



People • Communities • Connections •

Austin Code Department Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report



The mission of the Austin Code Department is to build a safer and greater Austin *together* through code education, collaboration, and enforcement.

Welcome

Thank you for the opportunity to share Austin Code's Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 2021. Austin Code continued to face challenges associated with COVID-19, which extended into its second year. In mid-February 2021, Austin experienced Winter Storm Uri. This winter weather event left many without power for days, affected travel, and caused structural damages.

The impact of this storm caused physical and emotional trauma throughout our **community**. Through severe damages from Winter Storm Uri, we remained focused on responding to every call for service received. The department worked with property owners to ensure a prompt response to lack of services and structural damages. We invite you to read about our performance this year, not only during Winter Storm Uri but beyond. We hope you are pleased with our accomplishments.



Responding to Winter Storm Uri

Winter Storm Uri brought **164 hours** of freezing temperatures and broke the record for most consecutive days of grounded snow. The storm left up to **40 percent** of Austin residents without power, with some outages lasting as long as **72 hours**. As pipes burst and roads froze, many residents were in homes without access to food or water.

The Austin Code Department mobilized to address close to **800** storm-related code complaints. The department worked with City partners to help the community recover. Code Inspectors were part of a critical team assisting with emergency water distribution. Code also worked to identify and mitigate needs across the city.

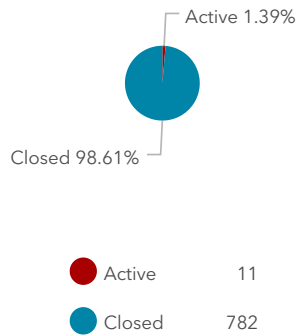
Austin Code staff developed a [Winter Storm Uri Dashboard](#) which helped visualize damages through the city. This dashboard includes geographical maps and updated filters to sort cases by City Council district. To support the use of this tool, ACD created a [Winter Storm Uri database tutorial](#) to help the public navigate the dashboard.





Austin Code Cases Related Winter Storm Uri

Case Status



Cases

793

Notices of Violation

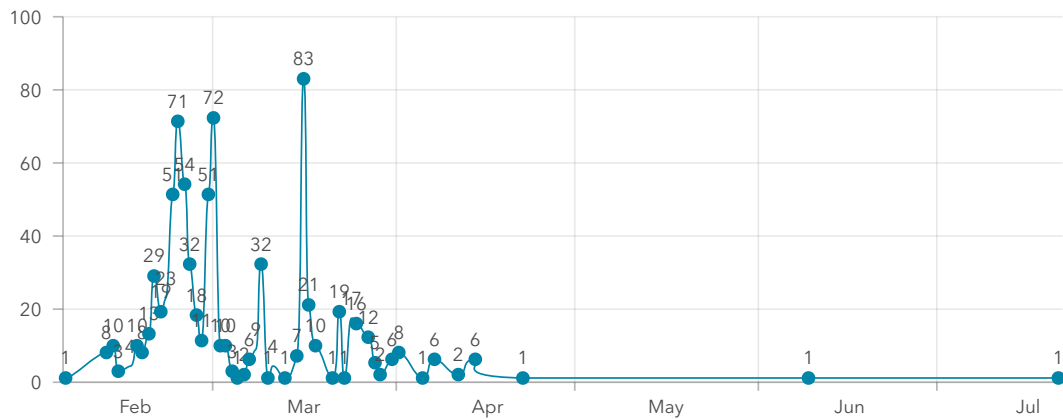
368

Deficiencies

377

Citations

12



Incoming Case Frequency by Date

To view or export this data, please visit our open data portal at [Austin Code Cases Related to Winter Storm Uri | Open Data | City of Austin Texas](#)

