

CHAPTER 10
PUBLIC NUISANCES

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PUBLIC NUISANCES 10.01

10.01 PUBLIC NUISANCES PROHIBITED. No person shall erect, contrive, cause, continue, maintain or permit to exist any public nuisance within the City.

10.02 PUBLIC NUISANCE DEFINED. A public nuisance is a thing, act, occupation, condition or use of property which shall continue for such length of time as to:

(1) Substantially annoy, injure or endanger the comfort, health, repose or safety of the public.

(2) In any way render the public insecure in life or in the use of property.

(3) Greatly offend the public morals or decency.

(4) Unlawfully and substantially interfere with, obstruct or tend to obstruct or render dangerous for passage any street, alley, highway, navigable body of water or other public way or the use of public property.

10.03 PUBLIC NUISANCES AFFECTING HEALTH. The following acts, omissions, places, conditions and things are hereby specifically declared to be public health nuisances, but such enumeration shall not be construed to exclude other health nuisances coming within the definitions of sec. 10.02 of this chapter:

(1) **ADULTERATED FOOD.** All decayed, adulterated or unwholesome food or drink sold or offered for sale to the public.

(2) **UNBURIED CARCASSES.** Carcasses of animals, birds or fowl not intended for human consumption, or foods which are not buried or otherwise disposed of in a sanitary manner within 24 hours after death.

(3) **BREEDING PLACES FOR VERMIN, ETC.** Accumulations of decayed animal or vegetable matter, trash, rubbish, rotting lumber, bedding, packing material, scrap metal or any material whatsoever in which flies, mosquitoes, disease-carrying insects, rats or other vermin may breed.

(4) **STAGNANT WATER.** All stagnant water in which mosquitoes, flies or other insects can multiply.

(5) **PRIVY VAULTS AND GARBAGE CANS.** Privy vaults and garbage cans which are not fly-tight.

(6) **ANIMALS.** All animals running at large.

(7) **AIR POLLUTION.** The escape of smoke, soot, cinders, noxious acids, fumes, gases, fly ash or industrial dust within the City limits or within one mile therefrom in such quantities as to endanger the health of persons of ordinary sensibilities or to threaten or cause substantial injury to property.

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(8) **10.03 NOXIOUS WEEDS.** All noxious weeds, as defined in §66.0407(1), Wis. Stats. In addition, other rank growth of vegetation, and all weeds, grasses and plants over 8 inches in height, excluding trees and shrubs, which:

- (a) Detract from the surrounding area and properties.
- (b) Become a possible fire hazard, as determined by the Fire Chief.
- (c) Become a health hazard due to their pollen or a potential cover for disease-carrying rodents and other small animals.
- (d) Are of infectious or poisonous nature in or adjacent to a populated area, regardless of height.
- (e) Become a potential hazard to vehicular traffic in vision clearance triangles.”

(9) **WATER POLLUTION.** The pollution of any public well or cistern, stream, lake, canal or other body of water by sewage, creamery or industrial wastes or other substances.

(10) **NOXIOUS ODORS, ETC.** Any use of property, substances or things within the City emitting or causing any foul, offensive, noisome, nauseous, noxious or disagreeable odors, gases, effluvia or stenches repulsive to the physical senses of ordinary persons which annoy, discomfort, injure or inconvenience the health of any appreciable number of persons within the City.

(11) **STREET POLLUTION.** Any use of property which shall cause any nauseous or unwholesome liquid or substance to flow into or upon any street, gutter, alley, sidewalk or public place within the City.

(12) **PESTICIDE APPLICATION.** The application, or causing of the application, of any pesticide, as defined in §946.67(25), Wis. Stats., in such a manner as to endanger the health of persons within the City.

10.04 PUBLIC NUISANCES OFFENDING MORALS AND DECENCY. The following acts, omissions, places, conditions and things are hereby specifically declared to be public nuisances offending public morals and decency, but such enumeration shall not be construed to exclude other nuisances offending public morals and decency coming within the definition of sec. 10.02 of this chapter.

