

Hoarding Hazards: Municipal Team Response

Afternoon Session: Case Scenario Review

Scenario One

- **Referral Source and Information:** Blight Enforcement Official observed a potential health and safety hazard in a single family home within your jurisdiction. From the public sidewalk, this officer observed exterior blight conditions of a dilapidated structure with deflection and deformities to the roof of the dwelling and a strong, noxious odor possibly of rotting garbage, urine and feces. The blight Enforcement official refers the roof and odor issues to the municipal building and health official.
- **Upon inspection by the building and health officials, entry was permitted by an adult female occupant. The home is filled with garbage, trash and human waste, household items, and other materials throughout the interior of the home, but none are blocking egress. There is a very strong, foul odor. All utilities are either inoperable or have been shut off. There are no sanitary facilities. There are two occupants: a 72-year-old male who is bedridden, and his 35-year-old daughter.**

Correct Response / Actions by Municipal Team:

Referral Out To:

Scenario Two

- **Referral Source and Information:** Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and PD responded to the premises for a Welfare Check; they later make referral to the Animal Control Officer (ACO) and Health Department.
- **Scenario:** The owner/occupant does not resist inspection or intervention, but is very concerned about the welfare of her beloved animals moving forward. It is mid-Winter and the exterior temperatures are below freezing. There is only one 50 year old, female occupant, who occupies and owns the home. 68 live cats and dogs are living with her in the home, many of which are either severely malnourished or in very poor shape otherwise (e.g. missing eyes, mange, etc.). Animal waste is found throughout the structure. Many deceased cats and dogs are also found throughout the home. Animal cages and other items are blocking egress.

Correct Response / Actions by Municipal Team:

Referral Out To:

Scenario Four

- **Referral Source:** A local landlord contacts you regarding a potential hoarding condition in his tenant's space. The landlord owns a two-family home; he lives in the second floor unit and is renting the first floor to an elderly woman who lives alone. Two years ago, town officials went out to the tenant's home and issued an order to remediate the condition, which at the time was significantly impeding egress and posed a significant fire hazard. Upon achieving compliance, officials closed the case and had not had contact with the occupant or the landlord since.
- **Scenario:** When the fire marshal attempts to conduct an inspection of the home upon the latest referral, entry is denied by the occupant. An administrative search warrant is applied for and granted by a judge. Upon entry, it is found that conditions have worsened significantly. There are no sanitation issues and the structure itself is sound, but egress and combustible materials especially liable to fire are a real concern. Items include journals, newspapers, clothing, stuffed animals, and other children's items. The stairwell providing rear egress to the second floor occupants is blocked. The woman has no family and suffered the tragic loss of her husband approximately 10 years ago. Since that time, she has been collecting items which either remind her of her husband or of her estranged children, whom she has not seen nor heard from in four decades (contact with her children is not an option).

Correct Response / Actions by Municipal Team:

Referral Out To:
