



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE TO CRACK DOWN ON VACANT COMMERCIAL STOREFRONTS IN OTHERWISE OCCUPIED BUILDINGS

Affected properties will be subject to new enhanced registration, maintenance and insurance requirements.

CHICAGO- The Chicago City Council today approved an ordinance requiring that property owners register, maintain and insure buildings with vacant storefronts and similar vacant ground-level spaces in their buildings.

"Opportunity is here in Chicago. Re-engaging business districts contributes to neighborhood growth and energizes entrepreneurs to explore new opportunities," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "These regulations are critical in ensuring that good businesses have a home here in Chicago, and that residents and neighboring business owners are benefiting from that growth and opportunity in communities they can be proud of."

The ordinance takes effect in late July. It requires property owners to:

- Register their vacant storefronts with the Chicago Department of Buildings
- Maintain additional liability insurance
- Pay a registration fee of 100 dollars every six months
- Post a notice of registration in a highly visible area that can be seen from the street or sidewalk
- Cover or remove signage from businesses that are no longer on-site

Commercial storefronts will not be considered vacant or unoccupied if:

- There is an active remodeling permit
- A remodeling permit has been applied for and is currently being reviewed
- The storefront is in habitable condition and is for sale or for rent as reflected on signage that is legible from the sidewalk or street and includes contact information

Lead Aldermanic Sponsor Anthony Napolitano introduced the ordinance in November of last year, expressing the impact these vacant storefronts have on our local business community and economy.



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“For years many property owners have neglected their commercial storefronts while benefiting from a vacancy tax exemption,” **said Alderman Anthony Napolitano.** “These vacancies hurt our neighboring businesses and weakened our local economy. It has been a pleasure working with the Department of Buildings, Business Affairs, the Mayor’s office, and other business stakeholders to craft legislation that will help support our local business districts while holding bad actors accountable.”

The Chicago Department of Buildings has been working with 41st Ward Alderman Napolitano and other stakeholders since late last year, to try and toughen the vacant storefront requirements in the hopes of lessening the number of empty storefronts across Chicago.

“I’ve seen these seemingly abandoned storefronts across the City, and firmly believe this ordinance will improve the level of safety and enhance the quality of life of residents and visitors while boosting the entrepreneurial energy in all 77 of Chicago community areas,” **said Building Commissioner Marlene Hopkins.**

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