(1) **DISORDERLY HOUSES.** All disorderly houses, bawdy houses, houses of ill fame, gambling houses and buildings or structures kept or resorted to for the purpose of prostitution, promiscuous sexual intercourse or gambling.

(2) **GAMBLING DEVICES.** All gambling devices and slot machines.

(3) **UNLICENSED SALE OF LIQUOR AND BEER.** All places where intoxicating liquor or fermented malt beverages are sold, possessed, stored, brewed, bottled, manufactured or rectified without a permit or license as provided for by this Code.

(4) **CONTINUOUS VIOLATION OF CITY ORDINANCES.** Any place or premises within the City where City ordinances or State laws relating to public health, safety, peace, morals or welfare are openly, continuously, repeatedly and intentionally violated.

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(5) **ILLEGAL DRINKING.** Any place or premises resorted to for the purpose of drinking intoxicating liquor or fermented malt beverages in violation of State laws or this Code.

10.05 PUBLIC NUISANCES AFFECTING PEACE AND SAFETY. The following acts, omissions, places, conditions and things are hereby declared to be public nuisances affecting peace and safety, but such enumeration shall not be construed to exclude other nuisances affecting public peace or safety coming within the definition of sec. 10.02 of this chapter:

(1) **SIGNS, BILLBOARDS, ETC.** All signs and billboards, awnings and other similar structures over or near streets, sidewalks, public grounds or places frequented by the public so situated or constructed as to endanger the public safety.

(2) **ILLEGAL BUILDINGS.** All buildings erected, repaired or altered in violation of the provisions of this Code relating to materials and manner of construction of buildings and structures within the City.

(3) **UNAUTHORIZED TRAFFIC SIGNS.** All unauthorized signs, signals, markers or devices placed or maintained upon or in view of any public highway or railway crossing which purport to be or may be mistaken as an official traffic control device, railroad sign or signal or which, because of its color, location, brilliance or manner of operation, interferes with the effectiveness of any device, sign or signal.

(4) **OBSTRUCTION OF INTERSECTIONS.** All trees, hedges, billboards or other obstructions which prevent persons driving vehicles on public streets, alleys or highways from obtaining a clear view of traffic when approaching an intersection or pedestrian crosswalk.

(5) **TREE LIMBS.** All limbs of trees which project over and less than 8 feet above any public sidewalk or less than 14 feet above a street or other public place.

(6) **DANGEROUS TREES.** All trees which are injurious to public health or safety because of a diseased or damaged condition, and the storage of cut elm wood, unless such wood is debarked or sprayed with an effective elm bark beetle destroying insecticide.

(7) **FIREWORKS.** All use, possession or display of fireworks except as provided by the laws of the State and ch. 9 of this Code.

(8) **DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS.** All buildings or structures so old, dilapidated or out of repair as to be dangerous, unsafe, unsanitary or otherwise unfit for human use.

(9) **WIRES AND CABLES OVER STREETS.** All wires and cables over streets, alleys or public grounds which are strung less than 18 feet above the surface thereof.

(10) **NOISY ANIMALS OR FOWL.** The keeping or harboring of any animal or fowl which, by frequent or habitual howling, yelping, barking, crowing or making of other noises, shall greatly annoy or disturb a neighborhood or any considerable number of persons within the City.

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(11) **OBSTRUCTIONS OF STREETS; EXCAVATIONS.** All obstructions of streets, alleys, sidewalks or crosswalks and all excavations in or under the same, except as permitted by this Code or which, although made in accordance with this Code, are kept or maintained for an unreasonable or illegal length of time after the purpose thereof has been accomplished, or do not conform to the permit.

(12) **SNOW, ICE AND DEBRIS REMOVAL.** All debris not removed, and all snow and ice not removed from the public sidewalks or sprinkled with salt, ashes, sawdust or sand, as provided in ch. 8 of this Code.

(13) **REFRIGERATORS.** All abandoned refrigerators or iceboxes from which the doors and other covers have not been removed or which are not equipped with a device for opening from the inside.

(14) **OPEN PITS, BASEMENTS, ETC.** All open and unguarded pits, wells, excavations and basements.

