

What is a Public Health Nuisance?



A public health nuisance is different from a public nuisance or a code violation. It may be a public health nuisance if it: (1) can make people sick, (2) cause an infestation of insects or rodents, or (3) can pose a health threat/injury to others who may enter the building.

Examples of a public health nuisance may include:

- Accumulation of refuse or debris
- Human or animal feces
- Rotting food waste
- Evidence of rodent or insect infestation
- Accumulation of solid waste
- Lack of water or sewage disposal
- Limited or blocked egress to windows and doors
- Number and type of live animals that might be injurious or dangerous to the health and safety of any individual or to the public in general.

It is important to acknowledge that a “messy” or “cluttered” building is not necessarily a public health nuisance.

What is the role of Public Health?

Minnesota Statute 145A defines a “public health nuisance” as any activity or failure to act that adversely affects the public. Minnesota Statute 145A gives the local board of health or its agent the authority to remove or abate the threat within a specified time.

How does Public Health find out that a Public Health Nuisance exists?

Public Health Nuisances may occur any place including residential homes, rental properties, open spaces, commercial buildings, or businesses. Referrals can come from anyone who suspects a public health nuisance exists. Referrals may be made by property owners, tenants, neighbors, family, concerned citizens or law enforcement.

How will Public Health Investigate a Public Health Nuisance?

The Public Health Department is responsible for investigating referrals. All public health nuisance referrals will be investigated. The level of investigation will be determined by the Public Health Department and may include a variety of agencies, such as Community Social Services, Law Enforcement and/or the Humane Society. Local city jurisdiction may have their own ordinances regarding public nuisance affecting health.

How are referrals reported to the Public Health Department?

To report a suspected public health nuisance:

- Polk County Public Health
 - Email: PCPHReferral@co.polk.mn.us
- Norman-Mahnomen Public Health
 - Email: NMPH@co.norman.mn.us

Polk County

816 Marin Ave Suite 125
Crookston, MN 56716
P: 218-281-3385
F: 218-281-7376

Norman County

16 3rd Ave E, Room 107
Ada, MN 56510
P: 218-784-5425
F: 218-784-7818

Mahnomen County

115 E Madison Ave
Mahnomen, MN 56557
P: 218-935-2527
F: 218-935-5331