How to Avoid/Reduce Vacant Building Inspection & Boarded Building Permit Fees

Don’t leave a building vacant for an extended period of time.

- If a building is maintained and occupied, there will be no vacant building inspection, Occupancy Certificate, or Boarded Building Permit fees.
- Vacant buildings are subject to community complaints forwarded to the City. Complaints will be investigated.

If your building requires temporary boarding to enact immediate and legitimate construction/renovation work, immediately apply for a Boarded Building Exemption Certificate before boarding the building.

- If the conditions of a Certificate of Exemption are not met, a Boarded Building Permit will be required.
- If qualified, and a certificate is issued there is no charge for a Boarded Building Exemption Certificate.
- During the period when a Boarded Building Exemption Certificate is active, the property is not subject to the requirements for a boarding permit, but is still required to be boarded securely and in compliance with the By-law.

If you intend on boarding your vacant building for any other reason, take out a Boarded Building Permit in advance of boarding.

If the City takes out a Boarded Building Permit on behalf of the property owner due to non-compliance with an Order, the following may be charged to your property taxes:

- Cost of the Boarded Building Permit Fee and
- Administrative costs (minimum $100) and
- A penalty of $1,000

A portion of the residential Boarded Building Permit fees may be refunded if the building is conventionally secured, demolished, OR if an Occupancy Certificate has been issued within one year of your Boarded Building Permit being issued.

Please note: The City will deduct any outstanding inspection and/or permit fees from the refund.

Updated Dec 2022
Boarded Building Permits & Fees
Boarded Building Permits are intended to ensure boarding standards, discourage long-term boarding, and encourage the rehabilitation and removal of boards in a timely manner through a partial refund when eligible.

Residential Boarded Building Permits & Fees
2023 Residential Boarded Building Permit ........$2,600

- A portion of the residential permit fee may be refunded if the building is brought into compliance with Schedule A and Schedule B–Part I of the Vacant Building By-law before the expiration of the Boarded Building Permit.

Commercial Boarded Building Permits & Fees
2023 Commercial Building Permits:
- First permit ..........................................................$2,600
- Second permit .....................................................$4,562
- Third permit .........................................................$6,430
- Fourth permit ......................................................$8,370
- Each subsequent year increase ..........................$1,950

Exemption from Permit
In some cases of legitimate construction an exemption from this permit may be granted. For more information see Boarded Building Exemption Certificates section of this brochure.

Penalties
A $1,000 penalty will be applied in all cases for owners who do not obtain a Boarded Building Permit when ordered to obtain one. The fee for the applicable permit and the penalty will be added to the property taxes.

All fees are current as of Jan. 1, 2023 and are subject to annual inflationary increases. Please refer to: winnipeg.ca/cms/BLES/LS/business_licenses/licence_fees.stm

Vacant Buildings By-law
The intent of the Vacant Buildings By-law No. 79/2010 (see winnipeg.ca) is to discourage the boarding of vacant buildings and regulate the conditions of vacant buildings in order to:

- reduce the risk of fire
- reduce safety hazards for firefighters and emergency personnel (i.e., gaping holes in floors, broken steps, etc.)
- reduce urban blight
- contribute positively to neighbourhood renewal by discouraging vacant buildings to remain inactive for extended periods of time
- reduce illegal activities
- ensure vacant buildings are brought to habitable standards prior to occupancy.

Annual Inspections
Schedule A Inspections of vacant buildings are conducted in order to ensure compliance with the Vacant Buildings By-law (see winnipeg.ca). These inspections focus on both property maintenance standards and safety issues of dwelling interiors, exteriors, and yards.

Schedule A inspections of residential and commercial properties will be conducted at least once per year.

Schedule A Inspection Fees for both Residential and Commercial Properties are:
- Compliant with Schedule A .....................................$650
- Not compliant with Schedule A ..........................$1,290

Fees will apply maximum once per year. All fees subject to annual inflationary increases.

Vacant Residential Building Occupancy Inspections, Occupancy Certificates & Fees
(i.e., single family dwellings, duplexes, and rooming houses)
Vacant residential buildings that have been boarded or that have been subject to an order prohibiting use or occupancy must not be reoccupied until an Occupancy Certificate has been issued by the City of Winnipeg. In order to obtain an Occupancy Certificate for a vacant residential building, a property owner must make arrangements for an occupancy certificate inspection.

- A printable application can be obtained at winnipeg.ca or in person at Main Floor–395 Main Street (204-986-2234).
- The 2023 Occupancy Certificate fee is $585. This fee must be paid prior to the occupancy certificate inspection being scheduled. The vacant building cannot be occupied until a By-law Enforcement Officer has completed all required inspections and issues a certificate.
- An Occupancy Certificate cannot be issued until a By-law Enforcement Officer deems the building compliant with Division 3–Sec. 13(1) or 13(2) of the Vacant Building By-law 79/2010.
- A residential Occupancy Certificate will expire if a new order prohibiting occupancy is issued or if the building is re-boarded.

Empty Building Fee
Effective January 1, 2020, owners of any vacant building that has been subject to five (5) or more Schedule A Inspections will be assessed an annual Empty Building Fee equal to 1% of the most recent assessed value of the vacant building.

The Empty Building Fee will be applied annually until such time that the vacant building has been inspected and is determined by the designated employee to be reoccupied in accordance with the Vacant Buildings By-law 79/2010.

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Residential Boarded Building Permits & Fees
2023 Residential Boarded Building Permit ........$2,600

- A portion of the residential permit fee may be refunded if the building is brought into compliance with Schedule A and Schedule B–Part I of the Vacant Building By-law before the expiration of the Boarded Building Permit.

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