

**INSTRUCTIONAL ORDER**

August 2017

Immediately

**V.5:11**

Distribution: All Employees

**Subject: SECURING BUILDINGS**Index as: Abandoned Structure or Property  
Buildings, Securing ofSecuring Buildings  
Unsecured Buildings

Accreditation Standards:

Cross Reference:

Replaces: I.O. V.5:11, Securing Buildings (August 28, 2017)

This Order establishes a procedure for securing buildings or structures found to be unsecured during the course of a police investigation. It consists of the following sections:

- I. [Policy](#)
- II. [Officer's Responsibility to Secure](#)
- III. [Unsecured Building or Structure](#)
- IV. [Reporting Requirements](#)

**I. POLICY**

It is the policy of the St. Petersburg Police Department that when an officer investigates or is present at an unsecured building or structure, they will take action to secure the site to protect its contents from theft or loss/damage due to inclement weather.

**II. OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SECURE**

- A. When an officer finds a structure or building to be unsecured or damaged in such a manner so as to permit entry, the officer will, whenever possible, personally act to secure the site by routine means such as locking open doors or windows.
- B. If unable to secure the site, the officer will take further actions, as delineated in this Order, prior to leaving the scene.

**III. UNSECURED BUILDING OR STRUCTURE****A. Unsecured Structure Damaged by an Officer**

1. When a structure is not secure due to damage caused by the actions of an officer, the officer should first attempt to secure the structure before leaving.
2. If unable to secure the site, the officer will attempt to have the owner or agent secure the structure.

3. If no owner or agent can be contacted, a supervisor will be notified.
  - a. The officer will request a member of the Department Maintenance Unit to respond to secure the structure.
    - 1) During non-business hours, a supervisor will utilize the on-call maintenance number to request assistance.
    - 2) Information regarding the damage will be provided to the maintenance personnel to ensure they bring the necessary resources with them.
  - b. If maintenance personnel are not able to respond during non-business hours, an on-call vendor will be contacted through the Emergency Communications Center.
4. A business card with the phone number for the Risk Management Department (727-892-5265) will be left with the owner.
5. All inquiries for payment are to be directed to the City of St. Petersburg, Risk Management Department.

**B. Unsecured Structure Not Damaged by an Officer**

1. When an officer encounters a residence or business that cannot be secured, the owner or agent will be contacted to secure the structure.
2. If no owner or agent is available, a supervisor will be contacted to determine the best course of action.
 

The supervisor will:

  - 1) Consider assigning an officer to watch the site until an owner or agent arrives; or,
  - 2) If there will be a lengthy delay before an owner or agent is expected to arrive, request an on-call vendor be contacted through the Emergency Communications Center.

**C. Abandoned Structure or Property**

1. When an officer encounters a building, structure or other real property that is abandoned and unsecured, the officer will notify Codes Compliance Assistance.
  - a. During normal business hours, they may be contacted at 727-893-7373.
  - b. During non-business hours, a message will be left at 727-892-5097 for Codes Compliance Assistance will follow-up on the information.
2. In the event of an emergency or if public safety is an issue, a supervisor will be notified to determine the best course of action.

**IV. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- A. A supervisor will respond and photograph the damage caused by an officer or the unsecure condition which lead to notification of a Department vendor. The photo(s) will be attached to the report.
- B. When a building or structure is secured either by an officer or by a Department vendor, the incident will be recorded in an incident report describing the original condition of the structure and the way it was left.
  1. The information may be included in the report of the original incident or a separate written report may be generated.
  2. The Records Division will send a copy of the report to the City of St. Petersburg, Risk Management Department along with the submitted photo(s).

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Anthony Holloway  
Chief of Police