
	STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES	
	SUBJECT	Unsafe Placards
	REFERENCE NUMBER	SOG-09-04
	EFFECTIVE DATE	February 27, 2009
	Signature of Approval	 Frank E. Wright, Fire & Rescue Chief

Recent fire safety code changes have allowed for the placarding of unsafe structures. An ongoing project is underway to identify vacant and unsafe structures within the City of Winchester and placard those identified according to the following guidelines:

- **311.4 Placards.** Any building or structure determined to be unsafe pursuant to Section 110 of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (*VSFPC*) shall be marked as required by Sections 311.5.1 through 311.5.5.
 - **315.1 Placard location.** Placards shall be applied on the front of the structure and be visible from the street. Additional placards shall be applied to the side of each entrance to the structure and penthouses.
 - **311.5.3 Placard date.** Placards shall bear the date of their application to the building and the date of the most recent inspection.
 - **311.5.4 Placard symbols.** The design of the placards shall use the following symbols:
 - This symbol shall mean that the structure had normal structural conditions at the time of marking.
 - This symbol shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist and interior fire-fighting or rescue operations should be conducted with extreme caution.
 - This symbol shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist to a degree that consideration should be given to limit fire-fighting to exterior operations only, with entry only occurring for known life hazards.
 - **311.5.5 Informational use.** The use of these symbols shall be informational only and shall not in any way limit the discretion of the on-scene incident commander.

This code revision is intended to create a nationally recognized marking system to identify the degree of structural stability of vacant buildings for firefighters who may be called upon to fight a fire therein.

Together with Property Maintenance Inspectors from the Building Officials office, we are identifying any and all vacant structures and citing owners with fire code violations and placarding as deemed necessary.

In the event staff respond to a structure and question its integrity or safety, contact me as soon as possible so action can be taken to correct any hazards. If you have any questions concerning the placarding process, contact me. Below is a sample of the placard:

