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# SCREENING OF OUTDOOR STORAGE

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As part of the City of Wichita Falls 2006-2007 Strategic Plan, the City Council, concerned about the overall appearance of the City, placed a high priority on providing an attractive and clean community. To help achieve this goal, the City Council has modified the Environmental Section of the Code of Ordinances to require the visual screening of certain properties that contain unsightly items that meet the definition of outdoor storage.

This brochure was developed as a guide for citizens who may have questions concerning screening requirements for outdoor storage.

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## **WHAT IS OUTDOOR STORAGE?**

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The City of Wichita Falls Code of Ordinances defines Outdoor Storage as:

“...any material, vehicle or equipment that has been used, damaged or partially dismantled and is:

1. stored outside indefinitely, or
2. held outside as inventory for future sale, processing or use.

Such articles include but are not limited to inoperable motor vehicles or motor vehicle parts, appliances, boxes, crates, pipe or pipe fittings, paper, metal, tires, toys, concrete blocks, bricks, furniture, fixtures, machinery, motors, lumber, buildings or portions of buildings, building materials, barrels or clothing.”

## **WHAT PROPERTIES CONTAINING OUTDOOR STORAGE ARE SUBJECT TO THE SCREENING REQUIREMENT?**

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All newly created outdoor storage yards, legally established after September 19, 2006, are subject to the screening requirement and must be screened to obscure the view of the outdoor storage from any adjacent land or right-of-way.

Legally authorized outdoor storage existing prior to September 19, 2006, on any parcel(s) of land with contiguous ownership and within 200 feet of a residential property line or residential zoning boundary, is subject to the requirement of an approved screening device to obscure the view of the outdoor storage from any adjacent land or right-of-way. Simply moving the outdoor storage to more than 200

feet away from the residential property line or residential zoning boundary will not suffice. Remember that it is the property that contains the outdoor storage that must be measured, not simply the outdoor storage itself.

Outdoor storage yards located within a Light Industrial or Heavy Industrial zoning district have until September 19, 2007 to comply with the above screening requirements.

## **MUST THE WHOLE PROPERTY CONTAINING OUTDOOR STORAGE BE SCREENED?**

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Not necessarily. Only items considered to be outdoor storage are subject to screening. This gives property owners the opportunity to group the outdoor storage items onto smaller areas of the land. In these cases, only that area considered to be an outdoor storage yard must be screened.

## **WHAT ARE ACCEPTABLE METHODS OF SCREENING OUTDOOR STORAGE?**

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The Ordinance gives several options for acceptable screening. Fences made of wood or metal are acceptable, provided that the materials used are weather resistant and uniform in color and pattern. Chain link fences modified with durable slats may be used, provided that a solid screen is produced. Trees and other types of vegetation may also be used if the intent of the Ordinance is met and the method is approved by the Department of Community Development. All screening devices shall be at least six feet tall.

For more information, please contact the Planning Division at 940/761-7451.

## **ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS TO THE SCREENING REQUIREMENT FOR OUTDOOR STORAGE?**

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The Ordinance provides a list of items or situations that are not considered to fall within the definition of outdoor storage and therefore are not subject to the screening requirement:

- New or used automobile and related vehicle sales lots authorized by a state motor vehicle dealer license.
- Storage yards incidental to the on-site sale of new building materials, new heavy machinery, new farm equipment, new nursery products, new mobile homes, new boats or new trailers.
- Storage yards for supplies and/or raw materials necessary to the on-site manufacturing, fabrication or assembly of finished products, if kept in a neat and orderly fashion.
- Parking areas for operable equipment, vehicles and trailers incidental to a rental or construction business.
- Parking areas for vehicles incidental to transportation and hauling activities of commercial businesses and governmental entities.
- Parking areas for operable motor vehicles awaiting service at auto repair or auto body shops.
- Used merchandise that is associated with a retail business and displayed during business hours.