

WHAT IS HOARDING?

Hoarding is the excessive acquisition of and inability to discard items to the extent that the spaces in the home cannot be used for their intended purposes.

It can be so extreme that the home becomes unlivable and unsafe. (For example, stacks of magazines on top of the stove can often create an unsafe situation and can present a fire hazard.)

What are signs you can look for in hoarding?

1. Clutter blocking egress and ingress (windows and doors)
2. Clutter making it difficult to use the kitchen or bathroom for its intended purposes. (For example, not being able to cook in kitchen, bathe in the bathroom, or invite people over)
3. Presence of infestations (mice, rats, roaches) as a result of clutter
4. Damage to the housing structure - walls, ceilings, floors
5. Accumulated items unsafely stored too close to the stove, oven, heater, fans, portable heaters, or furnace

What you can do?

1. **Call for help.** This situation can be very overwhelming, and difficult to handle alone. There are people who can assist you in keeping safe and healthy. See the contact number on the other side.
2. **Take it one step at a time.** The situation did not happen overnight, and will not be resolved overnight.
3. **Stay safe.** If you think that you or someone you know are not safe, act now.