

**North Carolina  
Northampton County**

An Ordinance Regulating Unsafe Buildings

*Be it Ordained by the Board of Commissioners of the County of  
Northampton*

**Section 1: Finding: Purpose.** Pursuant to G.S. 153-121 It is hereby declared that there exist in the County of Northampton buildings (excluding farm buildings) which are unfit for human habitation, use or occupancy due to deterioration, dilapidation; defects increasing the hazards of fire, accidents and other calamities; lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities; and other conditions rendering such buildings unsafe or unsanitary, dangerous and detrimental to the health, safety and morals, and other wise inimical to the safety and welfare of the residents of the County of Northampton. In order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the County of Northampton as authorized by Article 6 G.S. 153A-121(a) of the General Statutes, it is the purpose of this ordinance to establish minimum standards of fitness for initial and continued occupancy of all buildings used for human use as expressly authorized by G.S. 153A-123(e).

**Section 2: Definitions:** The following definitions shall apply in the interpretation and enforcement of this ordinance:

**2.1 Agri-Business:** For the purpose of this ordinance, Agri-business shall be defined as a business offering agriculture services, products, supplies or equipment for retail or private sales to farms and to the general public excluding farm produce & products through roadside stands and/or farmer's market facilities.

**2.1.1 Basement:** shall mean a portion of a building which is located partly underground, having direct access to light and air from windows located above the level of the adjoining ground.

**2.2 Buildings for human use:** Building(s) for human uses shall mean all buildings including building(s) used for dwellings or dwelling units and governed by the North Carolina State Building Code(s). (excludes farm buildings or buildings exempt from the North Carolina State Code(s))Such buildings shall include appurtenance buildings and premises.

**2.3 Cellar:** shall mean a portion of a building which is located partly or wholly underground and has an inadequate access to light and air from windows.

**2.4 Deteriorated** shall mean that a dwelling, a dwelling unit, or building is unfit for human habitation or use and can be repaired, altered or improved to comply with all of the minimum standards established by this ordinance at a cost not in excess of fifty percent (50%) of its value, as determined by finding of the inspector.

**2.5 Dilapidated:** shall mean that a dwelling, a dwelling unit, or building is unfit for human habitation or use and cannot be repaired, altered or improved to comply with all of the minimum standards established by this ordinance except at a cost in excess of 50% of its value, as determined by finding of the inspector.

**2.6 Dwelling:** Shall mean any building or parts of building(s), structures or parts thereof which is wholly or partly used or intended to be used for living, sleeping or habitation by human occupants, and includes any outbuilding or appurtenances belonging thereto or usually enjoyed therewith or temporary housing, as hereinafter defined.

**2.7 Dwelling Unit:** shall mean any room or group of rooms located within a dwelling and forming a single habitable unit with facilities which are used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking and eating.

**2.8 Extermination:** shall mean the control and elimination of insects, rodents, vermin or other pests by removing or making inaccessible materials that may serve as the food; by poisoning, spray, fumigating or trapping; or by other recognized and legal pest elimination methods approved by the inspector.

**2.8.1 Farms:** For the purpose of this ordinance, Farms shall be defined as 10 or more acres which are actively involved with production and/or supplies of farm products and services and generate income for the farmer.

**2.9 Garbage:** shall mean the organic waste resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking, consumption or disposal of food or food products.

**2.10 Gender:** words having a masculine gender shall include the feminine or neuter genders. Words having a feminine gender shall include the masculine or neuter genders. Words having the neuter gender shall include masculine or feminine genders.

**2.11 Habitable room:** shall mean a room or enclosed floor space used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking or eating purposes, excluding bathrooms, water closet compartments, laundries, heater rooms, foyers, or communicating corridors, closets and storage spaces.

**2.12 Infestation:** shall mean the presence, within or around a dwelling or other building for human use, of any insects, rodents or other pests in such number as to constitute a menace to the health, safety or welfare of the occupants or to the general public.

