

**VACANT BUILDING MAINTENANCE LICENSE
(VBML)
GENERAL INFORMATION**

VBML APPLICATION PROCESS

1. PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION ISSUES ORDERS TO KEEP BUILDING VACANT AND APPLY FOR VBML.
2. APPLICANT MUST APPLY FOR VBML WITHIN 30 DAYS OF ORDER.
3. APPLICANT PAYS LICENSE FEE OR APPEALS REQUIREMENTS (See Attachment for information on appeals).
4. APPLICANT MUST MAINTAIN GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR PROPERTY. (CMC SEC. 1101-77.1 b)
5. BUILDING MUST BE BROUGHT INTO VBML MAINTENANCE STANDARDS WITHIN 60 DAYS OF APPLICATION DATE.

REFUND- IF A VACANT PROPERTY IS BROUGHT INTO COMPLIANCE WITH THE MINIMUM STANDARDS OF THE CINCINNATI BUILDING CODE AND IS APPROVED FOR RE-OCCUPANCY, OR THE VACATED BUILDING IS DEMOLISHED AND SITE CLEARED WITHIN ONE YEAR OF PAYMENT OF THE VBML FEE, THE CURRENT YEAR'S FEE WILL BE REFUNDED ON REQUEST. (CMC 1101-124.4)

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE VACATED BUILDING MAINTENANCE LICENSE ORDINANCE:

- 1.) Apply for a Vacated Building Maintenance License (VBML) within 30 days of the date of this notice by completing the VBML/permit application form, paying the prescribed fee, and filing the application at 805 Central Avenue, Suite 700, Cincinnati, OH 45202, and;**
- 2.) Acquire General Liability Insurance within 30 days of the date of this notice (per Section 1101-77.1 General (b) shown below.) The Insurance policy shall provide for written notice to the director of buildings and inspections within 30 days of any lapse, cancellation, or change in coverage and;**
- 3.) Cause the premises to conform to the minimum standards of safety and structural integrity set forth in 1101-79.4 below within 90 days of the date of this notice. NOTE: Merely applying for a VBML, paying the fee, and showing proof of insurance does not constitute full compliance with the VBML requirements and this order. You must make all necessary repairs and clean up on the building and premises and obtain the license to be considered in compliance. The license will not be issued until full compliance with the maintenance conditions set forth in Section 1101-79.4 CBC Vacated Building Maintenance Standards shown below is achieved.**

Furthermore, as a condition upon which the VBML is issued, the premises must be kept in compliance and maintained in accordance with the VBML standards set forth in Section 1101-79.4 CBC during the entire license period, or the Vacated Building License will be revoked per section 1101-49.1 *Revocation and refusal of permits*, shown in part below.

Failure to timely pay the application fee within 30 days of the date the building is vacated or prior to the annual renewal date is subject to the assessment of a *late fee* equal to the VBML application fee or \$1000.00 whichever is less per Section 1101-129.3 CBC.

Failure to pay the application fee, late fees, or fines and City costs associated with the VBML may result in a lien being placed against the property for the total of these fines and fees allowed to remain unpaid.

Sec. 1101-77. Obligations of Owners of Vacated Buildings.

1101-77.1 General:

- a.** The owner of a building ordered in whole or in part vacated or kept vacant by the director of buildings and inspections shall apply for a vacated building maintenance license, cause the premises to conform to the minimum standards of safety and structural integrity set forth in § 1101-79.4, and obtain a vacated building maintenance license. **
- b.** The owner of a building ordered in whole or in part vacated or kept vacant by the director of buildings and inspections shall acquire or otherwise maintain general liability insurance in an amount of not less than \$300,000 for buildings designed primarily for use as residential units, including buildings containing no more than four dwelling units; and not less than \$1,000,000 for any other building, including, but not limited to, buildings designed for manufacturing, industrial, storage, or commercial uses, including buildings containing five or more dwelling units. Any insurance policy acquired after an order to vacate or keep the building vacant shall provide for written notice to the director of buildings and inspections within 30 days of any lapse, cancellation, or change in coverage. Upon request, the owner shall provide evidence of the insurance to the director of buildings and inspections. The owner of a building ordered in whole or in part vacated or kept vacant by the director of buildings and inspections shall not be required to obtain or otherwise maintain fire/casualty insurance.

