



## Legislation Text

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ORIGINAL

ALD. BORKOWSKI

An ordinance relating to a hazardous vacant building placarding system for first responder safety.

200-51.8 cr

This ordinance codifies the Milwaukee fire department's revised vacant/hazardous structure placarding system. The placarding system is intended to categorize vacant building hazards to aid in situational awareness, increase firefighter safety and prevent unnecessary risk.

The Mayor and Common Council of the City of Milwaukee do ordain as follows:

Part 1. Section 200-51.8 of the code is created to read:

**200-51.8. Hazardous Vacant Building Placarding Program. 1. DEFINITION.** In this section, "hazardous vacant building" means any building or other structure that is vacant or abandoned within the meaning of s. 200-51.7-3 and has been ordered closed, removed, shutdown or otherwise vacated under s. 200-12, 200-12.5, 218-4, 218-9 or by court order.

**2. WARNING PLACARD AUTHORIZED.** The fire chief is authorized to:

- a. Mark any hazardous vacant or abandoned building with a first responder warning placard alerting first responders to the existence of the structural or interior hazards at the building of the type that warrant extreme caution when conducting interior firefighting or rescue operations at such building or exterior operations with entry only occurring for known life hazards.
- b. Remove a first responder warning placard when the authority responsible for ordering the building closed, removed, shutdown or otherwise vacated lifts the applicable order or otherwise determines that the building is no longer a hazardous vacant building.

**3. PLACARD DESIGN AND PLACEMENT.** Any hazardous vacant building determined by the fire department to be especially unsafe in case of fire, under s. 110.1.1, International Fire Code, as amended, shall be identified and marked with one or more first responder warning placards in accordance with the following:

- a. Design of Placards.
  - a-1. A square with a diagonal line from the bottom left corner to the upper right corner shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist and interior firefighting or rescue operations should be conducted with extreme caution.
  - a-2. A square with 2 diagonal lines, one from the bottom left corner to the upper right corner and another from the bottom right corner to the upper left corner, shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist to a degree that consideration should be given to limit firefighting to exterior operations only, with entry only occurring for known life hazards in a known location.
  - a-3. Additional symbols consistent with current Milwaukee fire department policy shall be used to

further designate descriptive hazards on the hazardous vacant building placard.

b. Location and visibility. b-1. The placard shall be applied on the front of the hazardous vacant building and be visible from the street. Additional placards may be applied to the side of each entrance to the building and on penthouses.

b-2. Each placard shall be 16 inches by 16 inches minimum in size with a white background, orange reflective stripes and an orange reflective border. The stripes and border shall have a 1-inch minimum stroke.

b-3. Symbols shall include red lettering 3 inches minimum in height.

c. Inspections. Prior to receiving a placard, every hazardous vacant building shall be inspected by the department of neighborhood services or a representative of the fire chief.

**4. REMOVAL OF PLACARD PROHIBITED.** It shall be unlawful for any person, other than authorized city officials or their respective designees, to cover, obliterate, deface, damage or remove any first responder warning placard unless written permission to engage in such activity has first been obtained from the fire chief.

**5. NOTICE OF DEMOLITION REQUIRED.** If any building marked with a first responder warning placard is to be wrecked, demolished or razed, the owner of the building or the owner's agent shall notify the department of neighborhood services for proper removal.

**6. PENALTY FOR VIOLATION.** Any person who violates any requirement of this section shall be fined not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000 for each offense.

**7. RULES AND REGULATIONS.** The fire chief is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary or appropriate to implement the requirements of this section, including, but not limited to, rules and regulations pertaining to the location, number, size, color, reflective marking, date of application, design, construction, use, symbols or removal of first responder warning placards per current Milwaukee fire department policy.

**8. CONSTRUCTION OF SECTION.** The marking of a building with a first responder warning placard is informational only and shall not be construed to limit in any way the discretion of the on-scene incident commander or similar fire department personnel. The absence of such warning placard on any building shall not be construed to mean that entry to such building is permitted or that such building is safe or otherwise free of dangerous and hazardous conditions.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

\_\_\_\_\_  
Legislative Reference Bureau

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

IT IS OUR OPINION THAT THE ORDINANCE  
IS LEGAL AND ENFORCEABLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Office of the City Attorney

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

LRB175521-1  
Luke Knapp  
11/19/2019