**2.13 Inspector:** shall mean the Building Inspector of the County of Northampton or any authorized agent of the Inspector.

**2.14 Multiple dwelling:** shall mean any dwelling containing more than two (2) dwelling units.

**2.15 Multiple Occupancy:** shall mean any building(s) or complex with more than one (1) occupancy classification.

**2.16 Occupant:** shall mean any person over one year of age, living, sleeping, cooking or eating in, or have actual possession of a dwelling, dwelling unit or part thereof, in which dwelling units or rooming units are let.

**2.17 Operator:** shall mean any person who has charge, care or control of a building, or part thereof, in which dwelling units, rooming units or other building(s) subject to the North Carolina Building Code(s).

**2.18 Owner:** shall mean any person who alone or jointly, severally with others:

**2.18.1** Shall have title to any dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming unit or other building(s) subject to the North Carolina Building Code(s), with or without accompanying actual possession thereof; or

**2.18.2** Shall be a mortgagee of record for any dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming unit or other building(s) subject to the North Carolina Building Code(s); or

**2.18.3** Shall have charge, care or control of any dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming unit or other building(s) subject to the North Carolina Building Code(s), as owner or agent of the actual owner, or as executor, executrix, administrator, administratrix, trustee or guardian of the estate of the actual owner. Any such person thus representing the actual owner shall be bound to comply with the provisions of this ordinance, and of rules and regulation adopted pursuant thereto, to the same extent as if he (she) were the owner.

**2.19 Public Nuisance:** shall mean any activity, building, material, or condition which exist in such a state or place on or around any premise and is a detriment or a threat to property, the safety, welfare or well being of occupants, neighbors and/or the general public.

**2.19.1 Septic systems and sewage disposal:** A public or private system which takes effluent waste and returns it to the earth in such a manner as to neutralize any toxins, harmful bacteria or other contaminates.

**2.20 Temporary Housing:** shall include tents, travel trailers, campers, motor homes and any other legal type of shelter with or without toilet, bathing and cooking facilities.

**2.21 Temporary Occupancy:** shall mean the restricted or conditional occupancy of and temporary housing unit or any building(s) subject to the North Carolina Building Code(s) having non-compliant conditions or other restrictions and not extending more than 120 days.

**2.22 Temporary Electrical:** non-permanent or restricted power connection(s) to building service(s) or parts thereof. Temporary power is granted to facilitate partial or restricted

use of building(s) premises wiring to occupy building(s) or parts of a building(s) for a period not to exceed 90 days (NEC 590.3B).

**2.23 Temporary Service Poles or Boards:** Temporary service poles are used for construction purpose only and not for use as permanent power and must not be hard-wired to any building or other service system(s).

**Section 3: Minimum Standards of Fitness:** for buildings (excluding farm buildings) for human habitation or use.

**3.1 Minimum standards of Fitness:** (future minimum housing) Buildings (excluding farm buildings) for human use or human habitation shall comply with all of the minimum standards for safety & fitness for human use and all the requirements of Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of this ordinance.

**3.2 Illegal Occupancy:** No person shall occupy as owner-occupant, or let to another for occupancy for use as a human habitation, any dwelling, dwelling unit or other building for human use and not comply with all of the minimum standards for safety & fitness for human use and all the requirements of Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of this ordinance.

**Section 4: Minimum Standards for Structural Conditions:** The following standards shall constitute the minimum standards for structural conditions for a building for human habitation or use. (& future minimum housing)

**4.1 Walls** or partitions or supporting members, sills, joist, rafters or other structural members shall not list, lean or buckle, and shall not be rotted, deteriorated, or damaged, and shall not have holes or cracks which might admit rodents and vermin.

**4.2 Floor** or roofs shall have adequate supporting members and strength to be reasonably safe for the purpose used.

**4.3 Foundations,** foundation walls, piers or other foundation supports shall not be leaning, deteriorated or damaged.

**4.4 Stairways,** stairs, steps, landings, porches or other parts or appurtenances shall be maintained in such condition that they will not fail or collapse and must be structurally sound. Handrails and guardrails must be maintained and be structurally sound.