1101-77.2 Time For Compliance: An owner subject to § 1101-77.1 CBC shall apply for a vacated building maintenance license and obtain liability insurance in the amount required by § 1101-77.1 within 30 days from the date of issuance of the initial order to vacate the building or portion thereof. After applying for a license and obtaining insurance, the owner shall cause the premises to conform to the minimum standards of safety and structural integrity set forth in § 1101-79.4 within 60 days of the application date. The director may extend the time in writing, upon the owner showing good cause for extension. Any such extensions of time shall not exceed a total of 180 days, following the expiration of the 60-day period following the application date.

1101-79.4 Vacated Building Maintenance Standards: A building shall be deemed adequately protected from intrusion by trespassers and from deterioration by the weather if:

- (1) Building openings:** Doors, windows, areaways and other openings are weathertight and secured against entry by birds, vermin and trespassers. Missing or broken doors, windows and opening coverings are covered with at least one-half inch of CDX plywood, weather protected, tightly fitted to the opening and secured by screws or bolts.
- (2) Roofs:** The roof and flashings are sound, tight, will not admit moisture, and drained to prevent dampness or deterioration in the walls or interior.
- (3) Drainage:** The building gutters and downspouts are watertight and entire storm drainage system is adequately sized, installed in an approved manner, functional and discharged in an approved manner.
- (4) Building Structure:** The building is maintained in good repair, structurally sound, free from debris, rubbish and garbage, and sanitary, and interior floors, walking surfaces and stairs are structurally sound, and interior walls and ceilings are free of loose or hanging plaster and finishes, so as not to pose a threat to the public health or safety.
- (5) Structural Members:** The structural members are free of deterioration and capable of safely bearing imposed dead and live loads.
- (6) Foundation Walls:** The foundation walls are plumb, free from open cracks and breaks, and ratproof.
- (7) Exterior Walls:** The exterior walls are free of holes, breaks, and loose or rotting materials. Exposed metal and wood surfaces are protected from the elements and against decay or rust by periodic application of weather coating materials, such as paint or similar surface treatment.
- (8) Decorative Features:** The cornices, belt courses, corbels, terra cotta trim, wall facings and similar decorative features are safe, anchored, and in good repair. Exposed metal and wood surfaces are protected from the elements and against decay or rust by periodic application of weather coating materials, such as paint or similar surface treatment.
- (9) Structure Extensions:** All balconies, porches, canopies, marquees, signs, metal awnings, cornices, stairways, fire escapes, standpipes, exhaust ducts and similar features are in good repair, anchored, safe and sound. Exposed metal and wood surfaces are protected from the elements and against decay or rust by periodic application of weather coating materials, such as paint or similar surface treatment.
- (10) Chimneys and Towers:** Chimneys, cooling towers, smokestacks, and similar appurtenances are structurally safe. Exposed metal and wood surfaces are protected from the elements and against decay or rust by periodic application of weather coating materials, such as paint or similar surface treatment.
- (11) Sidewalk Openings:** Yardwalks, steps, and openings in sidewalks are safe for pedestrian travel.
- (12) Accessory and Appurtenant Structures:** Accessory and appurtenant structures such as garages, sheds, and fences are free from safety, health, and fire hazards.
- (13) Premises:** The premises on which a structure is located is clean, safe and sanitary, maintained free of weeds, junk cars, and litter, and does not pose a threat to the public health or safety.

1101-49.1 Revocation and refusal of permits: The director of buildings and inspections may revoke any permit, license, certificate or approval issued under the provisions of this Code, may refuse to issue a permit, license certificate, or approval or may stop the work for any of the following reasons:

- (3)** Whenever there is a violation of any condition on which the issuance of the permit, license or certificate was based;

Sec. 1101-129. *Fees for Vacated Building Maintenance Licenses.*

1101-129.1 **Application Fee:** The fee for application for a vacated building maintenance license is based on the duration of time the building has been ordered vacated or kept vacated as determined by the following scale:

- \$900.00 for properties that have been ordered vacated or kept vacant for less than one year
- \$1,800.00 for properties that have been ordered vacated or kept vacant for at least one year but less than two years:
- \$2,700.00 annually for properties that have been ordered vacated or kept vacant for at least two years but less than five years:
- \$3,500.00 annually for properties that have been ordered vacated or kept vacant for at least five years

The fee shall be paid at the time of application and deposited in the building hazard abatement fund. Such rates shall go into effect upon the effective date of the ordinance which implements the fee structure contained in this section. Upon any initial application for a license, or upon the first renewal of a license following the implementation of the above-listed fee structure, all persons shall initially be required to pay the \$900 fee, and will thereafter pay the designated annual fee based on the graduated rate listed herein.

