

TITLE 13

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE REGULATIONS¹

CHAPTER

1. MISCELLANEOUS.
2. SLUM CLEARANCE.
3. JUNKYARDS.
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CHAPTER 1

MISCELLANEOUS

SECTION

- 13-101. Smoke, soot, cinders, etc.
- 13-102. Stagnant water.
- 13-103. Weeds, grass and dirty lots.
- 13-104. Overgrown and dirty lots.
- 13-105. Dead animals.
- 13-106. Health and sanitation nuisances.
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13-101. Smoke, soot, cinders, etc. It shall be unlawful for any person to permit or cause the escape of such quantities of dense smoke, soot, cinders, noxious acids, fumes, dust, or gases as to be detrimental to or to endanger the health, comfort, and safety of the public or so as to cause or have a tendency to cause injury or damage to property or business.

13-102. Stagnant water. It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to allow any pool of stagnant water to accumulate and stand on his property without treating it so as effectively to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes.

13-103. Weeds, grass and dirty lots. Every owner or tenant of property shall periodically cut the grass and other vegetation commonly recognized as weeds on his property, and it shall be unlawful for any person to fail to comply with an order by the code enforcement officer to cut such vegetation when it has

¹Municipal code references

Animal control: title 10.

Littering streets, etc.: section 16-107.

Toilet facilities in beer places: section 8-213(12).

Wastewater treatment: title 18, chapter 2.

reached a height of over one foot (1'). It shall be unlawful for any owner of record of real property to create, maintain, or permit to be maintained on such property the accumulations of debris, trash, litter, or garbage or any combination of the preceding elements so as to endanger the health, safety, or welfare of other citizens or to encourage the infestation of rats and other harmful animals. (as replaced by Ord. #11-11-02, Dec. 2011)

13-104. Overgrown and dirty lots.¹ (1) Prohibition. Pursuant to the authority granted to municipalities under Tennessee Code Annotated, section 6-54-113, it shall be unlawful for any owner of record of real property to create, maintain, or permit to be maintained on such property the growth of trees, vines, grass, underbrush and/or the accumulations of debris, trash, litter, or garbage or any combination of the preceding elements so as to endanger the health, safety, or welfare of other citizens or to encourage the infestation of rats and other harmful animals.

(2) Limitation on application. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any parcel of property upon which an owner-occupied residence is located.

(3) Designation of public officer or department. The board of commissioners shall designate an appropriate department or person to enforce the provisions of this section.

(4) Notice to property owner. It shall be the duty of the department or person designated by the board of commissioners to enforce this section to serve notice upon the owner of record in violation of subsection (1) above, a notice in plain language to remedy the condition within ten (10) days (or twenty (20) days if the owner of record is a carrier engaged in the transportation of property or is a utility transmitting communications, electricity, gas, liquids, steam, sewage, or other materials), excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. The notice shall be sent by registered or certified United States Mail, addressed to the last known address of the owner of record. The notice shall state that the owner of the property is entitled to a hearing, and shall, at the minimum, contain the following additional information:

(a) A brief statement that the owner is in violation of section 13-104 of the Atoka Municipal Code, which has been enacted under the authority of Tennessee Code Annotated, section 6-54-113, and that the

¹Municipal code reference

Section 13-103 applies to cases where the town wishes to prosecute the offender in town court. Section 13-104 can be used when the town seeks to clean up the lot at the owner's expense and place a lien against the property for the cost of the clean-up but not to prosecute the owner in town court.

This title, chapter 2.

property of such owner may be cleaned-up at the expense of the owner and a lien placed against the property to secure the cost of the clean-up;

(b) The person, office, address, and telephone number of the department or person giving the notice;

(c) A cost estimate for remedying the noted condition, which shall be in conformity with the standards of cost in the town; and

(d) A place wherein the notified party may return a copy of the notice, indicating the desire for a hearing.

