

CHAPTER X

Subject 4 **Unsafe Vacant and Abandoned Buildings Marking System**

1004.01 Objective

- A. To outline procedures to be used for standardized placards to be applied to unsafe vacant and abandoned buildings in the City of Cincinnati as defined in the 2017 Ohio Fire Code (OFC) section 110 and the Ohio Revised Code 3737.41 in divisions A, B and C.
- B. For the placard system to alert responding companies and Incident Commanders to possible hazards to use during Size-Up at emergencies.

1004.03 Scope

- A. The marking system implemented in this procedure shall only be used on vacant and abandoned buildings determined to be Hazardous or Sever Hazards within the City of Cincinnati.

1004.05 Definitions

- A. **Unsafe Buildings-** after inspection by a certified fire safety inspector, the building is found to be of improper repair, by reason of age and dilapidated conditions, holes in floors, missing or defective means of egress, missing or defective stairs, missing landings, open roofs, defective fire escapes or any other reason, is especially liable to fire or endangers life or other buildings or properties.
- B. **Abandoned Building-** a structure that is not occupied, being maintained or used for any purpose. The structure may be unsecured and in a state of obvious disrepair or neglect.

1004.07 Inspection

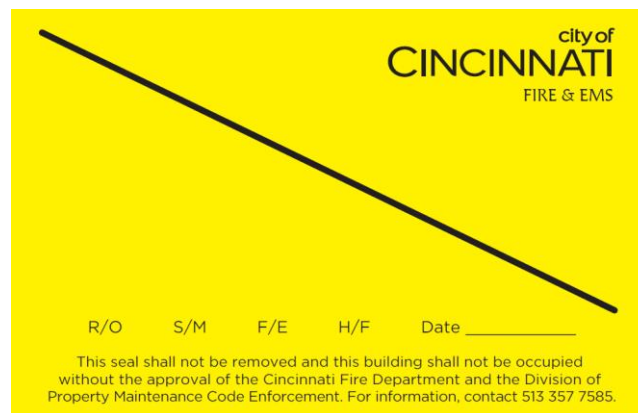
- A. Company Commanders shall coordinate the inspection of vacant and abandoned buildings in their inspection district.
 - a. A list of condemned and vacant buildings can be obtained from the Fire Inspection Module in the Reports menu. This list can be queried by Company Inspection District.
- B. Fire Companies shall utilize the Unsafe Vacant Building Inspection Form (Form 178, available on S drive) during the inspection process.
 - a. These forms shall be kept on file at the fire company responsible for the inspection of the property.
 - b. Vacant buildings shall not be entered during inspection process without permission from a building owner or a search warrant.
- C. These structures may be re-inspected annually at a time determined by the Company Commander. Companies shall routinely review these structures to be alert for

changing conditions at the properties. These buildings shall be reviewed at least monthly during an evening drill by fire companies.

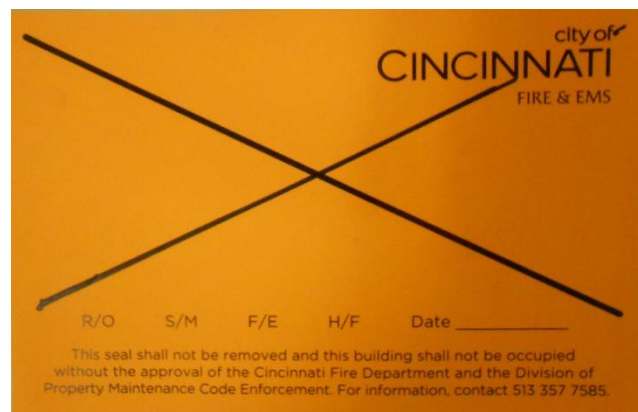
- D. A list of vacant and abandoned buildings determined to be Hazardous or a Severe Hazard shall be kept continually updated at the fire company responsible for the inspection and shall be posted in the locker room.
- a. Other lists of vacant and abandoned buildings may be sent to Fire Companies for inspection by the Community Risk Reduction Division.

1004.09 **Placards**

- A. The following placard symbols shall be utilized to indicate:



HAZARDOUS- This symbol shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist, and interior firefighting or rescue operations should be conducted with extreme caution.



SEVERE HAZARD- This symbol shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist to degree that consideration should be given to limit firefighting to exterior operations only, with entry only occurring for known life hazards. Prior to the designation of a Severe Hazard for a building, approval of a District Chief is required.

- B. Additional symbols shall be circled at the bottom of a placard to indicate the following

hazards:

- a. R/O - Roof open
- b. S/M- Stairs, steps and landings missing
- c. F/E- Avoid fire escapes
- d. H/F- Holes in floor

The marking system is not meant to replace or negate the need for a Premise History for hazardous buildings.

C. Vacant and abandoned buildings determined to contain no hazard shall not be placarded.

**Not all buildings condemned or ordered to be kept vacant have structural hazards.

D. Placards are available through Community Risk Reduction Division.

1004.11

Placard Placement on Buildings

- A. The appropriate placard shall be placed on the building by the Fire Company or the Community Risk Division.
- B. The placard shall be placed on the A (address side of the building) where it can be readily visible by Fire Companies.
- C. All weather placards are available through Community Risk Reduction. The all-weather placards can be securely posted on buildings with screws or nails in a non-destructive way. Double sided tape will be available through Community Risk Reduction Division for buildings which screws, or nails cannot be used.

1004.13

Operations at Unsafe and Abandoned Buildings with Placards

- A. Defensive operations should be considered for advanced fires. Interior operations at these buildings shall only occur after the Incident Commander has conducted an in-depth size up.
- B. Entry shall only be made only for fires in the incipient phase.
- C. Crew size and entry time shall be limited and closely monitored.
- D. The use of hose lines, tag lines and thermal imaging cameras are mandatory.
- E. These markings are only a guide to the hazards that may be encountered in a building. Hazards may change throughout time. A detailed size-up shall always be completed for all buildings to determine appropriate fire ground strategies and tactics.