



Municipality of Bristol

Occupancy and Maintenance of Buildings By-Law

By-Law Number 319

Notice of motion: April 7th 2026

Adoption of by-law: May 2nd 2026

MRC Conformity certificate deliverance: June 2nd, 2026

Coming into force: July 17, 2026

WHEREAS pursuant to sections 145.41 to 145.41.7 of the Act respecting Land Use Planning and Development (c. A-19.1), a municipality must adopt a by-law respecting the occupancy and maintenance of buildings;

WHEREAS a by-law on the occupancy and maintenance of buildings is necessary to prevent deterioration, ensure protection against weather, preserve structural integrity and protect public health and safety;

WHEREAS the regulations on the occupancy of buildings must apply as a minimum to heritage buildings as defined in paragraph 1 of article 148.0.1 of the Act respecting Land Use Planning and Development (c. A-19.1)

WHEREAS the Municipal Council wishes to ensure acceptable housing conditions for residents and protect the cultural heritage of the Municipality of Bristol;

WHEREAS a Notice of Motion and presentation of First Draft By-Law # 319 was deposited on April 7th, 2026.

THEREFORE By-Law # 319 was adopted unanimously on May 2nd 2026:

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CHAPTER 1 Declaratory Provisions

1.1 Preface

The preface to this by-law forms an integral part thereof.

1.2 Title and Number of the By-Law

This by-law is entitled “Occupancy and Maintenance of Buildings” and bears Number 319.

1.3 Object

The purpose of this by-law is to set minimal standards for the maintenance of buildings aimed in particular at preserving the integrity of their architectural features, protecting them from the elements, preventing their deterioration, and ensuring their occupants health and safety.

The standards it contains also aims to ensure the preservation and sustainability of heritage buildings.

1.4 Validity

Council declares that this by-law is adopted chapter by chapter, section by section. If any provision is declared invalid, the remaining provisions remain in force.

1.5 Fields of Application

The provision of this by-law applies to the territory of the Municipality of Bristol.

It applies to all residential buildings with some sections applying uniquely to heritage buildings as defined in paragraph 1 of article 148.0.1 of the Act respecting Land Use Planning and Development (c. A-19.1) such as:

1. Buildings cited under the Cultural Heritage Act (c. P-9.002);
2. Buildings located within a cited site;
3. Buildings included in the MRC Pontiac heritage inventory adopted pursuant to section 120 of the Cultural Heritage Act.

CHAPTER 2 Interpretation and Definitions

In this regulation, unless otherwise specified, the following rules apply:

- In the case of a contradiction between the text and a heading, the text shall prevail;
- In the event of a contradiction between the text and any other form of expression, the text shall prevail.
- The use of verbs in the present tense includes the future tense;
- Words written in the singular include the plural and vice-versa;
- Where any provision of this by-law is found to be inconsistent or in conflict with any other by-law or with any other provision of this by-law, the more restrictive or prohibitive provision shall apply.

2.1 Definitions

Accessory Building: A detached secondary building located on the same property as the principal building.

Building: Any structure used or intended to be used for shelter, occupancy or storage.

Council – The Municipal Council of Bristol.

Dangerous Building: A building that, due to structural weakness, fire damage, neglect, deterioration or abandonment, poses a risk to occupants or the public.

Designated Officer – Any person appointed by Council to enforce this by-law.

Deterioration: The progressive decline in condition of a building due to neglect, moisture, structural failure or other causes.

Dilapidated Building: state of deterioration produced by time and normal aging of a building and making it inadequate for the use for which it is intended or for which it was designed.

Dwelling: A building or part thereof used or intended for residential occupancy.

Heritage Building: A building cited under the Cultural Heritage Act (c. P-9.002), located within a cited heritage site, or included in the MRC heritage inventory adopted pursuant to section 120 of that Act.

Heritage Immovable: An immovable property that has archaeological, architectural, artistic, ethnological, historical, aesthetical, scientific, social, urbanistic or technological value, in particular a building, a structure, or land;

MRC: the Pontiac regional county municipality.

Occupant: Any person residing in or using a building.

Owner – Any person or legal entity holding title to property.

Structure: a fundamental load-bearing component of a building including foundations, load bearing walls, beams, columns, floors, roofs and other structural components.