**4.5 Adequate facilities** for egress in case of fire or panic shall be provided. When building is occupied, no required egress exit shall be barred, shackled or locked in such a manner that requires the use of keys, tool or other devices that impede immediate emergency egress.

**4.6 Interior walls** and ceilings of all rooms, closets and hallways shall be finished of suitable materials, which will by use of reasonable methods promote sanitation and

cleanliness, and shall be maintained in such a manner so as to enable the occupants to maintain reasonable privacy between various spaces.

**4.7 Roofs**, flashings, exterior walls, basement walls, floors, and all doors and windows exposed to the weather shall be constructed and maintained so as to be weather and watertight.

**4.8 Chimneys**, fireplaces, flues and chimneys shall not be defective, deteriorated or in danger falling, or in such condition or location as to constitute a fire hazard.

**4.9 Ground as a floor:** For dwellings or dwelling units, there shall be no use of the ground for floors, or wood floors on the ground.

## **Section 5: Minimum Standards for Basic Plumbing, Heating and Electrical Equipment and Facilities.**

### **5.1 Plumbing system:**

5.1.1 (future minimum housing)

5.1.2 (future minimum housing)

5.1.3 All buildings for human use (exempt farm buildings) that are occupied for more than three consecutive hours must have a minimum of one water closet and one lavatory.

5.1.4 All plumbing fixtures shall meet the standards of the State Plumbing code shall be maintained in a state of good repair and in good working order.

5.1.5 All required plumbing fixtures shall be located within the building for human habitation or use shall be accessible to the occupants of same. The water closet and/or shower or tub located in a room that affords privacy to the occupants.

5.1.6 All waste water connections to public or private sewage disposal systems must be maintained in such a manner as to have no leakage, exposure or contamination to the ground surface or public or private potable water systems.

### **5.2 Heating system**

5.2.1 (future minimum housing)

5.2.2 Buildings which require heating shall be provided with sufficient fireplaces, chimneys, flues, gas vents or other facilities to which heating appliances may be connected to heat with a minimum of 68° F (North Carolina Residential Code R303.6) measured three feet (3') above the floor during ordinary winter conditions.

### **5.3: Electrical Systems**

5.3.1 (future minimum housing)

5.3.2 All other buildings having no natural ventilation or lighting and is for human occupation for periods of more than 3 hours or building(s) occupied during the hours of darkness must have electric lighting capable of furnishing a minimum of 6 fc illumination 30" above the floor (North Carolina Residential Code R303.142) .

5.3.3 All Electrical service systems must be installed in accordance with the National Electric Code and maintained in proper and safe working condition.

5.3.4 All stairways and halls in areas not having natural illumination or used in hours of darkness must be furnished with sufficient electrical lighting.

**Section 6: Minimum Standards for Ventilation:**

(future minimum housing)

**Section 7: Minimum Standards for Space, Use & Location:**

(future minimum housing.)

**Section 8: Minimum Standards for Safe & Sanitary Maintenance:**

**8.1 Dwellings & Dwelling Units:**

(future minimum housing)

**8.2 Building for human habitation or use:**

**8.2.1 Exterior foundation, walls and roofs:** Every foundation wall, exterior wall and exterior roof shall be substantially weather tight and rodent proof; shall be kept in sound condition and good repair; shall be capable of affording privacy; and shall be safe to use and capable of supporting the load which normal use would cause to be placed thereon. Every exterior wall shall be protected with weather tight siding or other protective covering to prevent the entrance or penetration of moisture or the weather.

**8.2.2 Interior floors, walls and ceilings:** Every floor, interior wall and ceiling shall be substantially rodent proof; shall be kept in sound condition and good repair; and shall be safe to use and capable of supporting load which normal use would cause to be placed thereon.

**8.2.3 Windows and doors:** Every window, exterior door, basement or cellar door and hatchway shall be substantially weather tight and rodent proof and shall be kept in sound working condition and good repair.