1101-129.2 Renewal Fee: The fee for renewal of a vacated building maintenance license to be determined by the scale in 1101-129.1. shall be paid at the time of application for renewal and deposited in the building hazard abatement fund. A renewal license shall expire on the annual renewal date. The annual renewal date shall be the anniversary of the date notice of violation is given pursuant to Section 1101-61 CBC wherein the building or portion thereof was initially ordered to be vacated or kept vacant.

1101-129.3 Late Fee: In addition to the amount assessed for the VBML license, the director of buildings and inspections shall charge a late fee equal to the license or renewal fee or \$1,000, whichever is less, if the owner fails to obtain a vacated building maintenance license within the time provided by 1101-77.2 CBC or if the owner fails to apply for renewal of a vacated building maintenance license before the annual renewal date. The annual renewal date shall be the anniversary of the date notice of violation is given pursuant to Section 1101-61 CBC wherein the building or portion thereof was initially ordered to be vacated or kept vacant. Unpaid Late Fees shall be considered a debt collectible pursuant to Section 1101-129.3A.

1101-129.3A Fee as a lien: If the owner fails to pay the amount due for the license, for renewal of the license, or as a fine for being out of compliance with the vacant building requirements, said amount shall constitute a debt due and owing to the city, and the city may commence a civil action to collect such unpaid debt.

1101-129.4 Refund: The director of buildings and inspections shall refund the fees for a vacated building maintenance license paid if the subject building is brought into compliance with standards of the CBC and reoccupied within one year of payment of the application fee.* *

** * The refund will only be made in the amount paid for the license during the year in which the building was approved for re-occupancy. Prior years fees will not be refunded.*

** Contractors hired to complete this work must be registered with the City of Cincinnati. See the City of Cincinnati Website (<http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/bldginsp/pages/-17928->), or call 3523267, for more information.*

The effective date of this revised fee schedule is April 15, 2006

BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION NUMBER
SAMPLE VBML APPLICATION
HISTORIC - Y / N DIGITAL - Y / N CHANGE OF USE - Y / N
INITIALIZED BY _____

CONTRACT REG # (REQUIRED)

Part A - Identification

Project Address (Please Print in Blue or Black Ink Only) _____ Floor/Suite/Unit /Bldg/ILot _____

Owner - Name (Print) _____ Street Number & Name _____ City / State / Zip Code _____ Phone No / FAX No _____

Contractor - Name (Print) _____ Street Number & Name _____ City / State / Zip Code _____ Phone No / FAX No _____

Contact Person (Print) _____ Street Number & Name _____ City / State / Zip Code _____ Phone No / FAX No _____

E-mail Address _____

Part B - Main Use Of Primary Building On Property. (Office, Residential, Mercantile, Restaurant, Etc)

Current Use _____ Use Group (check) _____ Number Of Dwelling Units _____

Proposed Use _____ of Dwelling Units _____

**Fill in Parts
A & B**

Part C - Description Of Work

WORK DESCRIPTION

New Building SQ FT _____

Addition SQ FT _____

Alteration

Repair

Other

Sewer Availability YES / NO (Circle One)

Sprinkler/Standpipes New or Modify existing? (Circle One) Associated Building _____

Fire Alarm New or Modify existing? (Circle One) Associated Building _____

Retaining Wall Length _____ Average Height _____

Excavation / Fill Quantity of Fill _____ CY / Board Feet _____
Quantity of Excavation _____ CY / Board Feet _____

Sign Does the copy pertain to the business conducted on the premises? (Circle One)
Type of illumination? _____

Wrecking Dimensions of the Building? Length _____ Width _____ X _____ # of Stories _____

Certificate of Use and Occupancy
 Certificate of Inspection
 Vacant Building Maintenance License
 Daycare Center Certificate of Inspection - Type A

**Part C: Check "Vacant
Building Maintenance
License"**

**Part D: Sign & Date
Application
enclose
Application Fee**

Part D - Costs and Authorizations

FAIR MARKET VALUE OF LABOR AND MATERIALS FOR THIS APPLICATION _____

Do not include cost of electrical, plumbing, or mechanical.

The owner or agent of this building and undersigned does hereby certify that the information and statements given on the application, drawings, and inspections are to the best of their knowledge, true and correct. The undersigned further certifies their authorization to grant consent to the City of Cincinnati employees of the City of Cincinnati of the described premises at any time when work on those premises is ongoing and hereby grants their consent.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Permit Processing Fee _____

Approvals:

Zoning _____ Date _____ Plans Exam _____ Date _____

VBML APPEAL PROCESS

What can be appealed?

