/DC_DOB)

[\*\*instagram.com/deptofbuildings\*\*](https://instagram.com/deptofbuildings)

[\*\*facebook.com/deptofbuildings\*\*](https://facebook.com/deptofbuildings)

[\*\*linkedin.com/company/departmentofbuildings\*\*](https://linkedin.com/company/departmentofbuildings)



Call or Email Us

**202-671-3500; [dob@dc.gov](mailto:dob@dc.gov)**

