



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Economic and Community Development

Bill: 22-0204

Vacant Structures - 3-1-1 Complaint Fines

Sponsor: *President Mosby*

Introduced: *March 31, 2022*

Purpose:

For the purpose of establishing a fee structure for repeated substantiated 3-1-1 service requests; providing for a special effective date; and generally relating to fining the owner of a vacant structure for repeated service requests.

Effective: The ordinance would be effective the 90th day after enactment

Agency Reports

City Solicitor	Favorable/Amendment
Department of Housing and Community Development	Unfavorable
Department of Finance	Opposed
Mayor's Office of Information and Technology	Defers to DHCD
Environmental Control Board	Not Oppose

Analysis

Current Law

Article 13 - Housing and Urban Development Section(s) 4A-1 through 4A-4 to be under the new subtitle designation "Subtitle 4A. Service Request Fines", Baltimore City Code, (Edition 2000)

Background

Vacant Structures

According to the *Baltimore City Building Code Chapter 1 - Scope and Administration, Section 116.4.1.2 a vacant structure is defined as:*

"Vacant structure" means a structure or distinguishable part of a structure that is:

1. unoccupied, and
2. either:
 - A. unsafe or unfit for human habitation or other authorized use, or
 - B. a nuisance property.

Bill 22-0204 would not apply to accessory structures that are not intended for occupancy such as garages, sheds or storage buildings. The bill would also not apply to vacant structures owned by a governmental entity or an instrumentality or unit of a government entity.

The Building Code outlines standards for safeguarding the upkeep, maintenance and safety of a vacant property. Currently, non-compliance with a notice or order pertaining to a vacant structure may result in a violation notice. The bill would apply to any structure that is subject to an unabated violation notice issued under *Section 116 Unsafe Structures of the Baltimore City Building Code*.

Bill 22-0204 would establish a fee structure for repeated substantiated 3-1-1 service requests related to vacant houses. A service request is a complaint about the condition or state of a property. The complaint is submitted through Baltimore City's 3-1-1 system. Substantiated service requests are those investigated by a City agency and determined to be a valid complaint.

Fees

If a service request is substantiated for a second time within 12 months, according to Bill 22-0204 fees will be imposed. An invoice will be issued to the owner. Each service request is treated individually. After the 2nd service request response, the first fee will be \$100 and increase at varying increments after each service request response (*see Fee Schedule in Bill 22-*

0224). A late fee, up to a maximum of \$50, may also be assessed. If the late fee is not paid within 10 days, the Executive Director of the Environmental Control Board may revoke vacant structure registration.

Amendment

The Law Department is proposing amendments regarding the late fee and revocation of the license for the vacant structure (*see attached*).

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: Not Available

Information Source(s): *Bill 22-0204*

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