



**City of Winchester
Fire & Rescue Department
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**



Section: Life Safety Division	SOP: 13.5
Subject: Vacant and Unsafe Structures	Executed: February 27, 2009 (SOG-09-04) Revised: April 15, 2014 June 25, 2014
Approved:  Jeremy Luttrell, Fire Marshal	

PURPOSE

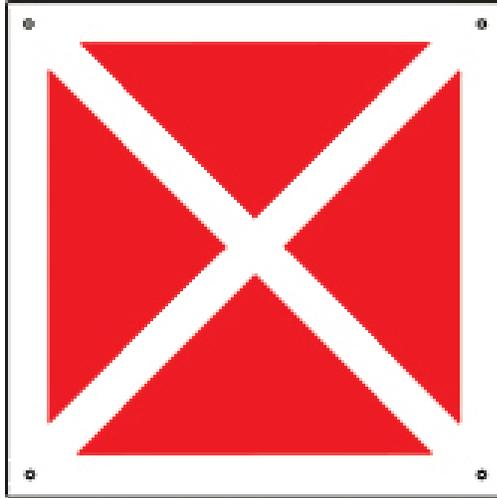
The Vacant and Unsafe Structure Placard Program has been developed to educate the fire and rescue department personnel on the standard marking system that has been added to the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. This marking system has been developed to alert responding fire and rescue personnel of the potential danger and/or associated risks that might exist within a specific structure.

POLICY

It shall be policy that ALL operational personnel be familiar with the visual appearance and meaning of the "Vacant and Unsafe Structure" placard to improve firefighter safety as well as situational awareness in assisting them in tactical decision making while operating on an incident scene as well as understand the following:

1. Any vacant or abandoned buildings or structures determined to be unsafe pursuant to Section 110 of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code relating to structural or interior hazards shall be placarded.
2. Placards will be applied to the address side of the structure and be visible from the street. Additional placards may be placed at all exterior entry doors and may be applied to other sides of the structure.
3. The placard symbol shall mean that structural or interior hazards exist to a degree that limits firefighting activity to exterior operations only, with entry only occurring for **known life hazards**.

4. Placards shall be 24 inches by 24 inches minimum in size with a red background, white reflective "X" stripe and a white reflective border. The "X" stripes and border shall be 2-inch minimum width. The design of the placards shall use the following symbol:



5. Placards shall bear the date of their application to the building and the date of the most recent inspection.
6. The use of **this symbol** shall be informational only and shall not in any way limit the discretion of the on-scene incident commander.
7. In the event that fire and rescue personnel respond to any structure not already placarded and question its integrity or safety, please contact the Fire Marshal as soon as possible so the appropriate actions can be taken to correct any hazards.
8. **Personnel shall announce via radio communication the recognition of a placarded building upon arrival to an incident so all units are aware of the situation.**
9. This policy rescinds "SOG-09-04 Unsafe Placards".