Case Summary

Next: Case Breakdown by Council District



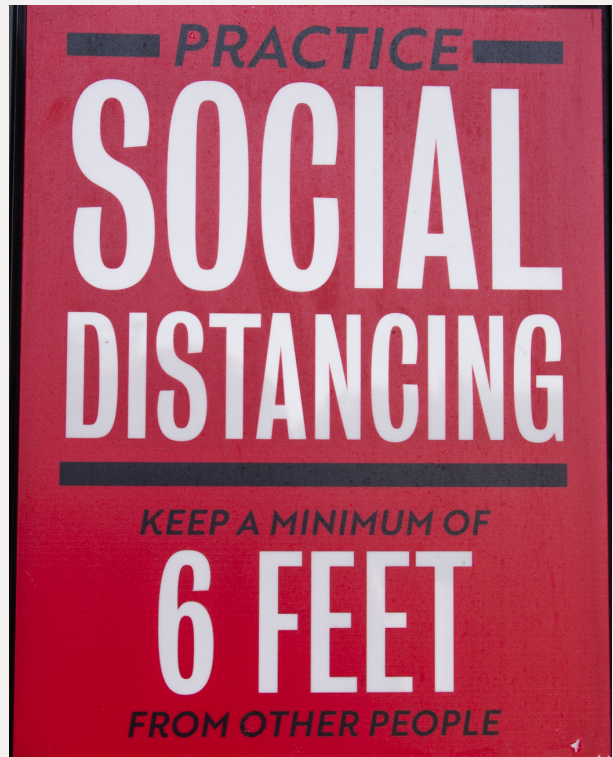
Adapted Services for COVID-19

Continuing Service

In 2021, Austin Code continued to face challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic extending into its second year. Code staff continued working socially distant or remotely as part of the department's commitment to public health and safety.



Code inspectors continued property inspections to meet the public demand and address property maintenance needs. For their safety, inspectors worked out of their vehicles, wore face masks, offered virtual inspections as needed, and maintained physical distance.



A photograph of a construction site at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of construction equipment, including a tall crane on the left and a yellow crane in the center. The background shows the skeletal structure of a building under construction, with rebar visible on the upper floors.

IPMC Adoption

Updating local codes and ordinances

The [International Property Maintenance Code \(IPMC\)](#) is a model code that regulates the minimum maintenance requirements for existing residential and commercial buildings. ACD collaborated with other City partners to present the International Code Council's (ICC) 2021 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) for City Council adoption. The amendments required an action plan for the occupants in structures unsafe for human occupancy. ([Section 111.1.3](#)) The purpose is to ensure public safety and maintain consistency with other city codes.

This work involved a stakeholder engagement process with community partners. Some of these partners included Austin Women in Housing, Austin Apartment Association, Austin Board of Realtors, and Building and Strengthening Tenant Action (BASTA). This was instrumental in reinforcing constructive relationships with stakeholders. Austin City Council approved the proposed changes which took effect on September 1, 2021. For more information, view the official [press release](#).



Education

Strengthening community relations, awareness and understanding of local code requirements

Learning and understanding code violations are the first steps toward preventing them. Our priority in education is to teach the community about city ordinances and regulations. We do this through a variety of [educational initiatives](#) and by our efforts in community engagement. Our goal is to ensure Austin community members have access to the City of Austin's programs, activities, services, and information.

Community Meetings

This fiscal year staff attended **80 community events and neighborhood meetings**. We reached out to residents, interest groups, and neighborhood associations. We shared tips on how to keep our homes and surroundings safe. As the pandemic continued, many outreach efforts continued in a virtual setting. When in-person interactions were required, Code continued to follow safety precautions. [Request a Code Speaker today](#) to stay connected with Austin Code.



80

**Community and
Neighborhood Meetings**

Proactive Educational Campaigns

We stay connected with Austin residents by continuing to inform them through relevant messaging to our community. We raise community awareness of common code violations, safety hazards, property maintenance, and ordinance requirements. This is done through proactive education, and some topics include tall grass and weeds, substandard housing, and carbon monoxide poisoning. We continue to explore making the information easy to understand and accessible for all communities.



Code Connect

Code Connect is our dedicated phone line that gives residents direct access to experienced code inspectors. By calling Code Connect, residents can address general questions about code cases, get resource recommendations, updates on their current cases, and ordinance information. In the fiscal year 2021, the program received a total of 6,553 calls.

Give Code Connect a call at **(512) 974-CODE (2633)**.



6,553

**Total Code
Connect Calls**

Sharing the Knowledge

Issues addressed by code enforcement departments vary from city to city. In efforts to best address the needs of residents, Austin Code listens and engages with the public to address local needs and demands. Our staff and leadership is often invited to share learning moments and best practices with other cities to help learn from one another. Most of our educational efforts are local but our lessons are applicable nation-wide. See the [presentation](#) made by Director José G. Roig at the 2021 [American Association of Code Enforcement Conference \(AACE\)](#).

