

Our Mission

The Hoarding Task Force of Washtenaw County is a partnership of public and private agencies which seek to raise public awareness of hoarding behavior and to preserve safe and appropriate housing by developing best practices and early intervention strategies

Our Values

We believe that all people have the right to live in safe, healthy housing that meets all code requirements and is comfortable

Solutions

1. Risk Reduction
2. Cost Reduction
3. Preventing Fire where hoarding behavior is present

Gifts to the Hoarding Task Force of Washtenaw County can be made through Synod Residential Services, a 501(c)3 organization and are fully tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations

Contact Us
Phone: 734-340-5813

Membership:
Carpenter Place Apartments
City of Ann Arbor
Children of Hoarders
Department of Human Services
Jan's Straighten Up
Jewish Family Services
Legal Services of South Central Michigan
Pittsfield Township Building Services
Senior Health St. Joseph Mercy Hospital
Synod Residential Services
UMHS Anxiety Disorder Clinic
UMHS Geriatrics Center
UMHS Housing Bureau For Seniors
Washtenaw County Treasurer

Affiliated with:



Housing Bureau for Seniors

734-998-9339

www.med.umich.edu/seniors



University of Michigan
Health System

Hoarding Task Force of Washtenaw County

Hoarding Behavior and Fire Safety



Hoarding Behavior and Increased Fire Risks

- Large amount of items = High Fuel Load
- Materials tend to be highly combustible
- Fire grows more rapidly
- Increased potential to spread to neighboring occupancies
- Unsafe/nonworking mechanical & electrical systems
- Increased potential for unorthodox use of utilities
- Blocked exits impede/delay access and escape
- Narrow blocked internal pathways impede/delay ability to maneuver & provide aid or extinguish fire
- As fire progresses, structure is more likely to collapse under weight of items
- Rescue is more difficult where hoarding behavior is present

Fire Costs & Hoarding Behavior

- 1.8 times more apparatus is needed to fight fires where hoarding behavior is present
- Total damage costs average 8 times higher in fires where hoarding behavior is present
- Fire response costs average 16 times higher where hoarding behavior is present
- Firefighter injuries average 5 times more where hoarding behavior is present

90% of average fires can be contained to the room of origin while only 40% of fires where hoarding behavior is a factor can be contained to the room where it started

73% of fires in environments with evident hoarding behavior are in households where the occupant is over 50 and 77% are males who live alone

Reducing the Danger

- Verify installation of working smoke/CO detectors
- Unblock primary & secondary exits
- Remove accumulation from doors & windows
- Insure 36" wide pathways throughout residence
- Verify structural integrity
- Keep combustible storage at least 5' from heat sources (furnace, water heater, dryer, etc.)
- Clear heat/air ducts & cold air returns
- Establish safe cooking & heating areas
- Insure 18" open area at ceiling
- Reduce fire load (amount of combustibles)
- Develop and practice evacuation routes