(5) Clean-up at property owner's expense. If the property owner of record fails or refuses to remedy the condition within ten (10) days after receiving the notice (twenty (20) days if the owner is a carrier engaged in the transportation of property or is a utility transmitting communications, electricity, gas, liquids, steam, sewage, or other materials), the department or person designated by the board of commissioners to enforce the provisions of this section shall immediately cause the condition to be remedied or removed at a cost in conformity with reasonable standards, and the cost thereof shall be assessed against the owner of the property. Upon the filing of the notice with the office of the register of deeds in Tipton County, the costs shall be a lien on the property in favor of the municipality, second only to liens of the state, county, and municipality for taxes, any lien of the municipality for special assessments, and any valid lien, right, or interest in such property duly recorded or duly perfected by filing, prior to the filing of such notice. These cost shall be placed on the tax rolls of the municipality as a lien and shall be added to property tax bills to be collected at the same time and in the same manner as property taxes are collected. If the owner fails to pay the costs, they may be collected at the same time and in the same manner as delinquent property taxes are collected and shall be subject to the same penalty and interest as delinquent property taxes.

(6) Appeal. The owner of record who is aggrieved by the determination and order of the public officer may appeal the determination and order to the board of commissioners. The appeal shall be filed with the town recorder within ten (10) days following the receipt of the notice issued pursuant to subsection (3) above. The failure to appeal within this time shall, without exception, constitute a waiver of the right to a hearing.

(7) Judicial review. Any person aggrieved by an order or act of board of commissioners under subsection (5) above may seek judicial review of the order or act. The time period established in subsection (4) above shall be stayed during the pendency of judicial review.

(8) Supplemental nature of this section. The provisions of this section are in addition and supplemental to, and not in substitution for, any other provision in the municipal charter, this municipal code of ordinances or other applicable law which permits the town to proceed against an owner, tenant or occupant of property who has created, maintained, or permitted to be maintained on such property the growth of trees, vines, grass, weeds,

underbrush and/or the accumulation of the debris, trash, litter, or garbage or any combination of the preceding elements, under its charter, any other provisions of this municipal code of ordinances or any other applicable law.

13-105. Dead animals. Any person owning or having possession of any dead animal not intended for use as food shall promptly bury the same or notify the town recorder and dispose of such animal in such manner as the town recorder shall direct.

13-106. Health and sanitation nuisances. It shall be unlawful for any person to permit any premises owned, occupied, or controlled by him to become or remain in a filthy condition, or permit the use or occupation of same in such a manner as to create noxious or offensive smells and odors in connection therewith, or to allow the accumulation or creation of unwholesome and offensive matter or the breeding of flies, rodents, or other vermin on the premises to the menace of the public health or the annoyance of people residing within the vicinity.

13-107. Violations and penalty. Violations of this chapter shall be punished in accordance with the general penalty provision of this municipal code of ordinances except that violations of section 13-104 shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of that section.

CHAPTER 2

SLUM CLEARANCE¹

SECTION

- 13-201. Findings of board.
- 13-202. Definitions.
- 13-203. "Public officer" designated; powers.
- 13-204. Initiation of proceedings; hearings.
- 13-205. Orders to owners of unfit structures.
- 13-206. When public officer may repair, etc.
- 13-207. When public officer may remove or demolish.
- 13-208. Lien for expenses; sale of salvage materials; other powers not limited.
- 13-209. Basis for a finding of unfitness.
- 13-210. Service of complaints or orders.
- 13-211. Enjoining enforcement of orders.
- 13-212. Additional powers of public officer.
- 13-213. Powers conferred are supplemental.

13-201. Findings of board. Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated, section 13-21-101 et seq., if the board of mayor and aldermen of the Town of Atoka finds that there exists in the town structures which are unfit for human occupation due to dilapidation, defects increasing the hazards of fire, accident or other calamities, lack of ventilation, light or sanitary facilities, or due to other conditions rendering such dwellings unsafe or unsanitary, or dangerous or detrimental to the health, safety and morals, or otherwise inimical to the welfare of the residents of the town then they may take whatever measures authorized under this chapter to alleviate the condition.

