



CITY OF BARTOW

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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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City of Bartow Code Enforcement is Cracking Down on Snipe Signs

(Bartow, FL – January 8, 2025) – The Bartow City Commission last year amended the City’s Code of Ordinances to make it unlawful for a person or business to place snipe signs on the public rights-of-way and put in place penalties for violations of this rule. Enforcement began on January 1, with warnings issued to violators through the end of the month. Beginning in February, infractions will incur fines which escalate with each offense.

Bartow is the first municipality in the region to step up the enforcement and penalties for snipe signs, which are defined as any sign attached to a tree or fence within the public right-of-way or located on City-owned property, as well as on utility poles or boxes, housing structures, public benches, bus shelters, or any other object located on public property, unless specifically allowed by permission and consent of the City.

“These signs are essentially litter in the rights-of-way. They cause traffic hazards, unsightly clutter on City-owned infrastructure, and are an overall nuisance, which detract from the aesthetic beauty of our City,” explained Tray Towles, Code Compliance Manager for the City.

Prior to this amendment, snipe signs were classified as “temporary signs” under the City’s Unified Land Development Code. Code enforcement officers were required to witness the violator in the act of placing the sign to take enforcement action. The updated Litter ordinance allows offenders to be cited based on identities as can be verified based on the content of the signs.

The penalty for violating the Litter Control Update Ordinance of 2024 is a Class III civil infraction, which carries a fine of \$250 for a first offense, \$350 for a second offense, and a mandatory hearing before the City’s Special Magistrate for three or more offenses. The City’s Special Magistrate may fine the violator up to \$500 for each offense.

“This ordinance is an important first step in improving public safety in the City of Bartow,” said Towles. “Placement of snipe signs on the City’s rights-of-way creates not only a hazard and distraction for motorists, but a danger to City staff who are ultimately responsible for removing and disposing of them.”

Towles, who has headed the Code Enforcement Section since January 2024, noted that the City collected 2,288 illegal signs between February and December of last year.

“Eliminating snipe signs from Bartow’s roadways is a critical component of the City’s Cleaner, Safer Neighborhoods Program,” said Bartow City Manager Mike Herr. “This ordinance creates a mechanism for enforcement and accountability and enables our team to effectively pursue individuals and businesses who repeatedly pollute our rights-of-way with these signs.”

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