

AMHERST TOWN CODE

CHAPTER 4

BUILDINGS.¹

Sec. 4-1. Building permits.

(Editor's note: This section was repealed on October 14, 1998.)

Sec. 4-2. Building Maintenance.

Sec. 4-2.1. Building maintenance policy.

The owners of property in the Town of Amherst shall remove, repair or secure any building, wall or any other structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the Town of Amherst.

Sec. 4-2.2. Procedure for requiring building maintenance.

Any person who has reason to believe that the condition of any building, wall or any other structure might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the Town of Amherst may petition the Town Council to remedy the perceived problem. Upon receiving a complaint, the Town Council may direct such complaint to the Property Maintenance Investigation Board and request that it inspect the premises and give a report on the condition of the building.

Sec. 4-2.3. Property Maintenance Investigation Board.

The Property Maintenance Investigation Board shall contain three members, each of whom shall be appointed for a three year term with terms staggered so that one appointment or reappointment shall be effective as of July 1 of each year. Preference for membership shall be given to contractors, engineers, architects, and members of the Town of Amherst Planning Commission and Town Council. The body shall meet as soon as possible, perform site inspections as appropriate, and prepare a written recommendation regarding the complaint to the Town Council as soon as is practical. The Town Manager shall act as the clerk for the board. Funds may be made available to support the Board as allocated by the Town Council

Sec. 4-2.4. Notice requirement.

Upon receipt of a report from the Property Maintenance Investigation Board, the Town Council of the Town of Amherst may order the removal, repair or securing of any building, wall or any other

¹For charter provisions as to authority of town council to regulate the materials and construction of buildings and other structures; to compel the removal or reconstruction of dangerous buildings and structures; and to require building permits, see Char., art. VIII, Sec. 1. As to authority of town council to establish fire limits and to require fireproof materials to be used in future construction of buildings within such fire limits, see Char., art. IX, Sec. 1, subsec. (2).

As to authority of town council to enact ordinances to require removal or repair of dangerous structures, see Code of Virginia Sec. 15.2-900 et seq.. As to statewide Building Code which shall be applicable within all municipalities, and counties in the state, when promulgated and made effective, see Acts 1972, ch. 829, approved April 10, 1972. As to Virginia Fire Hazards Law, see Code of Virginia, Sec. 27-63 et seq.

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structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the Town, if the owner and lien holder of such property after a reasonable notice and a reasonable time to do so has failed to remove, repair or secure the building, wall or other structure. For purposes of this section, reasonable notice includes a written Notice (i) mailed by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, sent to the last known address of the property owner and (ii) published once a week for two successive weeks in a newspaper having general circulation in the Town of Amherst. No action shall be taken by the Town Council of the Town of Amherst to remove, repair or secure any building, wall or other structure for at least thirty days following the later of the return of the receipt or newspaper publication.

Sec. 4-2.5. Reimbursement for Town expenses.

In the event the Town Council of the Town of Amherst removes, repairs or secures any building, wall or any other structure after complying with the notice provisions of this section, the cost or expenses thereof shall be chargeable to and paid by the owners of such property and may be collected by the Town of Amherst as taxes are collected. Every charge authorized by this section with which the owner of any such property has been assessed and which remains unpaid shall constitute a lien against such property ranking on a parity with liens for unpaid Town taxes and enforceable in the same manner as provided in Articles 2 and 4 of Chapter 39 of Title 58.1 of the Code of Virginia. (Reference Section 15.2-906 of the Code of Virginia)

Amended October 13, 2004.

Sec. 4-3. Commercial Sprinkler Systems.

When any sprinkler system is installed in a commercial building or structure within the Town of Amherst the sprinkler system must comply with the following requirements:

- (1) The minimum size for water supply lines should be ten inches in diameter for primary lines and six inches in diameter for secondary lines in the Town system to a gate valve locked in the open position in a valve box on the supply line to the sprinkler system.
- (2) Minimum flow through the line must be at least 750 gallons per minute.
- (3) The siamese connection for fire department use should have a legible sign indicating the type of sprinkler system, i.e. wet pipe, preaction or deluge.
- (4) A back flow preventor (cross connection device) to prevent any contamination of the public water supply system must be installed.
- (5) Main water control valves of the following types are acceptable: post indicating, wall indicating, or outside stem and yoke indicating. In either type of main water control valve, the valve must be locked in open position with a chain and padlock. If a wrench is required to operate the valve, the wrench must be locked on the valve in the open position.
- (6) A water motor alarm is required. Wet pipe systems must have a safety device such as a retard chamber or exterior bypass line to avoid false alarms in the event of a water pressure drop.
- (7) No tap on the sprinkler line for use as a portable or process water is permitted unless a meter is installed so the Town can measure water usage.

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- (8) Sprinkler systems should be designed to meet all specifications and building codes set by State, Federal, and local ordinances and regulations.

Any violations of this chapter shall be a criminal offense with a fine of up to \$100.00 per violation. Each separate day shall be considered a separate violation.