

**Q.** Does general clutter classify a house as hazardous?

**A.** No. General clutter by itself would not classify a home as hazardous. General clutter in addition to other factors such as a lack of heat or proper bathroom facilities or pest infestation would qualify the home as hazardous.

**Q.** I have noticed that my neighbor does not place garbage out for weekly pickup and sometimes I can detect odors coming from their home. I don't want to pry, but I am worried. What should I do?

**A.** Your neighbor may be in need of someone to assist them. Contact the Office of Human Services so that they can assess the situation. It is best to not ignore situations like this, as they can become a hazard to the entire neighborhood.

**For more information on this, and many other Village programs and services, please visit our website at: [www.skokie.org](http://www.skokie.org)**



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## Hazardous Home Sites

Answers to your frequently asked questions



*A Cooperative Initiative  
by the Village of Skokie  
Departments of Community  
Development, Police, Fire,  
Health, and the Office of  
Human Services.*

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Like many communities, the Village of Skokie occasionally encounters a problem that has been becoming more and more common in the suburban area: the occurrence of what have been termed “garbage houses,” or more specifically, Hazardous Homes.

A hazardous home can be defined as any home that contains any one or more of the following:

- *Large accumulation of putrescible (rotting or foul smelling) garbage*
- *Severe pest infestation*
- *Excessive human/animal waste*
- *Inoperable/inaccessible bathroom facilities*
- *Inoperable/inaccessible kitchen facilities*
- *No potable water for drinking or sanitary purposes*
- *No working furnace or heating system*
- *Existing sewage backup/ water damage*

The Village formed a task force to develop an action plan in order to ensure that hazardous home sites do not become an increasing problem in the Village of Skokie.

The health and well-being of individuals always remains the primary focus of the Village. It is for this reason that the Village is taking all appropriate steps to help

alleviate this problem for Skokie residents. Hazardous homes can become public nuisances and can affect the health and well-being of its residents and those that live in the surrounding neighborhood.

### ***Frequently Asked Questions:***

**Q:** *Who should I call if I think that I might know someone who is living in a hazardous home?*

**A:** If you feel as though someone you know might be living in a hazardous home, please contact the Office of Human Services at 847-933-8208. They can assist people who live in these conditions, and will know the appropriate course of action. You may also contact the Skokie Police Department and ask them to do a well being check to see if that person is in need of assistance.

**Q:** *Are there any warning signs that might cue me that someone I know is living in a hazardous home?*

**A.** Yes, many times there are. Sometimes individuals who live in these situations may not take their trash out for pickup, or, sometimes, you will notice an odor emanating from their home. You may find that people who live in hazardous homes do not allow anyone into their home for fear that they might see that there are problems. Other warning signs might be an accumulation of garbage in and around the yard,

overgrown weeds and shrubs, or other unusual circumstance. Remember to contact the Office of Human Services if you think there might be a problem.

**Q:** *I am a contractor and was called in to do some minor work on a house that I consider to be hazardous. Who should I call?*

**A.** You should contact the Office of Human Services immediately at 847-933-8208.

**Q.** *The Village has no right to tell me how to live. I choose to have a home that is what some might consider hazardous, but I think its just fine. Why should the Village be involved?*

**A.** The Village has an obligation to protect the health and well being of the community as a whole and to ensure that individuals are in compliance with Village, State and National codes.

**Q:** *My elderly parent is living in a hazardous home. He is willing to get help to cleanup his house, but cannot afford it right now and neither can I. How can the Village help?*

**A.** Your parent may qualify for a low-interest home improvement loan from the Village that can be used to cover the costs of cleanup. Other social service agencies may also be of assistance to you. Your first call should be to the Office of Human Services. They can help to assess the situation, and can provide assistance and advice.

*Continued on the inside flap...*