Vacant Building: A building unoccupied for 1 year excluding seasonal absence where the building is maintained in compliance with this by-law.

CHAPTER 3 Occupancy and Maintenance Standards

3.1 General Maintenance Obligation

Every owner of a property shall repair and maintain it in compliance with this by-law. The owner, tenant and occupant must keep the building in good condition and must repair and carry out necessary maintenance work to prevent its deterioration, protect it from the elements, and preserve the integrity of its structure.

No one may commit an act of willful damage against a heritage building or one of its architectural or heritage features, except within the framework of work specifically authorized by a permit or certificate issued in accordance with the provisions of the administration regulations of urban planning regulations in force.

3.2 Structural Elements

The structure of a building must be solid enough to withstand the combined forces of live loads, roof loads, wind pressure, snow load, and other natural elements to which it is subjected.

Any structural component that is degraded or dilapidated, particularly due to water infiltration, soil movement, rot, mold, vermin infestation, rodent or insects must be repaired or replaced to prevent further weakening of the structure or any potential hazards.

3.3 Roof

Roofs shall be maintained in a watertight condition, free from defects permitting water infiltration. Damaged or missing roofing materials must be repaired or replaced.

3.4 Exterior Cladding

Exterior walls and cladding shall be weather-resistant, securely fastened and free from rot, rust, holes or important deterioration.

Any exterior cladding that is crumbling, peeling, or threatening to detach must be repaired, repainted or replaced.

For exterior brick or stone cladding, the mortar joints must be maintained in good condition and hold the brick or stone in place. Any brick or stone walls must be free of major cracks and must not be at risk of collapse.

3.5 Windows and Doors

Windows and doors shall be installed and maintained to be weather-tight and prevent air, rain and snow infiltration. They shall be free from broken glass, maintained in working order and replaced when damaged.

3.6 Stairs, Balconies and Porches

All parts of any stairs, balconies, porches or other outdoor structures attached to a building must:

- Be repaired and maintained in good condition to prevent disrepair.
- Be free from rot and corrosion that could affect its structural stability and safety.
- Have structurally sound guardrails where needed.
- Be free from any obstruction preventing traffic flow and access to emergency exits.

3.7 Architectural Heritage Elements

➤ *This chapter only applies to Heritage buildings.*

Exterior architectural features that contribute to the building's interest or heritage character must be coated with the appropriate product to maintain them in good condition.

The exterior maintenance work carried out must not distort or alter the heritage character of the building and must preserve its architectural appearance.

3.8 Occupation General Obligation

The occupation of a building must not endanger the health and safety of the occupants or the public due to its condition. No dwelling shall contain extensive visible mold, chronic dampness or persistent water infiltration.

3.9 Housing Standards

All dwellings must be:

- Supplied with a drinking water system continuously maintained in good working order.
- Have a wastewater plumbing system connected to a septic system compliant with the provincial regulations in force.
- Supplied with a heating and ventilation system in good working order capable of maintaining a temperature of 20 degrees Celsius during the heating season.
- Equipped with basic electrical installation in good working order that do not pose a fire hazard.
- Provided with adequate natural and artificial lighting.
- Equipped with a minimum of one operable window or exterior door per bedroom.

3.10 Minimal Equipment

All dwellings must have:

- A kitchen sink
- One toilet
- One washbasin

- One bathtub or shower

3.11 Vacant Buildings

A vacant building must be closed off to prevent unauthorized access through any of its openings. It must be barricaded with plywood panels securely fixed to the exterior walls of the building.

The water supply system must be closed and drained, unless the operation of the heating system or fire protection system installed in the building requires water supply. Even so, it is recommended to maintain a temperature of at least 10 degrees Celsius in the building to prevent condensation and premature degradation.

A vacant building must be maintained at all times in a condition that prevents premature deterioration of its structural parts. It must also remain weatherproof and protected against water infiltration and mold contamination.

The building must be subject to periodic monitoring in order to identify its architectural and heritage elements (roof, exterior cladding, walls, foundation, etc.) which no longer protect against the weather or which threaten the integrity of the building's structure.

This article does not apply to vacant buildings whose owner, occupants or tenant are absent seasonally or occasionally, provided that the vacancy does not last more than 1 year.

