

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: DAMAGE ASSESSMENT CODES MONITORING



## **Why is the City initiating this monitoring work?**

In response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton, City building inspectors and support staff completed damage assessments after each event. Over 12,000 properties were identified as being damaged with damages ranging from flooded structures to trees falling on homes. While Damage Assessment Code Cases are being initiated citywide, there are specific requirements for properties within flood hazard areas that must be monitored to ensure compliance with FEMA regulations. Complying with these regulations will protect current and future residents, ensure proper permits are pulled and that inspections are completed for adherence to Florida Building Code, and significantly reduce the risk of losing the City's discount with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and FEMA funding.

## **What does it mean if I have a codes monitoring case against my property?**

The City uses a case management system to maintain records for the 20,000+ codes compliance cases that are processed annually. Each case is documented into this system to ensure accurate record keeping. A codes case does not mean you have a violation. If you were to receive a violation for unpermitted work, you will receive the violation notice through mail to the address of record on the property appraiser's website.

## **Does a codes monitoring case mean I have a code violation?**

No, a codes case does not result in an automatic code violation. If inspections result in a violation of city code, the property owner would be notified of a violation notice through a mailing sent to the address of record on the property appraisers' website.

## **Why did a codes monitoring case get started when I have active permits or my repairs are completed and permits are closed?**

Monitoring cases were started to ensure that properties with permits completed all work and received the required inspections. The goal is to support the Permitting team by allowing them to focus on the permit review and inspection process while the Codes team assists with monitoring for incomplete work or expired permits.

Staff attempted to cross-reference properties with closed permits prior to initiating monitoring cases. The number of properties with unique circumstances and the limitations of the codes and permitting software led staff to pursue a more efficient process: create the monitoring cases and distribute the permit research amongst the entire investigative staff.

## **Will a codes case affect my ability to sell or refinance my property?**

No, an active codes case does not affect the sale or refinance of a property if violations or accrued fines/liens do not exist. The Codes Administrative Coordinator communicates regularly with title companies regarding properties with pending codes issues.

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## **What if my property was on the damage assessment list but received no storm damage?**

If you believe your property was included on the damage assessment list in error and your codes case should be closed, please contact the City at [codes@stpete.org](mailto:codes@stpete.org) or 727-893-7373 and a member of the management team will review the details surrounding your property.

## **Why doesn't the City notify property owners when a codes case is initiated against their property?**

Thousands of codes cases are initiated each year that never result in a violation. Since an active case itself does not negatively impact a property, we do not notify owners unless our inspections determine a property is in violation.

## **What if I received a violation notice?**

If you've been cited for completing repairs without permits in a flood hazard area, it is critical that you contact our permitting department to start the permit process. Additional information can be found at [www.stpete.org/Rule49](http://www.stpete.org/Rule49). You can also email permitting at [stormrecoverypermits@stpete.org](mailto:stormrecoverypermits@stpete.org) for additional assistance. For questions about your codes violation, we are available to assist you through this process and encourage you to contact [codes@stpete.org](mailto:codes@stpete.org) or 727-893-7373.

## **Do fines start immediately?**

No, the violation notice is the first step in the enforcement process. On average, it takes between four to six months before any potential liens could be placed against a property for non-compliance.

## **When will my case be closed?**

These cases will be closed under the following circumstances:

- Additional reviews of the property have determined that repairs are not necessary to address storm-related damage.
- A property has completed repairs with approved permit(s) and the permit(s) has received approvals for all required inspections.
- If you have an active permit but repairs are not complete and your permit has not been closed out, you will see that your case has been changed to a "Post Disaster Emergency Permit" case, which means that you have the necessary permits, but they have not yet been closed out.

If you believe your codes case is in error because you did not receive any storm damage, please contact [codes@stpete.org](mailto:codes@stpete.org) or 727-893-7373 to have your case reviewed.