13-202. Definitions. (1) "Municipality" shall mean the Town of Atoka, Tennessee, and the areas encompassed within existing town limits or as hereafter annexed.

(2) "Governing body" shall mean the board of mayor and aldermen charged with governing the town.

(3) "Public officer" shall mean the officer or officers who are authorized by this chapter to exercise the powers prescribed herein and pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated, section 13-21-101 et seq.

(4) "Public authority" shall mean any housing authority or any officer who is in charge of any department or branch of the government of the town or

¹State law reference

Tennessee Code Annotated, title 13, chapter 21.

state relating to health, fire, building regulations, or other activities concerning structures in the town.

(5) "Owner" shall mean the holder of title in fee simple and every mortgagee of record.

(6) "Parties in interest" shall mean all individuals, associations, corporations and others who have interests of record in a dwelling and any who are in possession thereof.

(7) "Structures" shall mean any building or structure, or part thereof, used for human occupation and intended to be so used, and includes any outhouses and appurtenances belonging thereto or usually enjoyed therewith.

13-203. "Public officer" designated; powers. There is hereby designated and appointed a "public officer," to be the building inspector of the town, to exercise the powers prescribed by this chapter, which powers shall be supplemental to all others held by the building inspector.

13-204. Initiation of proceedings; hearings. Whenever a petition is filed with the public officer by a public authority or by at least five (5) residents of the town charging that any structure is unfit for human occupancy or use, or whenever it appears to the public officer (on his own motion) that any structure is unfit for human occupancy or use, the public officer shall, if his preliminary investigation discloses a basis for such charges, issue and cause to be served upon the owner of, and parties in interest of, such structure a complaint stating the charges in that respect and containing a notice that a hearing will be held before the public officer (or his designated agent) at a place therein fixed, not less than ten (10) days nor more than thirty (30) days after the service of the complaint; and the owner and parties in interest shall have the right to file an answer to the complaint and to appear in person, or otherwise, and give testimony at the time and place fixed in the complaint; and the rules of evidence prevailing in courts of law or equity shall not be controlling in hearings before the public officer.

13-205. Orders to owners of unfit structures. If, after such notice and hearing as provided for in the preceding section, the public officer determines that the structure under consideration is unfit for human occupancy or use, he shall state in writing his finding of fact in support of such determination and shall issue and cause to be served upon the owner thereof an order: (a) if the repair, alteration or improvement of the structure can be made at a reasonable cost in relation to the value of the structure (not exceeding fifty percent [50%] of the reasonable value), requiring the owner, during the time specified in the order, to repair, alter, or improve such structure to render it fit for human occupancy or use or to vacate and close the structure for human occupancy or use; or (b) if the repair, alteration or improvement of said structure cannot be made at a reasonable cost in relation to the value of the structure (not to exceed

fifty percent [50%] of the value of the premises), requiring the owner within the time specified in the order, to remove or demolish such structure.

13-206. When public officer may repair, etc. If the owner fails to comply with the order to repair, alter, or improve or to vacate and close the structure as specified in the preceding section hereof, the public officer may cause such structure to be repaired, altered, or improved, or to be vacated and closed; and the public officer may cause to be posted on the main entrance of any dwelling so closed, a placard with the following words: "This building is unfit for human occupancy or use; the use or occupation of this building for human occupancy or use is prohibited and unlawful."

13-207. When public officer may remove or demolish. If the owner fails to comply with an order, as specified above, to remove or demolish the structure, the public officer may cause such structure to be removed and demolished.