(15) **FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS VIOLATIONS.** Repeated or continuous violations of this Code or the laws of the State relating to the storage of flammable liquids.

10.06 JUNK, CERTAIN VEHICLES, RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT AND FIREWOOD.

(1) **PUBLIC NUISANCES DECLARED.** The following are hereby declared to be public nuisances wherever they may be found within the City.

(a) Any motor vehicle, truck body, tractor or trailer as enumerated in subs. (3) and (4) below and defined in sub. (2) (a), (b) and (c) below.

(b) Any junk stored contrary to sub. (5) below.

(c) Any recreational equipment stored contrary to sub. (6) below

(d) Any firewood used or stored contrary to sub. (7) below

(2) **DEFINITIONS.** The words phrases, and terms used in this section shall be interpreted as follows:

(a) Disassembled, Inoperable, Junked or Wrecked Motor Vehicles, Truck Bodies, Tractors, Trailers. Motor vehicles, truck bodies, tractors or trailers in such state of physical or mechanical ruin as to be incapable of propulsion or being operated upon the public streets or highways.

(b) Front setback. For Section 10.06 only, this shall be defined as the first three (3) feet from the front property line.

(c) In the Open. Land which may be viewed from public streets or adjoining property.

(d) Junk. Worn out or discarded material of little or no value including, but not limited to, household appliances or parts thereof, machinery and equipment or parts thereof, vehicles or parts thereof, tools, discarded building materials or any other unsightly debris, the accumulation

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of which has an adverse effect upon the neighborhood or City property values, health, safety or general welfare.

- (e) Motor Vehicle. As defined in §340.01(35), Wis. Stats.
- (f) Public Hazard. Any circumstance, condition, or situation that tends to:
 - 1. Substantially injure or endanger the comfort, health, repose, or safety of the public.
 - 2. In any way render the public insecure in life or in the use of property.
 - 3. Unlawfully and substantially interfere with, obstruct, or tend to obstruct or render dangerous for passage any street, alley, highway, navigable body of water or other public way or the use of public property.
- (g) Recreation Equipment. Boats, canoes, boat and utility trailers, mobile homes, campers, off-highway vehicles and snowmobiles.
- (h) Seasonal Recreational Vehicle. A recreational vehicle which is normally used during the current season. During the summer season this may include boats, campers, or trailers with jet skis. During the winter season, this may include snowmobiles or ice fishing gear. These are examples and not meant to be all-inclusive.
- (i) Store/Storage. The leaving of any vehicles or equipment defined under this section on any street, highway, municipal parking lot for storage purposes.
- (j) Unlicensed Motor Vehicles, Truck Bodies, Tractors or Trailers. Motor vehicles, truck bodies, tractors or trailers which do not bear lawful current license plates.
- (k) Unseasonal Recreational Vehicle. A recreational vehicle which does not fit the description of a seasonal recreational vehicle.

(3) **STORAGE OF INOPERABLE VEHICLES, ETC.** (a) Restricted. No person shall accumulate, store or allow any disassembled, inoperable, junked or wrecked motor vehicles, truck bodies, tractors or trailers in the open upon any public or private property in the City for a period exceeding 10 days.

(b) Exceptions. 1. Any business engaged in automotive sales or repair located in a properly zoned district may retain no more than 3 disassembled or wrecked vehicles, including vehicles under repair, in the open for a period not to exceed 30 days, after which such vehicles shall be removed.

2. Junk yards licensed under chapter 12 of this Code.

(4) **STORAGE OF UNLICENSED VEHICLES, ETC.** (a) Restricted. No person shall accumulate, store or allow any unlicensed motor vehicle, truck body, tractor or trailer in the open upon any public or private property in the City for a period exceeding 10 days.

(b) Exceptions. 1. Any business engaged in the sale, repair or storage of such unlicensed vehicles in a properly zoned district. 2. Garden tractors and mowers may be stored in the rear yard not less than 10 feet from any property line.

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(5) **STORAGE OF JUNK PROHIBITED.** No person, except a junk dealer licensed under ch. 12 of this Code, shall accumulate, store or allow any junk outside of any building on any public or private real estate located in the City.