**8.2.4 Stairs, porches and appurtenances:** Every outside and inside stairs, stairways, porches and appurtenance thereto shall be safe to use and capable of supporting the load

that normal use would cause to be placed thereon and shall be kept in sound condition and good repair.

**8.2.5 Bathroom floors:** Every bathroom and toilet room floor surface shall be constructed and maintained so that it will be reasonably impervious to water and will permit such floor to be easily kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

**8.2.6 Supplied facilities:** Every supplied facility, piece of equipment, or utility which is required under this ordinance, shall be so constructed or installed that it will function safely and effectively and shall be maintained in satisfactory working condition.

**8.2.7 Drainage:** Every yard shall be properly graded in order to obtain thorough drainage and to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water.

**8.2.8 Noxious Weeds:** Every yard and all exterior property areas shall be kept free of species of weeds or plant growth which are noxious or detrimental to health.

**8.2.9 Egress:** Every building for human use shall be provided with adequate means of egress as is required by the North Carolina State Building Code.

## **Section 9: Minimum Standards for Control of Insects, Rodents and infestations:**

**9.1 Screens:**  
(future minimum housing)

**9.2 Rodent & Vermin control:** Every building for human habitation or use, including basements or cellars, shall be equipped with screens or other such approved device or barrier which will effectively prevent the entrance of insects, rodents and vermin.

**9.3 Infestation:** Every owner, owner-occupant or occupant shall be responsible for the extermination of insects, rodent or vermin there in or on the premises; whenever infestation is caused by failure of the owner to maintain a building for human use in a rodent, insect and/or vermin proof condition, extermination shall be the responsibility of the owner, when a building is occupied by multiple tenant spaces, extermination shall be the responsibility of the owner.

**9.4 Rubbish Storage and Disposal:** Every building for human habitation or use shall be supplied with approved containers and covers for storage of rubbish as is required by Northampton County Solid Waste Management ordinances, and the owner, operator or agent in control of such building unit shall be responsible for the removal of rubbish.

**9.5 Garbage Storage and Disposal:** When garbage is generated, every building for human habitation or use shall have an approved garbage disposal system or container as is required by the Northampton County Solid waste management ordinances.

**Section 10: Minimum Standards applicable to rooming houses:**  
(future minimum housing code)

**Section 11: Responsibilities of Owner and Occupants:**

**11.1 Public Areas:** Every owner of a building for human habitation or use shall be responsible for maintaining in a clean and sanitary condition the shared or public areas of the dwelling and premises thereof.

**11.2 Cleanliness:** Every occupant of a building for human habitation or use shall keep in a clean and sanitary condition that part of a building and premises thereof which he occupies, uses and controls.

**11.3 Rubbish and Garbage:** Every occupant, of a building for human habitation or use, shall dispose of all his rubbish and garbage in a clean and sanitary manner by placing it in the supplied storage facilities. In all cases, the owner shall be responsible for the availability of rubbish and garbage storage facilities.

**11.4 Supplied Plumbing Fixtures:** Every occupant of a building for human habitation or use shall keep all supplied plumbing fixtures therein in a clean and proper use and operation of same.

**11.5 Care of facilities, Equipment and structure:** No occupant shall willfully destroy deface or impair any of the facilities or equipment, or any part of a building for human habitation or use.

**Note:** The respective responsibilities of landlords and tenants under rental agreement for dwellings or dwelling units are further enumerated in State law, G.S. Chapter 42, Article 5.

**Section 12: Powers and Duties of Building Inspectors:** The Building Inspector is hereby designated as the officer to enforce the provisions of this ordinance and to exercise the duties and powers herein prescribed. The Building inspector is authorized to exercise such powers as may be necessary or convenient to carry out and effectuate the purpose and provisions of this ordinance. The building Inspector shall have the following powers and duties:

**12.1** to investigate the condition(s) of the building(s) and/or premises in question, and to inspect dwellings and dwelling units under the jurisdiction of the County of Northampton in order to determine which building(s) for human habitation and/or use are in violation of this ordinance and for the purpose of carrying out the objectives of this ordinance with respect to the repair, closing or demolition of each such building.