13-208. Lien for expenses; sale of salvaged materials; other powers not limited. The amount of the cost of such repairs, alterations or improvements, or vacating and closing, or removal or demolition by the public officer shall, upon the filing of the notice with the office of the register of deeds of Tipton County, be a lien on the property in favor of the municipality, second only to liens of the state, county and municipality for taxes, any lien of the municipality for special assessments, and any valid lien, right, or interest in such property duly recorded or duly perfected by filing, prior to the filing of such notice. These costs shall be placed upon the tax rolls of the town of Atoka as a lien and shall be added to property tax bills to be collected at the same time and in the same manner as property taxes are collected. If the owner fails to pay the costs, they may be collected at the same time and in the same manner as delinquent property taxes are collected and shall be subject to the same penalty and interest as delinquent property taxes. If the structure is removed or demolished by the public officer, he shall sell the materials of such structure and shall credit the proceeds of such sale against the cost of the removal or demolition, and any balance remaining shall be deposited in the chancery court of Tipton County by the public officer, shall be secured in such manner as may be directed by such court, and shall be disbursed by such court provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be construed to impair or limit in any way the power of the Town of Atoka to define and declare nuisances and to cause their removal or abatement, by summary proceedings or otherwise.

13-209. Basis for a finding of unfitness. The public officer defined herein shall have the power and may determine that a structure is unfit for human occupation and use if he finds that conditions exist in such structure which are dangerous or injurious to the health, safety or morals of the occupants or users of such structure, the occupants or users of neighboring structures or other

residents of the Town of Atoka; such conditions may include the following (without limiting the generality of the foregoing): defects therein increasing the hazards of fire, accident, or other calamities; lack of adequate ventilation, light, or sanitary facilities; dilapidation; disrepair; structural defects; and uncleanness.

13-210. Service of complaints or orders. Complaints or orders issued by the public officer pursuant to this chapter shall be served upon persons, either personally or by registered mail, but if the whereabouts of such person is unknown and the same cannot be ascertained by the public officer in the exercise of reasonable diligence, and the public officer shall make an affidavit to that effect, then the serving of such complaint or order upon such persons may be made by publishing the same once each week for two (2) consecutive weeks in a newspaper printed and published in the town. In addition, a copy of such complaint or order shall be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises affected by the complaint or order. A copy of such complaint or order shall also be filed for record in the Register's Office of Tipton County, Tennessee, and such filing shall have the same force and effect as other lis pendens notices provided by law.

13-211. Enjoining enforcement of orders. Any person affected by an order issued by the public officer served pursuant to this chapter may file a suit in chancery court for an injunction restraining the public officer from carrying out the provisions of the order, and the court may, upon the filing of such suit, issue a temporary injunction restraining the public officer pending the final disposition of the cause; provided, however, that within sixty (60) days after the posting and service of the order of the public officer, such person shall file such suit in the court.

The remedy provided herein shall be the exclusive remedy and no person affected by an order of the public officer shall be entitled to recover any damages for action taken pursuant to any order of the public officer, or because of noncompliance by such person with any order of the public officer.

13-212. Additional powers of public officer. The public officer, in order to carry out and effectuate the purposes and provisions of this chapter, shall have the following powers in addition to those otherwise granted herein:

- (1) To investigate conditions of the structures in the town in order to determine which structures therein are unfit for human occupation or use;
- (2) To administer oaths, affirmations, examine witnesses and receive evidence;
- (3) To enter upon premises for the purpose of making examination, provided that such entry shall be made in such manner as to cause the least possible inconvenience to the persons in possession;

(4) To appoint and fix the duties of such officers, agents and employees as he deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter; and

(5) To delegate any of his functions and powers under this chapter to such officers and agents as he may designate.

13-213. Powers conferred are supplemental. This chapter shall not be construed to abrogate or impair the powers of the town with regard to the enforcement of the provisions of its charter or any other ordinances or regulations, nor to prevent or punish violations thereof, and the powers conferred by this chapter shall be in addition and supplemental to the powers conferred by the charter and other laws.

CHAPTER 3

JUNKYARDS

SECTION

13-301. Junkyards.

13-301. Junkyards.¹ All junkyards within the corporate limits shall be operated and maintained subject to the following regulations:

(1) All junk stored or kept in such yards shall be so kept that it will not catch and hold water in which mosquitoes may breed and so that it will not constitute a place, or places in which rats, mice, or other vermin may be harbored, reared, or propagated.