Owners of vacated property subject to the VBML Ordinance may apply for suspension of certain VBML requirements by filing an appeal with the Board of Housing Appeals- See Section 1101-83 Cincinnati Municipal Code (CMC).

The Board of Housing Appeals may hear appeals to suspend VBML application fees and maintenance provisions of the VBML when:

- a.) The owner has a development plan as defined in Section 1101-83.13 CMC or
- b.) The building is in a land banked status as defined in Section 1101-83.13 CMC.

The Board may suspend certain provisions of the thirteen point VBML maintenance and preservation criteria as well as VBML application fees for a period of up to two (2) years under the following circumstances:

- a.) The appellant has demonstrated that a legitimate and viable development plan exists for the property and full compliance with the VBML will be an undue burden on the plan, and:
 - 1. The building will not be a serious hazard to firefighters, police or emergency personnel upon entry in time of emergency; and,
 - 2. The building and premises will not be a significant negative factor reducing property values in the area; and,
 - 3. The building or parts of the building are not deemed a threat to collapse, and the building is maintained safe and secure against entry by trespassers, or
- b.) The appellant is a non-profit redevelopment corporation, and:
 - 1. The building is in a land banked status; and
 - 2. The building will not be a serious hazard to firefighters, police or emergency personnel upon entry in time of emergency; and,
 - 3. The building and premises will not be a significant negative factor reducing property values in the area; and,
 - 4. The building or parts of the building are not deemed a threat to collapse, and the building is maintained safe and secure against entry by trespassers.

How is a VBML appeal filed?

Fully complete a Housing Appeal Application Form and attach a development plan include enough information to support the grounds for your appeal. File the completed application and supporting documentation at 805 Central Avenue, Suite 700, Cincinnati, OH 45202, along with the filing fee of \$50.00. See the reverse side of the Housing Appeal application form for frequently asked questions regarding the appeal process. An appeal of the VBML requirements should include the following:

- A. A completed, notarized Board of Housing Appeals application form stating the VBML requirements being appealed and the grounds for the appeal
- B. A completed development plan form
- C. Supporting documentation for the appeal and development plan



APPEAL TO THE

BOARD OF HOUSING APPEALS

ADDRESS OF PREMISES IN QUESTION: _____

NAMES AND ADDRESS:

Appellant _____	Address: _____
Owner: _____	Address: _____
Lessee: _____	Address: _____

To the Board of Building Appeals:

I hereby appeal to the Board of Building Appeals for a hearing before the Board in reference to the attached (ruling) (order) issued to _____ by the Chief Building Official (CBO) under the date of _____. The appeal is based on the following grounds: (use additional sheet, if required)

I hereby depose and say that the above statements and the statements transmitted herewith are true.

Signature of Appellant: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Relationship of appellant to owner: Same _____ Lessee _____ Attorney _____

Architect _____ Engineer _____ Other _____ (Please Specify) _____

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Notary Public _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Case Number _____

Date Filed _____

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PLEASE NOTE: This information is supplied for your convenience. Your attention is directed to the full text and provisions of Chapter 1101 Cincinnati Building Code, The Cincinnati Property Maintenance Code and the Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3735 for community reinvestment areas related appeals.

1.) WHO MAY APPEAL? Persons aggrieved by notices of violation, decisions, or orders of the Department of Community Development ("DCD"), issued by Code Officials from the Division of Property Maintenance Inspections, pursuant to their enforcement of the Cincinnati Building Code, the VBML Ordinance, or decisions of a housing officer issued pursuant to 3735.65 to 3735.69 of the Ohio Revised Code (CRA Codes)

2.) WHAT MAY BE APPEALED? A written ruling or a written order to make repairs, corrections or alterations, or to obtain a Vacated Building Maintenance License, or rulings of a Housing Officer as it relates to Community Reinvestment Areas, such as denial of a tax exemption etc. may be appealed.

3.) WHEN MUST AN APPEAL BE FILED? Appeal must be filed within 30 days of the issuance of the order, notice or ruling.

4.) WHAT ARE THE GROUNDS FOR AN APPEAL?

- a.) That the property values in and around the subject building/property will not be adversely affected should the appeal be granted; and,
- b.) That the exception is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Cincinnati Building Code and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and general welfare; or,
- c.) That there has been a misinterpretation of the Cincinnati Building Code by the City official or enforcement officer issuing the decision; or,
- d.) That a variance from the applicable section of the Cincinnati Building Code, the administration thereof, or any rule or regulation made hereunder, in the specific case, will not be contrary to the public interest and a literal enforcement of such provisions will result in undue hardship. For Community Reinvestment Area Appeals- overruling a decision of a Housing Officer would be consistent with sections 3735.65 to 3735.69 of the Ohio Revised Code.

