

## GOOD NEIGHBOR CHECKLIST



### **✦ Building Community**

Having a good neighbor starts with being a good neighbor. The primary responsibility of making life better on the street where you live begins with you – the resident. Take an active role in bringing your neighborhood together.

Show interest in your neighbors – meet them and learn their names. You'll find that your neighbors have diverse backgrounds, careers, and experiences. Plan an annual event centered on a yard sale, a barbecue, or a holiday. National Night Out (the first Tuesday in August) is a great opportunity to promote safety and Neighborhood Watch efforts. Invite everyone in the neighborhood to community events, regardless of personal feelings or previous disputes. If you are planning to have a block party, contact the Transportation Department at 972-205-2430 if a street needs to be blocked off.

Be considerate. Your schedule and that of your neighbors may differ considerably. The make-up of your household and community may vary from students, to parents with young children who require early bedtime hours, to those who work full time. Be aware of community issues such as noise, parking, resident zoning laws, trash and property upkeep, and alcohol usage.

### **✦ Organizing Your Neighborhood**

Neighborhood Associations are formally recognized organizations of residents, businesses and/or service organizations that offer an opportunity for citizens to participate in decision making for their neighborhood. Neighborhood Associations provide a structure and a forum for concerned citizens to organize and manage neighborhood projects and programs that contribute to the livability and stability of their neighborhood.

If you are interested in forming an association, contact the Office of Neighborhood Vitality for assistance, 972-205-3864.

### **✦ Problem with a neighbor?**

We all have different expectations of our neighbors. For some of us, a good neighbor is one who takes time for a chat across the fence or who helps with the chores when a neighbor is ill. For others, a good neighbor is one who leaves us alone. Although we may not agree on all the fine points of neighborliness, we do tend to agree on certain basic standards which allow residents to enjoy their homes and property, preserve peace and quiet in our neighborhoods, help maintain property values, and prevent disputes among neighbors.

If you have a concern, try talking with your neighbor. Calmly explain what is bothering you. It is possible that your neighbor is unaware that the music is too loud or that the dog barks every time it is left alone.

### **✦ Maintaining Property Appearance**

A home is an important long-term investment. Property maintenance codes are designed to protect public health and safety. Maintaining the appearance of the structure as well as the yard is essential to property value and the general welfare of the neighborhood. Code Compliance can provide you with a detailed list of resident

responsibilities. Listed below are helpful hints to be sure that you are contributing positively to the health of your neighborhood.

- Keep yard free of debris and trash.
- Do not park vehicles on unimproved surfaces.
- Grass should be cut lower than 12 inches.
- Property address should be visible from adjoining streets, alleys, and driveways.
- Oversized vehicles are not allowed to park in residential areas.
- Trees and shrubs should not encroach alleys, streets or sidewalks. A 14 foot clearance should be maintained for streets and alleys, 9 feet over sidewalks.
- Contact Code Compliance for garage sale permits.

Contact Code Compliance at (972) 485-6400 for more information.

## Environmental Health

Keeping Garland beautiful, clean, and healthy requires that we take responsibility for community appearance through proper management and disposal of trash and litter. The responsibilities listed below contribute greatly to the quality of life in your neighborhood.

- Move the trash container and recycling bins back out of sight after collection.
- Place trash container(s) and recycling bin(s) at the designated collection point by 7:00 a.m. on your collection day. Leave four (4) feet of space between containers.
- Don't take trash containers from vacant property. Containers are assigned to each residential location.
- Participate in the city's recycling program.
- Place brush and bulky goods on the front curb by 7:00 a.m. on your designated collection day.
- Don't use school or commercial dumpsters located in the neighborhood to dispose of trash. The schools and businesses pay for this service and dumpsters are for their use only.

Contact Environmental Waste Services at 972-205-3500 if you have additional questions.

Polluting of the storm drain system is a fineable offense of up to \$2,000 per day under City Ordinance. Maintaining water quality and proper drainage is very important and beneficial to all residents and businesses in Garland. You can do your part by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Pick up pet waste even in your own yard. You drop it, you drink it.
- Wash your car at a carwash
- Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. NEVER fertilize if rain is forecast within 24 hours.
- Repair plumbing leaks and drainage problems immediately to minimize standing water and prevent pollution. Mosquitoes can reproduce in small volumes of water in as few as five days.
- All wastewater (including laundry and dishwater) must be plumbed properly to the sanitary sewer (not a storm drain or any other area that drains to a storm drain).
- Use water-based (latex) paints and stains whenever possible and NEVER wash out equipment outside. Use disposal equipment whenever possible and wipe reusable items with disposable paper towels. Follow label directions for proper clean up and use the Dallas County Home Chemical Collection Center (11234 Plano Road, between Miller Rd. and Forest Ln.)
- Soil, grass clippings, leaves and other plant debris clogs our storm drains and increases flash flood potential. Decomposition of organic matter steals oxygen from the fish and minnows in our creeks, ponds and lakes that help control mosquito populations. Castle Landfill accepts yard waste and makes it into compost that is free to the public.

