

Litter Court



Fighting Blight

In Jan. 2009, the Mayor's listening tours revealed widespread citizen concerns for illegal signs, trash, debris and code violations. As a result, Baton Rouge has started a bold campaign against blight with its new litter court program. Citizens may call 311, 389-3090, or go online at www.brgov.com/apps/crs to report violations. Inspectors from the Department of Public Works Inspections Division and the Office of Neighborhoods take photos of violations. Inspectors are pro-active so they report violations that are called in as well as what they see when driving the streets. Property owners are sent a letter from the city giving them fifteen days to correct the violation, with the exception of sign and garbage can violators who are immediately liable. (New policy) Inspectors then re-inspect. If the violation still exists another letter is sent out issuing a court date for the property owner. Sign and garbage can violators will be sent a letter with the court date after the first inspection. Fines are \$117, plus \$50 court costs. The owner must appeal within 30 days. If necessary, after being found liable, DPW will be ordered to clean the property. The Parish Attorney's office will affix clean up costs to the owner's property taxes for the next year. It is in the owner's best interest to take care of the problem.

This effort was started to encourage citizens to take responsibility for their property, have a cleaner looking city, and decrease blight. Statistics show that blight is related to crime. When we fight blight, we fight crime, increase property values, and make our city a better place to live, work, and play.

Violations under the litter court enforcement program include:

- 1. Maintenance of Property:**
 - a. Open, abandoned buildings
 - b. Overgrown yard: More than half of the grass or vegetation must not be over 12 inches tall.
- 2. Maintenance of Swimming Pools:**
 - a. Water quality: You must be able to see the bottom of the pool.
 - b. Proper security: The pool must be enclosed by a fence 5 feet high. The fence gate must close automatically. The gate latch must lock automatically.
- 3. Accumulation of Junk, Trash, and Debris:** In front yards, side yards, backyards, or carports. This includes inoperable vehicles.
- 4. Signs:** Portable signs and advertising flags and banners are illegal on public and private property. Changeable letter signs are illegal. Only permanent signs that have been permitted by the city parish are legal. Campaign signs and real estate signs have a special permit, but should only be placed on private property.
- 5. Garbage Cans:** Garbage cans must be stored on private property except between 4 p.m. the night before pick-up and 6 a.m. the day after pick-up. They should be placed near the street, but not in the street for pick-up.

*For more information please contact
The Office of Neighborhood Services at
(225) 389-7871, Fax: (225) 389-5689
neighborhoods@brgov.com*

Sending service requests online:

Go to www.brgov.com. Click on Request for Service. Then "Submit a service request or look up an existing request." Then click Submit. Fill in the information. If the pull down menu doesn't list your problem go to the bottom where it says "Service requests That Cannot Be Categorized." Be sure to write down the service request number or print the page that has the number and information.