



## EVA Problem Resolution Guide

If there's a problem in your neighborhood - such as a dangerous building, persistent garbage, or illegal activities - you can do something about it! While there's no simple, one-step solutions; here's some guidelines for achieving an effective resolution. Persistence often yields results.

First, try to **talk directly to the people involved** in creating the difficult situation. Sometimes this is impossible. . . such as when you could be physically threatened. But you may be able to clear up problems that are really simple misunderstandings - and keep some measure of goodwill instead of developing an adversarial relationship.

**Talk to your neighbors** and try and enlist their assistance in solving the problem. Doing things alone is always more work. And, if you're the only one complaining, no matter how justified your opinion may be, you're vulnerable to the criticism that since you're the only one who's complaining, maybe you're the problem, and you'd be dismissed as a troublemaker. It's unfair, but true.

**EVA meetings** are a good place to discuss problems. Members can provide useful advice or may join you in your efforts. EVA holds general meetings on the first Tuesday of every month, at Happy Village Tavern, on the corner of Wolcott and Thomas Streets.

**Write everything down.** Don't rely on your memory. Having good records of detail shows you're serious. And if you lose track of information, your work will have been wasted. Be sure and keep notes on the basics: who, what, when, and where. An ongoing log is especially critical when problems persist and you have different conversations with different people.

### **Make an official complaint to:**

**Your Alderman** Some people call the aldermen first, being of the opinion that it's the alderman's responsibility to take care of their constituents' complaints. Other people are afraid to call their alderman because they don't want to bother him with little problems. Consider using your alderman's expertise when necessary, such as after you've complained on your own and the problem isn't taken care of. The alderman's staff can be very helpful in dealing with other administrative departments. For example; their intervention in Building Court can make a big difference.

**311, the Mayor's Office of Inquiry & Information** The operators at 311 have a computerized system to record your complaints, and route them to the appropriate departments. Ask for the reference number, which is necessary for follow-up. You can also request

### **Reference Phone Numbers**

Emergency (any crimes in progress) - 911  
Mayor's Office of Inquiry and Information - 311

#### **Aldermen**

1<sup>st</sup>: Alderman Manny Flores (773) 278-0101  
27<sup>th</sup> Ald. Walter Burnett Jr (312) 432-1995  
32<sup>nd</sup> Ald. Scott Waguespack (773) 248-1330

#### **Ward Dept. Streets and Sanitation Yards**

1<sup>st</sup> DSS (312) 744-5523  
27<sup>th</sup> DSS (312) 744-2240  
32<sup>nd</sup> DSS (312) 744-8618

**City Clerk** (312) 744-6861

**Cook County Inquiry & Info** (312) 443-5500

#### **13th Police District**

Wood Street Police Station (312) 746-8350  
TAC Office (312) 746-8356  
CAPS Office (312) 746-8355

Email: Caps013district@chicagopolice.org

**Determine who your elected officials are:**

[www.civicfootprint.org](http://www.civicfootprint.org)

some city services online, follow the links at [www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org). If you know which City agency is responsible; you can call that agency directly. For example, if you have a garbage problem, your Ward Super can help. However, calling 311 assures that your complaint is part of the official record, and helps the City monitor the work of the various Departments and Bureaus.

**Police at 911** If laws are being broken, call 911. This is the only way officers are dispatched. It's important to be aware of how 911 works, in order to protect yourself and use the system effectively. Anyone who calls 911 is automatically identified by the computer system via the phone number they are calling from. The operator will ask for your name. It's possible to make an anonymous complaint, but you must tell the operator, explicitly, that you **DO NOT** want your name used.

Calls are answered in order of assumed priority, and your problem may not be handled as you think it should be. If you feel that the police don't respond appropriately, follow up. You can always call 911 back immediately and ask to speak to a supervisor, or talk directly to the Commander at your local station the next day. The police need to know if the system isn't working. Again, it's very important to keep track of the details. You'll need to know dates, times, and individuals involved in incidents. If you see police on the street, look for their badges or car number for identification.

**CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy)** is Chicago's community policing program. There are CAPS meetings for each police beat where you can meet and talk with the officers who patrol your area. See the website or call your local station for the dates and times of your area's beat meeting. Most of the East Village neighborhood is in the 13<sup>th</sup> District. If the issue is not an emergency, and you have questions, you can call the CAPS office at your local Station.

**Building Court** Problems with poorly maintained buildings are particularly difficult to address. The City of Chicago Municipal Code is quite strict, and chances are that whatever's bothering you is something that could land the property owners in Building Court. However, be aware that the court system is a labyrinth bureaucracy, hundreds of cases are processed each day and things can move very slowly.

Following a case through this system requires a considerable amount of time and energy. The system works better if you can appear in court in person, but this may not be possible for you, especially since cases are continued month after month.

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Don't be discouraged if the first call or complaint you make doesn't produce results. Persistence is essential. If one line of inquiry isn't working, try another. If you don't receive adequate follow-up, move up to the supervisory level.

East Village Association is a useful resource for information, and provides its members with another way to officially address problems. If you've tried the steps above and been unsuccessful, EVA can support you in making sure that city services - for which we pay taxes - work. However, remember that EVA is an all-volunteer group with limited human resources. We're only as strong as our members, and we're strongest when we work **together**.