(6) **STORAGE OF RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT REGULATED.**

(a) No person shall park or store a recreational vehicle or boat or boat trailer on public or private property or on any street right of way in any commercial district for a period of more than 12 hours.

(b) It is permissible to park or store a recreational vehicle or boat or boat trailer on private property in any residential district in the following manner:

(1) The body of the recreational vehicle or boat or trailer must be at least 15 feet from the face of any curb.

(2) No part of the unit may extend over the public sidewalk or public right-of-way.

(3) Parking is permitted only for storage purposes. Recreational vehicles or boats shall not be:

(a) Used for dwelling purposes, except for overnight sleeping for a maximum of 14 days in any one calendar year.

(b) Permanently connected to sewer lines, water lines or electricity. The recreational vehicle may be temporarily connected to an appropriate electrical outlet for charging batteries and other purposes.

(c) Used for storage of goods, materials or equipment other than those items considered to be part of the unit or essential for its immediate use.

(c) No person shall park or store recreational equipment, seasonal or unseasonal, on any street right of way in any residential district for a period of more than 24 hours.

(d) No person shall park or store any unseasonal recreational equipment in any residential district within the front setback, excluding the driveway, for a period of more than 48 hours.

(e) No person shall store any seasonal recreational equipment in any residential district within the front setback, excluding the driveway, for a period of more than 96 hours.

(f) Notwithstanding (c), (d), and (e) no person shall store recreational equipment, seasonal or unseasonal, in any residential district in the front setback, including the driveway, in such a way as to cause a public safety hazard.

(7) **STORAGE OF FIREWOOD.** (a) Regulated. No person shall store firewood on any

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residential premises except for use on the premises. No firewood pile may be located within the front setback.

(b) Exception. Any firewood pile located contrary to the provisions of par. (a) above on the effective date of this subsection need not be moved to a place of compliance until June 1, 2004.

(8) **ISSUANCE OF CITATION; ACTION TO ABATE.** Whenever the Building Inspector, the Fire Chief or the Police Chief shall find any such vehicle, junk or recreational equipment, as defined in sub. (2) above, accumulated, stored or remaining in the open upon any property within the City contrary to the provisions of subs. (3), (4), (5) and (6) above, or firewood stored contrary to sub. (7) above, he shall notify the owner of said property on which such vehicle, junk, recreation equipment or firewood is located of the violation of this section. If such vehicle, junk, recreational equipment or firewood is not removed within 10 days, the Building Inspector or the Police Chief shall cause a citation to be issued to the property owner or the occupant of the property upon which such vehicle, junk, recreational equipment or firewood is located. In addition, action to abate such nuisance may be commenced, as provided in sec. 10.07 of this chapter.

(9) **PENALTY.** Any person who shall be adjudicated to have violated any of the provisions of this section shall be subject to a forfeiture as provided in sec. 25.04 of this Code plus the costs of said prosecution and, upon default of payment of such forfeiture and costs, shall be imprisoned in the County Jail until such forfeiture and costs are paid, but not to exceed 10 days. Each day that a violation of this section continues shall be deemed a separate offense.

10.07 ABATEMENT OF PUBLIC NUISANCES. (1) ENFORCEMENT. It shall be the duty of the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief and the Building Inspector to enforce those provisions of this chapter that come within the jurisdiction of their respective offices, including the issuance of citations, and they shall make periodic inspections upon complaint to insure that such provisions are not violated. No action shall be taken under this section to abate a public nuisance unless the officer shall have inspected or caused to be inspected the premises where the nuisance is alleged to exist and have satisfied himself that a nuisance does, in fact, exist.

(2) **SUMMARY ABATEMENT.** (a) Notice to Owner. If the inspecting officer shall determine that a public nuisance exists within the City and that there is great and immediate danger to the public health, safety, peace, morals or decency, the Mayor may direct the Chief of Police to serve notice on the person causing, permitting or maintaining such nuisance or upon the owner or occupant of the premises where such nuisance is caused, permitted or maintained and to post a copy of said notice on the premises. Such notice shall direct the person causing, permitting or maintaining such nuisance or the owner or occupant of the premises to abate or remove such nuisance within 24 hours and shall state that unless such nuisance is so abated, the City shall cause the same to be abated and will charge the cost thereof to the owner, occupant or person causing, permitting or maintaining the nuisance, as the case may be.