(2) All such junkyards shall be enclosed within close fitting plank or metal solid fences touching the ground on the bottom and being not less than six (6) feet in height, such fence to be built so that it will be impossible for stray cats and/or stray dogs to have access to such junkyards.

(3) Such yards shall be so maintained as to be in a sanitary condition and so as not to be a menace to the public health or safety.

¹State law reference

The provisions of this section were taken substantially from the Bristol ordinance upheld by the Tennessee Court of Appeals as being a reasonable and valid exercise of the police power in the case of Hagaman v. Slaughter, 49 Tenn. App. 338, 354 S.W.2d 818 (1961).

CHAPTER 4

AUTOMOBILE GRAVEYARD REGULATION

SECTION

- 13-401. Automobile graveyards declared a public nuisance.
- 13-402. Definitions.
- 13-403. Violations a civil offense.
- 13-404. Order of removal.
- 13-405. Exceptions.
- 13-406. Enforcement.
- 13-407. Penalty for violations.
- 13-408. Procedure under other law.

13-401. Automobile graveyards declared a public nuisance. The accumulation or storage of junk vehicles on public and private property is hereby found to create an unsightly condition upon the property tending to reduce the value thereof, to invite plundering, to create fire and safety hazards, and to constitute an attractive nuisance creating a hazard to the health and safety of minors. The accumulation or storage of junk vehicles on public and private property creates an automobile graveyard, and is further found to promote urban blight and deterioration in the city and to violate the zoning regulations of the city in many instances, particularly where such vehicles are maintained in the required yard areas of residential property. Such junk vehicles are in the nature of rubbish, litter, and unsightly debris in violation of health and sanitation laws. Therefore, the storage of junk vehicle, or the accumulation of an automobile junkyard, on public and private property, except as expressly hereinafter permitted, is hereby declared to constitute a public nuisance which may be abated as such, which remedy shall be in addition to any other remedy provided in this code. (as added by Ord. #99-01-01, March 1999)

13-402. Definitions. For the purpose of the interpretation and application of this chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the indicated meanings:

- (1) "Person" shall mean any natural person, or any firm, partnership, association, corporation or other organization of any kind and description.
- (2) "Private property" shall include all property that is not public property, regardless of how the property is zoned or used.
- (3) "Traveled portion of any public street or highway" shall mean the width of the street from curb to curb, or where there are no curbs, the entire width of the paved portion of the street, or where the street is unpaved, the entire width of the street which vehicles ordinarily use for travel.
- (4) "Automobile graveyard" means any structure, establishment, or place of business which is maintained, used or operated for refurbishing, storing,

keeping, buying, or selling wrecked, scrapped ruined, or dismantled motor vehicles or motor vehicle parts. Four (4) or more such vehicles will constitute an automobile graveyard.

(5) "Vehicle" shall mean any machine propelled by power other than human power, designed to travel along the ground by the use of wheels, treads, self-laying tracks, runners, slides or skids, including but not limited to automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, motor scooters, go-carts, campers, tractors, trailers, buggies, wagons, and earth-moving equipment, and any part of such machines.

(6) "Junk vehicle" shall mean a vehicle of any age that is damaged or defective in any one, or in a combination of any two or more, of the following ways, that either makes the vehicle immediately inoperable, or would prohibit the vehicle from being operated in a reasonably safe manner upon the public street and highways, under it's own power if self-propelled, or while being towed or pushed if not self-propelled:

(a) Flat tire, missing tire, missing wheel, or missing or partially or totally disassembled tire and wheel;

(b) Missing or partially or totally disassembled essential part or parts of the vehicle's drive train, including but not limited to engine, transmission, transaxle, drive shaft, differential or axle;

(c) Extensive exterior body damage, or missing or partially or totally disassembled essential body parts, including but not limited to fenders, doors, engine hood, bumpers, windshield, or windows;

(d) Missing, or partially or totally disassembled essential interior parts, including but not limited to driver's seat, steering wheel, instrument panel, clutch, brake or gear shift lever;