5.) HOW DO I FILE? Complete this form and deliver or send it to the Secretary to the Housing Board of Appeals at Centennial Plaza II, 805 Central Avenue, Suite 700, Cincinnati, OH 45202. This form must be notarized and be accompanied by:

- a.) A copy of the written ruling or written order appealed;
- b.) A non-refundable filing fee in the sum of \$50.00, check made payable to the City of Cincinnati and;
- c.) Pursuant to Item #4 above, a supporting statement or argument to be offered for the Board's consideration must be included. An appeal based wholly or in part on hardship must include detailed bid estimates on the cost of compliance and a statement of income.
- d.) A VBML waiver must include a detailed rehabilitation plan and a completed waiver application.

6.) WHAT AUTHORITY DOES THE BOARD HAVE? The Board has authority to overrule decisions of a Housing Officer related to Community Reinvestment Areas; to waive VBML fees and compliance with the 13 point building preservation criteria for up to two years; to modify, affirm, reverse or set aside the ruling or order appealed from.

7.) WHEN ARE THE HEARINGS HELD ? The hearings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 1:30 PM at the Business Development and Permit Center, 3300 Central Parkway, Cincinnati, Ohio. Your case will be set by the board as the caseload and schedule permits. You will be notified 10 days prior to the hearing when your case is scheduled.

8.) HOW WILL I KNOW THE BOARD'S DECISION ? Decisions are made in open sessions, usually immediately after the hearing. The decision will be sent to the owner of the property, the appellant and the City agencies involved within 30 days of the final hearing.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR VBML APPEAL

(A WAIVER OF VBML MAY BE REVOKED AND THE FEE BECOME IMMEDIATELY DUE AND PAYABLE IF ANY CONDITION UPON WHICH THE WAIVER IS GRANTED IS UNMET. FILE A COPY OF THIS PLAN AND ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION ALONG WITH A COMPLETED HOUSING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION FORM AND FILING FEE OF \$50.00 WITH THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF HOUSING APPEALS AT 805 CENTRAL AVE., 7TH FLOOR, CINCINNATI, OH 45202)

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY _____

OWNER _____ DAY PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ (Not a Post Office Box)

CITY / STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

DATE APPLIED _____ OTHER PHONE _____

WAIVER: TIME REQUESTED _____ (MAX 24 Months)

DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

1.) Describe the scope of the work necessary to prepare the building for re-occupancy and/or describe the full development plan (attach additional sheets, specifications or drawings)

2.) What is the estimated total cost of the development \$ _____

ITEMIZED COST ESTIMATES:

(Attach detailed cost estimates showing labor, material and itemization of work and total costs for each general category below.)

PLUMBING \$ _____ HVAC \$ _____ ELECTRICAL \$ _____

EXTERIOR REPAIRS \$ _____ STRUCTURAL AND SITE WORK \$ _____

INTERIOR RENOVATION \$ _____ ESTIMATED PERMIT FEES \$ _____

Continued on reverse side:

FINANCING PLAN:

3.) FINANCING SECURED: \$ _____ (Attach any financing commitment already obtained for this project.)

4.) NAME OF LENDER (S):

5.) OTHER CAPITAL, DOWNPAYMENTS, OR MEANS OF FINANCING THE DEVELOPMENT:

\$ _____ (Proof of the existence and availability of all funds must accompany this application.)

BENCHMARKS:

The work and tasks described below will be completed in the timeframe indicated as follows:

1.) Within 120 Days of the beginning of the waiver period. ___/___/___ Work to be completed:

2.) By the halfway mark of the waiver period or by ___/___/___ Work to be complete:

6.) LANDBANK:

Is property Land banked? Yes _____ No _____ Is the owner a non-profit? Yes _____ No _____

Is Land Bank plan endorsed by the Director of Community Development? Yes _____ No _____

If yes- attach copy of endorsement

The undersigned owner, or duly authorized agent hereby certifies that all statements and attachments herein are true and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The undersigned further certifies that he/she is the owner or duly authorized agent and person in control and responsible for the building and the development.

OWNER/AGENT _____ DATE _____ 20____

PRINTED NAME _____

Total number of pages of this application including attachments: _____

Incomplete or inaccurate applications will be rejected.