THE EVOLUTION OF CODE ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

PRESENTER:

José G. Roig

Director, Austin Code Department



Collaboration

Strengthening community relationships

"Together" is more than just a word at Austin Code. It is a key factor for how the department is able to achieve its mission of building a safer and greater Austin. Building and strengthening community relationships is essential to everything that Austin Code does. By listening to community leaders, residents, and civic groups we ensure that we understand issues and address concerns.



Advocacy & Interest Groups

Austin Code cultivates and supports constructive relationships with our stakeholders. Community partners such as Austin Women in Housing, Austin Apartment Association, Austin Board of Realtors, and Building and Strengthening Tenant Action (BASTA). Leadership and staff meet with interest groups to discuss and identify ways to help keep communities safe. The outcomes of these discussions lead to policy suggestions, process improvements, and area needs to improve communities.

Community Meetings

To better serve our residents and address specific needs, Code Inspectors speak with neighborhoods and nonprofit groups. Inspectors educate about city codes and invite feedback on current needs. This leads to improving awareness and community partnerships and stronger relationships with community members.



Voluntary Compliance



85% Single-Family Homes

90% Multi-Family Homes

Collaborating with Property Representatives

In FY21, **85 percent** of single-family homes and **90 percent** of multi-family homes achieved voluntary compliance. Voluntary compliance happens when property owners fix the issue without legal escalation. We attribute this success to the work inspectors do daily to connect with property owners and help them understand property maintenance codes to achieve compliance.

When a Code Inspector identifies a safety concern or code violation, they work with property owners to fix them. Inspectors speak to property owners to bring the issue to their attention, and identify steps needed to find resolution. By doing this, they are able to create a path to achieve compliance, and as a result residents are able to live in properties that are safe.



Short-Term Rental Program

Throughout the pandemic, Austin Code has continued to issue new [short-term rental licenses](#). Code also issues license renewals. In FY21, ~~Austin Code~~ ~~discusses~~ ~~On~~ ~~total~~ a resident submits an application, the short-term rental team begins the work. The team works with the applicant to make sure their property meets the requirements of the license which they have applied for. [Learn more](#) about the different types of short-term rentals.

Proactive STR Education

In FY21, Austin Code created more community education opportunities and proactive engagement including stakeholder meetings and educational webinars. We achieved this by creating a short-term rental webinar series and holding monthly stakeholder meetings. The webinars provided information and an opportunity for the community to ask questions. Stakeholder meetings gave the community a forum to learn more about short-term rental enforcement and the applicable regulations.

The screenshot shows a presentation slide with a blue header bar. The title "The City of Austin/Short-Term Rental Program" is written in red serif font. Below the title, on the left, is a photograph of a person relaxing in a hammock under palm trees. To the right of the photo, the text "Welcome!" is displayed in a large blue font, followed by "To a STR licensing presentation" in a smaller blue font. At the bottom right of the slide is the Austin Code Department logo, which includes a circular seal and the text "AUSTIN CODE DEPARTMENT". On the right side of the slide, there is a vertical stack of five small video call windows. The top window shows a person's profile, the second shows a person with a headset, the third is a placeholder icon, the fourth shows a person with a headset, and the fifth shows a person with a headset.

Enforcement

Delivering fair, equitable and transparent enforcement of city codes

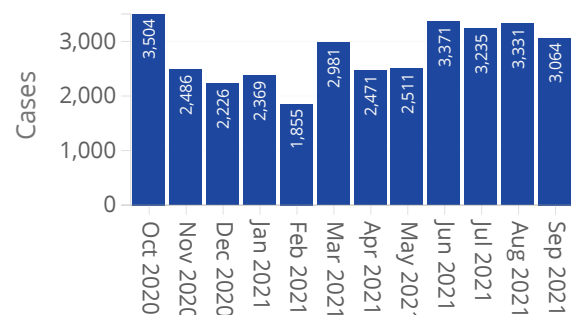


Code By The Numbers

- Total number of code complaints investigated in FY21: **34,100**
- Total number of confirmed code violations: **18,679**
- Number of confirmed violation cases escalated to Building Standards Commission: **256**
- Average Numbers of Days Until First Response: **1.86**

Code Cases Closed FY 2021

This data represents Austin Code Department cases in FY 2021





648

Cases Escalated to
Quasi/Judicial Proceedings



78%

Confirmed
Violation Cases



34,100

Total Number of Code
Complaints Investigated



3,568

Combined Total
Licenses Issued



84

Repeat Offender
Program Properties



773

Winter Storm Uri
Inspections

Code Response Time

The Austin Code Department utilizes an automated system, which sets clear expectations for [response times](#) to customer concerns. Response times are set based on considerations such as time-sensitivity and risks to life safety.