**12.2** to take such action, together with other appropriate departments and agencies, public and private, as may be necessary to effect rehabilitation of buildings and/or abatement of conditions in violation of this ordinance.



12.3 To keep a record of the results of inspections made under this ordinance and an inventory of those building(s) which are in violation of the provisions of this ordinance.

12.4 to administer oaths and affirmations, examine witnesses and receive evidence.

12.5 to enter upon premises for the purpose of making examination and inspections; provided, such entries shall be made in accordance with section 13 of this ordinance and state law, and shall be made in such manner as to cause the least possible inconvenience to the persons in possession;

12.6 to appoint and fix the duties of such officers, agents, and employees as he deems necessary to assist in carrying out the purposes of this ordinance, and to delegate any of his functions and powers to such officers, agents and employees; and

12.7 to perform such other duties as may be prescribed herein or by the Northampton County Board of Commissioners and as is directed by the Northampton County Manager.

### **Section 13: Inspections: Duty of Owners and Occupants.**

13.1 For the purpose of making inspections, the inspector is hereby authorized to enter, examine and survey, at all reasonable times all buildings and premises for human habitation or human use.

13.2 Every occupant, or tenant of a building for human habitation or human use shall give the owner thereof, or his agent at all reasonable hours access for the purpose of making repairs or alterations as are necessary to effect compliance with the provisions of this ordinance or with any lawful order issued pursuant to the provisions of this ordinance.

### **Section 14: Procedure for Enforcement.**

14.1 **Preliminary Investigation:** Notice: Hearing. When a petition is filed with the Inspector by a Public Authority or by at least five (5) residents of the County charging that any building for human habitation or use, or whenever it appears to the Inspector, upon inspection, that any building for human habitation or use, is unfit for human habitation he shall, if his preliminary investigation discloses a basis for such charges, issue and cause to be served upon the owner of and parties of interest in such building a complaint stating the charges and containing a notice that a hearing will be held before the Inspector at a place therein fixed, not less than ten (10) nor more than thirty (30) days after the serving of the complaint. The owner or any party in interest shall have the right to file an answer to the complaint and to appear in person, or otherwise, and give testimony at the place and time fixed in the complaint. Notice of such hearing shall also be given to at least one of the persons signing a petition relating to such dwelling. Any person desiring to do so may attend such hearing and give evidence relevant in courts of law or equity shall not be controlling in hearings before the Inspector.

**14.2 Procedure After Hearing:** After such notice and hearing, the Inspector shall state in writing his determination whether the building is unfit for human habitation or use, and, if so, whether it is deteriorated or is dilapidated. If the inspector determines that the building is deteriorated, he shall state in writing his findings of fact in support of such determination, and shall issue and cause to be served upon the owner thereof and order directing and requiring the owner to repair, alter, improve or other wise abate such building, dwellings or dwelling units to comply with the minimum standard of fitness established by this ordinance within a specified period of time, not to exceed ninety (90) days. Such order may also direct and require the owner to vacate and close such building until such repairs, alterations, and improvements or corrections have been made. If the Inspector determines that the dwelling is dilapidated, he shall state in writing his finding of fact to support such determination, and shall issue and cause to be served upon the owner thereof an order directing and requiring the owner either to repair, alter, improve or otherwise abate such conditions as to comply with the minimum standards of fitness established by this ordinance, or else to vacate and remove or demolish the same within a specified period of time not to exceed ninety (90) days.

### **14.3 Failure to Comply with Order:**

**14.3.1 In Personam Remedy:** If the owner of a deteriorated building shall fail to comply with an order of the Inspector to repair, alter, or improve or to vacate and close the same within the time specified therein, or if the owner of a dilapidated building shall fail to comply with an order of the inspector to repair, alter or improve or to vacate and close and remove or demolish the same within the time specified therein, the inspector shall submit to the Northampton County Board of Commissioners at its next regular meeting a resolution directing the County of Northampton Attorney to petition the superior court for an order directing such owner to comply with the order of the inspector as authorized by G.S. 153A-123(e).

