

South Portland Hoarding Resources

Hoarding is the acquisition and retention of a large number of items or animals until they cause interference with daily activities. One's home, health, family, work and social life may be affected. Severe hoarding causes safety and health hazards. Failure to discard clutter is one aspect of hoarding.

Signs of Hoarding

- Excessive acquiring
- Difficulty or distress about discarding items
- Having significant distress over items
- Buildup of clutter that blocks pathways, furniture, or entire rooms; rooms are unusable
- Not letting anyone inside, including repair staff; avoiding inviting people over
- A need to take free items (condiments, plastic utensils), regardless of need
- Losing important items in the clutter, like bills, legal documents, favorite items.

Hoarding & Health

- Increased risk of falls
- Possible allergies and breathing problems
- Social Isolation from friends and family
- Untreated medical or psychological needs
- Strained finances due to habitual shopping

Hoarding Assessment

- Do you have trouble discarding (or recycling, selling, giving away) things that most other people would get rid of?
- Because of the clutter or number of possessions, how difficult is it to use the rooms and surfaces in your home?
- To what extent do you buy items or acquire free things that you do not need or have enough space for?
- To what extent do your hoarding, saving, acquisition, and clutter affect your daily activities?
- How much do these symptoms interfere with school, work, or your social or family life?
- How much distress do these symptoms cause you?

Hoarding & Housing

There may be complaints to the landlord or the authorities if living conditions exist that pose severe and significant health and safety risks. An order of eviction from the landlord or the city/county can be given out. The residence may be posted "Unsafe to Occupy". If this happens, the courts may even appoint a conservator. That is why it is so important to begin working on cleaning up early so there is no reason to evict for real health or safety risks.

Hoarding Help

If your hoarding is related to a physical or mental disability, you may be able to stop an eviction and get extra time to clean up your home. This is called "Reasonable Accommodation." South Portland's Local Health Officer will work with you to find help. They are on your side and on your team. Contact them at 207-347-4130, or at 211. They may have access to funds for debris collection.