CHAPTER 4 Administration and Inspection

4.1 Administration

The designated official is responsible for the application and administration of this by-law. This person may exercise the powers provided herein and issue notices of infraction relating to any offence against a provision of these regulations.

4.2 Inspection

The designated official may enter and inspect any building or lot between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. to insure the respect of this by-law.

During the inspection the designated officer may take pictures or measurements to verify compliance with this regulation. Any person whose expertise or assistance is necessary may also accompany them.

Any owner, occupant or tenant of the property must receive the inspector, grant them access to the building or any accessory building and answer any questions relating to the application of this by-law.

Anyone who prevents the designated officer access to a property is liable to a fine of \$1000.

4.3 Infraction Notice

Where a property violates this by-law, the municipality can issue a written notice specifying the nature of the non-conformity, the corrective measures necessary and the deadlines to conform. Additional time may be granted.

- The following only applies to Heritage buildings.

When the designated official has reasonable grounds to believe that a portion of a heritage building lacks sufficient structural strength or that its distinctive architectural components have been altered during recent work, they may require that the owner hire a qualified professional to conduct tests or perform verification on any portion of the building. A written report must then be submitted to the designated official. This report must describe the causes of deterioration identified and include a detailed description of the corrective work required.

4.4 Deterioration Notice

If the owner fails to comply with the infraction notice within the prescribed delay, Council may, by resolution, recommend the registration of a Notice of Deterioration in the land register, describing the defects and the required corrective work in accordance with section 145.41.1 of the Act respecting Land Use Planning and Development. The Deterioration Notice must contain the following information:

- The designation of the property and the name and address of its owner
- The date and number of the resolution passed by the municipal council along with the municipality's contact details
- The title and number of this by-law

- A description of the corrective works

The municipality must, within 20 days, notify the building owner and any title holder of the notice registered in the land register with respect to that building.

4.5 Regularization Notice

When the municipality determines that the work required in the Notice of Deterioration has been completed, the Council must request the registration of a Notice of Regularization in the land register.

If a Notice of Regularization is registered in the land register, the municipality will withdraw from the list any entry concerning the Notice of Deterioration in accordance with section 145.41.4 of the Act respecting Land Use Planning and Development.

4.6 Municipal Acquisition Powers

The municipality may acquire, by mutual agreement or by expropriation, any building for which a notice of deterioration has been registered in the land register for at least 60 days, on which the work required in that notice has not been carried out, and if one or more of the following condition are met:

- a) It has been vacant for at least a year.
- b) It is in a state of disrepair that presents a health or safety risk.
- c) It is a heritage building.

Such a building may then be transferred, sold or donated to any person referred to in Section 29 or 29.4 of the C-19 Cities and Towns Act.

CHAPTER 5 Offences and Penalties

5.1 Penalties

The designated official is responsible for the application and administration of this by-law. He may exercise the powers provided herein and issue notices of infraction relating to any offence against a provision of these regulations.

Anyone who contravenes this by-law commits an offence and is liable to penalties and fines pursuant to Section 145.41.6 of the Land Use Planning and Development act:

- Individuals: \$500 to \$100,000
- Legal persons: \$1,000 to \$200,000

In the event of a repeat offence, the fine is doubled.

Each day that a violation continues constitutes a separate offence and the penalties enacted for each offence may be imposed for each day the offence lasts, in accordance with this article.

The following aggravating factors will be considered when determining the amount of the fine:

1. The fact that the offender acted intentionally or was negligent or reckless;
2. The seriousness of the harm or the risk of harm to the health or safety of persons;
3. The intensity of the nuisance suffered by the neighbourhood;
4. The predictability of the offence or the failure to act on recommendations or warnings intended to prevent it, particularly when the work described in a Notice of Deterioration has not been carried out;
5. The fact that the building in question is a heritage building;
6. The fact that the offender's actions or omissions have resulted in such deterioration of the building that the only effective remedy is its demolition;
7. The offender's attempts to conceal the offence or their failure to attempt to mitigate its consequences.

Any sum owed to the municipality incurred in enforcing this by-law is considered property taxes if the offender is the property owner.

1.2 Entry into Force

This by-law will come into force in accordance with the Law.

Adopted unanimously in Bristol on May 2nd 2026.

Valerie Twolan-Graham, Mayor

Christina Peck Director General

The French version of this by-law is the official version