Dear Fellow Delawarean,

When it comes to protecting our families, safeguarding our wallets, knowing our rights as victims of crime, or understanding how laws like the Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act can make our communities better, information is the key. Equipped with knowledge, we can make choices that greatly reduce our risk of becoming a victim of crime or fraud, and we can learn how to get help if we're mistreated or our communities are at risk.

The mission of the Delaware Department of Justice is to protect Delawareans from harm by enforcing the law and being your advocate. We're here to help you, and also to give you the information you need to help yourself and your family. Inside this brochure, you'll learn about how the Delaware Department of Justice Nuisance Abatement program is fighting drug and vice crime, and how to contact the Department of Justice for further assistance. Together, we can keep Delaware safe and strong.

Beau Biden
Attorney General

Delaware Department of Justice
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Wilmington, DE 19801

Nuisance Abatement

Protecting Delaware's Communities

Delaware Department of Justice

Attorney General
Joseph R. "Beau" Biden, III

Criminal Division

New Castle County	• (302) 577-8500
Kent County	• (302) 739-7641
Sussex County	• (302) 856-5353
Para asistencia en Espanol	• (877) 851-0482

www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov
Email: AttorneyGeneral@State.De.US

What is Nuisance Abatement?

Nuisance Abatement is a Department of Justice program that uses a powerful state law, the Delaware Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act, to take action against property owners and tenants who allow criminal activity, violence and the threat of violence associated with the illegal drug trade or other social vices like prostitution and illegal gambling on their properties.

The Department of Justice identifies nuisance properties through its own investigations and cooperation with state and local police agencies, local authorities, civic organizations, and neighborhood residents.

Attorney General Biden has used the Nuisance Abatement Act to fight illegal activity in communities in every county up and down Delaware.

How does Nuisance Abatement work?

Who can take action?

- Department of Justice
- Municipal or county governments
- Any person who resides, works/operates a business or worships within 1,000 feet of the nuisance
- A neighborhood or community organization

How can a complaint be filed?

Anyone who believes that a particular property is a nuisance may file a complaint with the Delaware Department of Justice by calling:

New Castle County • (302) 577-8400
Kent County • (302) 739-7641
Sussex County • (302) 856-5353

What proof is required?

Proof must be provided that drug and social vices nuisance activity is occurring on a particular premises. Specifically, the Nuisance Abatement Act defines nuisance activity as illegal drug activity (buying, selling, giving away or storing narcotics or other controlled substances), drug trafficking, prostitution, and illegal gambling.

Who can be sued?

- Owner, agent, manager, landlord, superintendant, tenant, lessee or occupier. Basically, anyone who has anything to do with the property
- The property itself - commercial or residential

What can Nuisance Abatement change?

If a property owner does not voluntarily stop the illegal activity on their property, the Department of Justice may ask a judge to order that the following steps be taken to put an end to the nuisance...

Immediate action

- Temporary order closing the premises down
- Appointment of a receiver to manage the property

Permanent action

- Civil penalties up to the fair market value of the property or transfer of the deed to the state
- Requiring the owner to:
  Make repairs, hire security guards, make alterations or improvements to the physical structure, appoint someone to manage the property, pay attorneys' fees and costs
- Revoking business and operating licenses
- Closing the premises