- **1 Hour** - Emergency - Imminent Danger / Life-Safety
- **1 Day** - Urgent - High-Risk Hazard / Time Sensitive
- **3 Days** - Unsafe - Land Use / Structural
- **4 Days** - Maintenance - Property Maintenance / Use
- **5 Days** - Nuisance - Other Violations such as Tall Grass and Standing Water



1 Day

**Median
Response Time**



92%

**Percentage Responded
Within the Timeframe**

Progressive Escalation



Administrative Hearing

Administrative hearings are quasi-judicial proceedings overseen by an administrative hearing officer. In FY 2021, the department oversaw 465 cases escalated to administrative hearing.



Building and Standards Commission

Another related city agency is the Building Standards Commission (BSC). This Commission was established to hear cases concerning violations of City's housing and dangerous building regulations. Its ten members are appointed by each City Council Member.



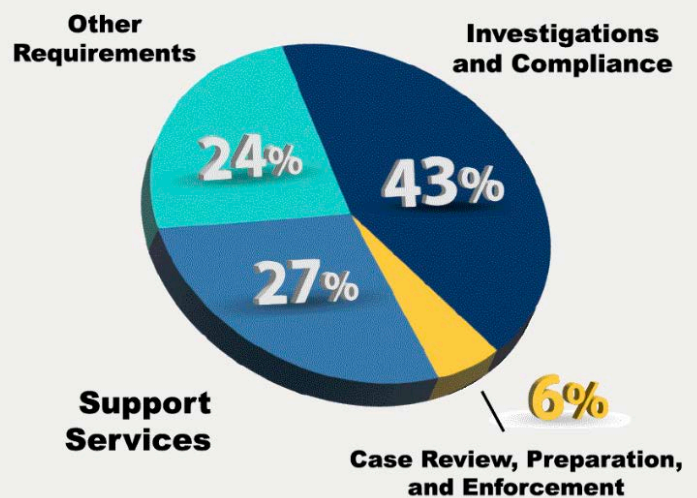
Municipal Court District Court

If the property continues to violate City ordinances more violations and citations can be issued. Once three citations have liable verdicts the case is escalated to Municipal Court. If Municipal Court finds the owner liable in two situations the case is escalated to District Court.

Your Investment at Work

Austin Code Budget

- Investigations and Compliance: **\$11,730,441**
- Case Review, Preparation, and Enforcement: **\$1,620,513**
- Support Services: **\$7,675,459**
- Other Requirements: **\$6,598,610**
- Total in FY21: **\$27,625,023**



“Connection is the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.” – Dr. Brene Brown



Message From The Director

Dear Austin community,

At Austin Code, we value the power of working together and connectivity. 2021 was an extraordinary year by any measure as our communities continued facing challenges brought on by Covid-19 and its developing variants, as well as the aftermath of a devastating winter storm. During critical times like these, our dedicated staff shines as they successfully adapt, manage priorities, and solve problems that support the needs of our community. Still, we recognize this is only possible by staying connected with our communities to understand issues and develop solutions. It is by listening to our communities' needs that we can create meaningful work conducive to improvements. By facing challenges, we realize that we must lean on each other as a community to help each other overcome adversity. Most challenges come along with the opportunity to serve, grow, and share the stories of how we thrive as a community. I am proud of how our department continues to work together internally and with our community, stakeholders, and City partners to ensure that we address Austinites' needs. We continue to stand by our belief that 'together, we make the community better,' and this is possible as we continue to count on your support.

– José G. Roig

Director, Austin Code Department



AUSTINCODE DEPARTMENT

[AustinTexas.Gov/Code](https://austintexas.gov/code)

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