Keep Garland Beautiful! Adopt a Spot or a Watershed and remove the trash from our creeks and ponds.

## Neighborhood Safety

A safe neighborhood is a priority valued by many sectors of our community. The best method to keep your neighborhood safe is to get to know your neighbors. The city also has several programs available so that residents take an active role in keeping neighborhoods safe.

Contact your Neighborhood Police Officer if you are interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch. To obtain the contact information for the officer in your area, you may call 972-485-4881.

The roadways in our neighborhoods are an important part of safety. If traffic signals are malfunctioning or signs are faded or knocked down, please call 972-205-3250 (after hours – 972-205-3210). The speed limit on all residential streets is 30 mph unless otherwise posted. If speeding is a problem, a speed trailer may be requested to monitor vehicular speed and the installation of street humps may also be considered as a solution.

Safety conscious kids become safety conscious adults. The Transportation Department in conjunction with the Police and Fire Departments, offers safety training for neighborhood children. This program is called KidWatch.

For more information on any of the above topics, please call 972-205-2430.

## Pets

All dogs and cats that are kept in Garland must be currently vaccinated for rabies and registered with Animal Services and must wear their city tag on their collar at all times. We do not currently have a specific number of animals that a resident may keep, but if there are violations of the ordinance, such as animals running loose, cruelly treated animals, neglect, excessive animal feces associated with having too many animals, the city may limit the number of animals that a citizen may keep. Garland does have a "pooper scooper" and a leash law as well, so if you take your dog for a walk, take the necessary materials to clean up after it, and always keep the dog on a leash. A fenced yard is the best way to keep your dog from soiling or digging in a neighbor's yard. If your yard is not fenced, check pet stores and catalogs for tie-outs.

A barking dog can become a neighborhood annoyance. Excessive barking is frequently the result of boredom or anxiety when a dog is left alone for long periods of time. Regular walks and play periods with your dog and teaching it tricks will help prevent boredom.

If you are a cat owner, keeping your cat indoors avoids problems with neighbors and your cat is less likely to be hit by a car or encounter an unfriendly dog or attacks by other animals.

Questions regarding pet ownership may be directed to Animal Services at (972) 205-3570.

## Car Repair & Maintenance

Car repair and maintenance is prohibited on public streets. If your driveway or garage permits, pull your car in to work on it. Or contact one of Garland's auto repair shops. Be mindful that leaking car fluids find their way to our storm drains and negatively impacts our water supply. Blatant polluting of the storm drain system is a fineable offense of up to \$2,000 per day under City Ordinance.

For more information, call the Stormwater Hotline at 972-205-2180.

## Let your light shine!

For safety in your neighborhood it is very important to keep your community well lit. If you see a street light out please call: 972-205-3483. Keeping your front or back porch light on at night is also an added safety measure. The cost to keep a 60-watt light bulb on for 10 hours cost approximately 7 cents per night.

For an Energy Audit, contact Garland Power & Light at 972-205-2635.

## Apartment Living

Living in an apartment is very different from living in a house, and being a good neighbor in an apartment building entails different considerations. Perhaps this is most obvious in the fact that walls, parking lots, laundry facilities, and more are shared with virtual strangers. While this situation may be intimidating at first, you can take steps to be a good neighbor and make apartment living a pleasant experience.

### **Get to know your neighbors.**

They don't have to become your best friends, but there are many reasons why knowing your nearest neighbors is a good idea. So, as you see them in the halls, laundry room, lobby, or by the mailboxes smile and say hello.

### **Understand and follow the community rules.**

Many apartment communities have rules for things like where you can park, where your pet can be, when certain facilities are open, quiet hours, trash pickup, and more. These should all be spelled out either in your lease or in a supplemental set of rules and regulations. Know them and follow them. Your neighbors and landlord will thank you.

### **If you have children, understand that many of your neighbors don't.**

And vice versa. Your childless neighbors probably aren't used to tripping over toys, tuning out yelling, and other adjustments that come with living with children, so be considerate. For those of you without children, understand that your neighbors' children have a right to be there, and that they are, after all, children.

### **If you have pets, understand that not all your neighbors are animal lovers.**

If your community allows pets, be aware of the rules concerning where they can be when they are outside your apartment. Don't let your dog roam free in the complex and promptly clean up any messes your pets make. If your community doesn't allow pets, don't try to get away with it.

### **When it comes time to throw that party, remember your neighbors.**

Let them know ahead of time when the party will be happening. Make sure your guests understand the rules of your community -- including where it is okay to park -- and that they remain inside your apartment (or within your own personal area outside) during the party. And remember: even when you're having a party, quiet hours apply.

**Visit the City of Garland web site for more information regarding city services and policies.**

<http://www.ci.garland.tx.us>

**Garland Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods**

<http://www.GarlandVitalNeighborhoods.org>

**National Night Out, 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in October**

<http://www.nationalnightout.org>

For neighborhood assistance, contact Felisa Conner, Neighborhood Vitality Manager, 972-205-3864 or [fconner@ci.garland.tx.us](mailto:fconner@ci.garland.tx.us).