

WHAT IS A RED TAG IN CONSTRUCTION?

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In addition to embarrassment and stress, having your property tagged by a code enforcement officer from your city cause major time and cost overruns. It is vital to resolve the issue swiftly to prevent expensive liens and penalties on your property.

Property owners who have experience with red tags know the severity of this issue. By learning about the red tag process, you can ensure that you know the steps to take to stay clear of red-tagging or avoiding a repeat of the same.

THE MEANING OF A RED TAG

The city puts up a red tag to indicate that the property or part of the property is not safe for occupancy in the present state. Common reasons why properties are red-tagged include:

- Building has no permit
- Building has structural issues
- Structure violates building codes

Most structural damages can get repaired, but some instances require demolition and rebuilding to maintain safety standards.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A RED-TAGGED HOUSE?



When red-tagging your property, the local officials usually put up a big sign, either orange or red in color. The notice is visible from afar and warns against entry into the property unless you have the authority to do so from the officials enforcing the code.

Any attempt to access the property with no consent can lead to an arrest for trespassing. It is also advisable to be cautious, as abutting property owners can alert the authorities if they suspect any trespassing.

A LETTER FOR CODE VIOLATION

Besides the red tag, authorities also send the property owner a letter indicating code violations.

Such a letter clearly states the reason behind the red tag and how to address the issue.

The code violation letter also specifies a timeframe for the correction, often 60 days starting from the day the initial notice gets issued. Any repairs or correction procedures also need to have the applicable permits.

HOW TO HANDLE A RED TAG

To eliminate the red tag from your property, ensure to make the necessary repairs or adjustments within the duration specified by the city. If the deadline passes without any repairs or attempts to repair, you'll incur a penalty for failing to comply with the codes as required.

Here are three steps to guide you;

1. CONFIRM THE CITATION

A red tag looks like a parking ticket for your car. Once you get it, check the citation to understand the issue with your property. Ensure the stated case is clear to be able to come up with a solution.

2. CONSULT AN ARCHITECT

Handling the documents involved with a red tag can be a challenge, so it is advisable to contact an architect. Since the city requires evidence of corrections and repairs, the architect can recommend quality materials. He's capable of ensuring that the process adheres to the building and safety codes.

3. FIX THE PROBLEM

After looking at the issues stated on the code violation letter, make a plan to resolve all of them immediately.

Once you address the issues, you can contact the city officials and organize another inspection.

Once you undergo a successful re-inspection, your property gets clearance, the red tag gets removed, and you can now access the property.

However, any outstanding fines, levies, or penalties against the property remain on the title until they get paid.

You may be toying with the idea of removing the sign from your property to save you some embarrassment. It is important to remember that the sign needs to stay put until the officers enforcing the code remove it.

CAN A PROPERTY WITH A RED-TAG BE SOLD?

Most properties with red tags carry a fine or lien on the title. Buyers looking to get financing may shy away from the property, as it is difficult for them to qualify for financing. This is because lenders or banks are unable to finance properties that are unsafe or require unimaginable repairs.

If your property has a red tag, the best option is to look for a buyer willing to pay cash as they do not need to go through a bank and accept the house in its current state.

REVENUE GENERATION

In some cases, cities can enforce codes as a way of generating revenue. Such cities collect accumulated levies from abandoned properties.

The aim is to force the new owners or banks to pay the expensive fees. Some departments are cooperative, but you may face some resistance since they want to maintain the revenue stream. This is why after you get the citation letter, you should immediately take action.

RED TAG PENALTIES

These can be very expensive if you do not address the problems within the specified time frame. City code enforcement can assess fines and levies against your property. Or, the city may proceed to correct the problem themselves, charging the owner for the same.

For example, if you purchased a red-tagged property, before your purchase, the city hires a contractor to board up the house to clean up the trash outside. The city then adds the contractor costs to the fines levied by code enforcement. Waiting to resolve the issue will only worsen the problem and might result in the city taking action against your property ownership.

To sum it up, you absolutely do not want your property to get red-tagged. The best way to handle red tags is to avoid getting them in the first place. In order to avoid red-tags, start your project the right way and follow city building code!

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