(e) Missing or partially or totally disassembled parts essential to the starting or running of the vehicle under its own power, including but not limited to starter, generator or alternator, battery, distributor, gas tank, carburetor or fuel injection system, spark plugs, or radiator;

(f) Interior is a container for metal, glass, paper, rags, or other cloth, wood, auto parts, machinery, waste or discarded materials in such quantity, quality and arrangement that a driver cannot be properly seated in the vehicle;

(g) Vehicle is lying on the ground (upside down, on its side, or at other extreme angle), sitting on block or suspended in the air by any other method or;

(h) General environment in which the vehicle sits, including but not limited to vegetation that has grown up around, in or through the vehicle, collection of pools of water in the vehicle, or accumulation of other garbage or debris around the vehicle. (as added by Ord. #99-01-01, March 1999)

13-403. Violations a civil offense. It shall be unlawful and a civil offense for any person:

(1) To park, and or in any other manner, place and leave unattended on the traveled portion of any public street or highway a junk vehicle for any period of time, even if the owner or operator of the vehicle did not intend to permanently desert or abandon the vehicle;

(2) To park or in any other manner place and leave unattended on the untraveled portion of any street or highway, or upon any other public property, a junk vehicle for more than forty-eight (48) continuous hours, even if the owner or operator of the vehicle did not intend to permanently desert or abandon the vehicle; or

(3) To park, store, keep, or maintain on private property a junk vehicle for more than thirty (30) days. (as added by Ord. #99-01-01, March 1999)

13-404. Order of removal. Upon the failure, neglect or refusal to abate by any owner-occupant or owner of private property who has been notified at least thirty (30) days in advance, and ordered to abate such public nuisance within the times as set forth below, the Atoka City Police Department is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to order removal of the same and dispose of it.

Such removal shall be the sole responsibility of the owner of such nuisance. The owner shall remove the nuisance within sixty (60) days of notification; any violations to this chapter will comply with § 13-407 below. (as added by Ord. #99-01-01, March 1999)

13-405. Exceptions. (1) It shall be permissible for a person to park, store, keep and maintain a junk vehicle on private property under the following conditions:

(a) The junk vehicle is completely enclosed within a building where neither the vehicle nor any part of it is visible from the street or from any other abutting property. However, this exception shall not exempt the owner or person in possession of the property from any zoning, building, housing, property maintenance or other regulations governing the building in which such vehicle is enclosed or the property on which such building is located.

(b) A junk vehicle may be repaired or maintained in a carport or other covered but open structure as long as repairs are complete within 30 days.

(c) A junk vehicle shall not be present in the front or side yard or within 15 feet of the property line.

(d) The junk vehicle is parked or stored on property lawfully zoned for a business engaged in wrecking, junking, or repairing vehicles. However, this exception shall not exempt the owner or operator of any such business from any other zoning, building, property, maintenance

and other regulations governing businesses engaged in wrecking, junking or repairing vehicles or the property on which any such business is located.

(e) No person shall park, store, keep or maintain on private property a junk vehicle for any period of time if it poses an immediate threat to the health and safety of any citizens of the city.

(f) It shall be permissible for a person to park, store or keep a vehicle on private property, for a set period of time as set by the board of mayor and alderman for the purpose of repairing and/or refurbishing one vehicle at a time. (as added by Ord. #99-01-01, March 1999)

13-406. Enforcement. (1) This chapter may be enforced in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated (hereinafter referred to as "T.C.A.") § 54-20-109 and all provisions thereof. (as added by Ord. #99-01-01, March 1999)

13-407. Penalty for violations. Any person determined to be in violation of this chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty of \$50.00 for each separate violation of this chapter. Each day the violation of this chapter continues shall be considered a separate violation. (as added by Ord. #99-01-01, March 1999, and amended by Ord. #12-04-05, April 2012)

13-408. Procedure under other law. Nothing in this chapter shall prevent the city from taking any action permitted by T.C.A. § 55-16-103 et seq. as to abandoned, immobile, or unattended motor vehicles nonpublic or private property. (as added by Ord. #99-01-01, March 1999)