



Code Enforcement – Neighborhood Disputes

The loud music next door is keeping you up all night. A neighbor parks a car across the sidewalk so your child has to walk in the street. The people across the street park their old car on the front lawn. All these are typical problems that annoy neighbors, create a nuisance and make it difficult to enjoy your neighborhood. Before you do something rash, or resign yourself to living with such problems, consider this 6-step approach to neighborhood problem solving.

Talk to the Neighbor

Try to resolve any differences by talking with the neighbor calmly and in person. Your neighbor might not even know they are causing a problem. Most people don't intend to cause a problem and they may be the last to know that they have. If you can help solve the problem, offer your assistance. If the yard hasn't been picked up because the neighbor is elderly or has been hurt, offer to help with the work. If it costs money to prune the tree that blocks your view offer to help pay. If you are uncomfortable talking to your neighbor, ask a friend to accompany you. A cooperative, friendly approach can resolve most neighborhood problems and may gain you new perspectives and a new friend.

Research Your Case

If talking to your neighbor does not solve the problem, do some research into the issue. The problem could simply reflect cultural differences of which you may not be aware. While this may not make the matter go away, you will be more sensitive to the cause of the situation, and more understanding of your neighbor. Usually, a little information can make us more tolerant.

Sometimes whatever is annoying us is against the law. In Concord, the City Code is designed to protect the peace and safety of the community. Problems such as junk cars, parking on the lawn, accumulating trash and debris are all violations of City Codes. Knowledge of the law, as it pertains to your neighbor dispute, can help you deal with an uncooperative neighbor.

Make Your Request To Your Neighbor in Writing

If the problem persists, make your request to your neighbor in writing. If you learned through your research that the matter is a violation of City Code, mention that in your letter. The letter should carefully state the situation and possible actions to correct the problem. If it is a recurring problem, you may wish to keep a log of the occurrences.

Contact Your Neighborhood Association

Your neighborhood or home owner's association is interested in preserving the peace and quality of your neighborhood. It is likely that they will share your concern about your neighbor. Talk with the directors of the association and attempt to enlist their help in mediating the problem. Often, an offending neighbor will correct a problem once they realize it bothers the whole neighborhood, not just one neighbor. If your neighborhood does not have an association, you may want to work with your neighbors to form one.

Try Outside Mediation

If your neighborhood does not have an association, or if the problem persists, a neutral third party may be able to help. In Concord you may consider contacting the Center for Human Development's Conflict Resolution Program at (925) 687-8844, or Alternative Dispute Resolution at (925) 957-5787, to seek a solution to the dispute with your neighbor.

Call your District Commander

As a last resort, if the problem worsens, or cannot be resolved any other way, you may have to contact the Police Department for help. One duty of the District Command system is to assist people with neighborhood problems.