

PHILADELPHIA HOARDING TASK FORCE

WHO ARE WE?

The Philadelphia Hoarding Task Force is a coalition that seeks to improve outcomes for people who hoard and reduce the catastrophic consequences related to hoarding in Philadelphia.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We work to provide individuals and organizations in the region with the tools they need to successfully overcome this challenging issue.

We do this by:

- **Educating** about hoarding disorder and best practices for intervention.
- **Connecting** people to resources to address hoarding behaviors.
- **Gathering** information to better understand the scope of hoarding in Philadelphia

WHAT IS HOARDING?

Hoarding Disorder is a mental health condition and a disability. A person with hoarding disorder has:

- Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions
- Clutter that fills up living areas and prevents normal use of space
- Symptoms that cause significant distress or impairment

WHAT HELPS?

Hoarding intervention requires a **team approach**.

- The **person who is hoarding** sets goals and learns how to sort and discard.
- **Friends, family and other people who struggle with hoarding** support the person's recovery. Look. Don't touch. Really listen. Don't judge.
- A **professional organizer or case manager** creates a plan and helps as a coach.
- A **counselor or therapist** addresses mental health issues like grief and trauma.
- **Legal Aid** helps respond to outside pressure.
- **Landlord or Code Enforcement** collaborates with the team to gain compliance.

WHERE TO START

People who are hoarding can take steps to ensure a safe and healthy home by:

- Finding their motivation.
- Asking for help.
- Prioritizing high risk areas first.
- Keeping piles under 4 feet.
- Keeping pathways 3 feet wide.
- Keeping doors and windows clear.
- Creating rules for new things.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL 215-981-0088 for persons under 60
215-545-5728 for persons 60 and over

WEB www.philadelphiahoarding.org

EMAIL info@philadelphiahoarding.org

RETHINK ENFORCEMENT

Property managers get better results when they partner with people with hoarding behaviors and use best practices. Here's what it looks like:

Partner for results.

- **Partner because you want to help.** Hoarding is a disability that can be best addressed by putting together a team that help with sorting, discarding and counseling.
- **Partner because you want to save money.** It costs less to help the tenant address their hoarding issues than to pay for the eviction and cleanout.
- **Partner because you have to.** The Fair Housing Act requires landlords to grant reasonable accommodation requests like additional time or assistance to come into compliance.

Clearly define compliance.

- **Use the Clutter Image Rating Scale** to help agree on the volume of clutter.
- **Use the HOMES Hoarding Risk Assessment** to help define the risks related to the clutter.
- **List each area of the home in order of priority** (e.g. bedroom, kitchen, basement, etc)
- **List the changes needed in each area to make it healthier and safer.** Be clear about which changes are high priority (e.g. items on stove), medium priority (e.g. items blocking window) and low priority (e.g. piles on the table).
- **Negotiate deadlines for the highest priority items.**

Use graduated sanctions and benefits.

Sanction for Non-Compliance

- Send lease termination notice.
- File complaint in court.
- Get judgment in court
- Move forward with eviction process
- Eviction

Benefit for Compliance

- Withdraw lease termination notice.
- Withdraw complaint in court.
- Vacate & dismiss judgment in court
- Pause eviction process
- Postpone eviction

- If the tenant does not meet a deadline, consider an extension.
- If the tenant does not meet the extended deadline, inform the tenant of the sanction.
- After every sanction, provide a new opportunity for compliance.
- If the tenant takes steps to comply or meets a deadline, inform the tenant of the benefit.