(b) Abatement, by City. If the nuisance is not abated within the time provided or if the owner, occupant or person causing the nuisance cannot be found, the officer having the duty of enforcement shall cause the abatement or removal of such public nuisance.

PUBLIC NUISANCES 10.07(3)

(3) **ABATEMENT BY COURT ACTION.** If the inspecting officer shall determine that a public nuisance exists on private premises, but that the nature of such nuisance is not such as to threaten great and immediate danger to the public health, safety, peace, morals or decency, he shall serve notice on the person causing or maintaining the nuisance and the owner of the property to remove the same within 10 days. If such nuisance is not removed within 10 days, he shall report such fact to the Mayor, who may direct the City Attorney to commence an action in Circuit Court for the abatement of the nuisance.

(4) **OTHER METHODS NOT EXCLUDED.** Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as prohibiting the abatement of public nuisances by the City or its officials in accordance with the laws of the State, nor as prohibiting an action to be commenced in the Circuit Court seeking a forfeiture as provided in sec. 10.15 of this chapter.

(5) **COST OF ABATEMENT.** In addition to any other penalty imposed by this chapter for the erection, contrivance, creation, continuance or maintenance of a public nuisance, the cost of abating a public nuisance by the City shall be collected as a debt from the owner, occupant or person causing, permitting or maintaining the nuisance, and if notice to abate the nuisance has been given to the owner, such cost shall be assessed against the real estate as a special charge.

10.08 WEED CONTROL. (1) **NOXIOUS WEEDS AND RANK GROWTH PROHIBITED.** No owner or occupant of any lot or parcel shall allow such property to become overgrown with any weeds or grass so as to constitute a public nuisance, as defined in sec. 10.03(8) of this chapter.

(2) **UNDEVELOPED LOTS.** Notwithstanding Section 10.08(1), the owners of undeveloped lots within the City of Black River Falls shall be required to keep all weeds, grasses, and plants excluding trees and shrubs to a height less than 8 inches only in the following areas:

- a) Within six (6) feet of any street with curb and gutter
- b) Within six (6) feet of any fire hydrant

(3) **DEPOSIT ON STREETS PROHIBITED.** No person shall deposit or cause to be deposited any weeds, grass, leaves, plants, trees, shrubs, or other material or objects that may disrupt the storm water sewer system upon any alley, parkway, public place or street in the City.

(4) **ENFORCEMENT.** If a property owner or occupant fails to control the growth of such weeds, grass or rank growth of vegetation on the property, or deposits or causes to be deposited any prohibited material or objects upon any alley, parkway, public place, or street, the City of Black River Falls Police Department, Mayor or City Administrator shall send a written notice by First Class Mail to the owner's address as shown on the City' tax roll. If such owner fails to abate this nuisance within ten (10) days after the date the notice is mailed, the City of Black River Falls Police Department is authorized to issue a citation to the property owner, occupant, or any person with legally recognized management authority of the property and/or the City may abate the nuisance by removing or mowing the offending vegetation. Following the first ten (10) days notice in any calendar year, the City may proceed with enforcement of future violations without sending subsequent ten (10) day notice.

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(5) **ABATEMENT.** If the City abates the nuisance as set forth above, all costs of abatement shall be added to the City tax rolls.

(6) **APPLICABILITY.** The responsibilities of landowners or occupiers under this section shall apply to the lot owned or occupied and to the public right-of-way lying between the property line and the roadway.

(7) **EXCEPTION.** Properties owned by the City of Black River Falls are exempt from this Ordinance.

10.15 PENALTY. In addition to the penalties provided in this chapter, any person who shall violate any provision of this chapter, or permit or cause a public nuisance, shall be subject to a penalty as provided in sec. 25.04 of this Code.