**14.3.2 In Rem Remedy:** After failure or refusal of an owner of a deteriorated or dilapidated building to comply with an order of the inspector with the time specified therein, if injunctive relief has not been sought or has not been granted as provided in the preceding paragraph (1), the inspector shall submit to the County Commissioners an ordinance ordering the Inspector to cause such building to be repaired, altered, improved, vacated, closed, removed or demolished, as provided in the original order of the inspector, and pending removal or demolition, to place a placard on such building as provided by G.S. 153A-123(c) and Section 16 of this Ordinance.

**14.4 Appeals from Orders of Inspector:** An appeal from any decision or order of the Inspector may be taken by any person aggrieved there by. Any appeal from the Inspector shall be taken within 10 days from the rendering of the decision or service of the order, and shall be taken by filing with the inspector and with the Northampton County Board of Commissioners or their designee, a notice of appeal which shall specify the grounds upon which the appeal is based. Upon the filing of any notice of appeal, the Inspector shall forthwith transmit to the board all the papers constituting the record on which the decision appealed from was made. When an appeal is from a decision of the Inspector

refusing to allow the person aggrieved thereby to do any act, his decision shall remain in force until modified or reversed. When an appeal is from a decision of the Inspector requiring the person aggrieved to do any act, the appeal shall have the effect of suspending the requirement until the hearing by the Board, unless the inspector certifies to the Board, after the notice of appeal is filed with him, that by reason of the facts stated in the certificate (a copy of which shall be furnished the appellant), a suspension of his requirement would imminent peril to life or property, in which case the requirement shall not be suspended except for due cause shown upon not less than a one day's written notice to the inspector by the Board, or by a court of record upon petition made pursuant to G.S. 153A-121 and subsection 14.5 of this section. The Board shall fix a reasonable time for the hearing of all appeals, shall give due notice to all the parties, and shall render its decision within a reasonable time. Any party may appear in person or by agent or attorney. The Board may reverse or affirm, wholly or partly, or may modify the decision or order appealed from, and may make such decision and order as in its opinion ought to be made in the matter, and to that end it shall have all the powers of the inspector, but the concurring vote of four (4) members of the Board shall be necessary to reverse or modify any decision or order of the Inspector. The Board shall have power also in passing upon appeals, in the way of carrying out the strict letter of the ordinance, to adapt the application of the ordinance to the necessities of the case to the end that the spirit of the ordinance shall be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done. Every decision of the Board shall be subject to review in the Superior Court of Northampton County by proceedings in the nature of certiorari instituted within 15 days of the decision of the board, but not otherwise.

**14.5 Petition to Superior Court by Owner:** Any person aggrieved by an order issued by the Inspector or decision rendered by the Board shall have the right, within thirty (30) days after issuance of the order or rendering of the decision, to petition the Superior Court for a temporary injunction restraining the Inspector pending a final disposition of the cause, as provided by G.S. 153A-121(d).

**Section 15: Methods of Service of Complaints and Orders:** Complaints or orders issued by the Inspector shall be served upon persons either personally or by registered or certified mail. If the whereabouts of such persons are unknown and the same cannot be ascertained by the Inspector in the exercise of reasonable diligence, the Inspector shall make an affidavit to that effect, and the serving of such complaint or order upon such person may be made by publishing the same, least once no later than the time at which personal service would be required under the provision of this ordinance in a newspaper having general circulation in Northampton County. Where service is made by publication, a notice of the pending proceedings shall be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises affected by the complaint or order.

**Section 16: In Rem Action by Inspector;** Placarding: After failure of an owner of a building to comply with an order of the Inspector issued pursuant to the provisions of this ordinance, and upon adoption by the County of Northampton of an ordinance authorizing and directing him to do so, as provided by G.S. 153A-121 and Section 14.3 of this ordinance, the Inspector shall proceed to cause such building(s) to be repaired, altered or improved to comply with the minimum standards of fitness established by this ordinance, or to be vacated and closed and

removed or demolished, as directed by this ordinance of the County of Northampton, and shall cause to be posted on the main entrance of such building a placard with the following words: "This building is unfit for human habitation and occupancy is prohibited and unlawful" Occupation of a building so posted shall constitute a misdemeanor.

**Section 17: Cost, a lien on Premises.** As provided by G.S. 153A-123(a), the cost of any repairs, alterations, or improvements, or of vacating or closing, or removal or demolition, or other abatements caused to be made or done by the Inspector pursuant to Section 16 of this ordinance shall be a lien against the real property upon which such cost was incurred. Such lien shall be filed and have priority as provided by North Carolina G.S. 153A-123 and such lien may be collected under any procedure prescribed by law for the foreclosure of property tax liens as set forth in North Carolina G.S. 105-374 and G.S. 105-375.

**Section 18: Alternative Remedies:** Neither this ordinance nor any of its provisions shall be construed to impair or limit in any way the power of The County of Northampton to define and declare nuisances and to cause their abatement by summary action or otherwise, or to enforce this ordinance by criminal process as authorized by G.S. 153A-123 and Section 20 of this ordinance, and the enforcement of any remedy provided herein shall not prevent the enforcement of any other remedy or remedies provided herein or in other ordinances or laws.

**Section 19: (Alternative) Housing Appeals Board.**  
(future minimum housing)

**Section 19: (Alternative) Zoning Board of Adjustments:**  
(future minimum housing)

**Section 20: Conflict with other Provisions:** In the event any provision, standard, or requirement of this ordinance is found to be in conflict with any provision of any other ordinance or code of the County of Northampton, the provision which establishes the higher standards or more stringent requirement for the promotion and protection of the health and safety of the residents of the County of Northampton shall prevail.

**Section 21: Violations: Penalty:**

**21.1** It shall be unlawful for the owner of any building for human habitation or use to fail neglect, or refuse to repair, alter, or improve the same, or to vacate and close and remove or demolish the same, upon order of the inspector duly made and served as herein provided, within the time specified in such order. Each day that any such failure, neglect, or refusal to comply with such order continues shall constitute a separate and distinct offense.

**21.2** It shall be unlawful for the owner of any building for human habitation or use with respect to which an order has been issued pursuant to Section 14 of this ordinance, to occupy or permit the occupancy of the same after the time prescribed in such order for its repair, alternation or improvement or its vacation and closing. Each day that such

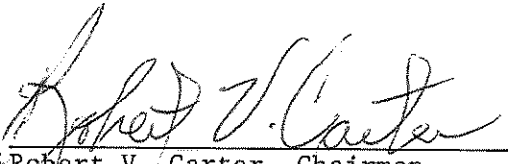
occupancy continues after such prescribed time shall constitute a separate and distinct offense.

21.3 The violation of any provision of the ordinance shall constitute a misdemeanor, as provided by G.S. 14-4.

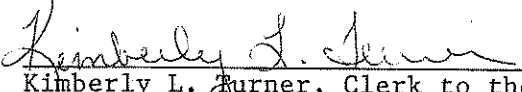
21.4 In addition to the penalty established by subsection 21.3 above, and the remedies provided by other provisions of this ordinance may be enforced by an appropriate equitable remedy issued by a court of competent jurisdiction.

**Section 22: Severability:** If any provision of this ordinance is for any reason(s) held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such provision shall be deemed a separate, independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of any other provision hereof, and to that end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

**Section 23: Effective Date:** This ordinance shall be effective on 18 February 2008.  
This ordinance was adopted on 18 February 2008.

  
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Robert V. Carter, Chairman  
Northampton County Board of Commissioners

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly L. Turner, Clerk to the Board