

364.3 Limitation of powers.

The following are limitations upon the powers of a city:

1. A city council shall exercise a power only by the passage of a motion, a resolution, an amendment, or an ordinance.

2. For a violation of an ordinance a city shall not provide a penalty in excess of the maximum fine and term of imprisonment for a simple misdemeanor under [section 903.1, subsection 1](#), paragraph “a”. An amount equal to twenty percent of all fines collected by cities shall be deposited in the account established in [section 602.8108](#). However, one hundred percent of all fines collected by a city pursuant to [section 321.236, subsection 1](#), shall be retained by the city. The crime services surcharge required by [section 911.1](#) shall be added to a city fine and is not a part of the city’s penalty.

3. a. A city may not set standards and requirements which are lower or less stringent than those imposed by state law, but may set standards and requirements which are higher or more stringent than those imposed by state law, unless a state law provides otherwise.

b. A city shall not impose any fee or charge on any individual or business licensed by the plumbing and mechanical systems board for the right to perform plumbing, mechanical, HVAC, refrigeration, sheet metal, or hydronic systems work within the scope of the license. This paragraph does not prohibit a city from charging fees for the issuance of permits for, and inspections of, work performed in its jurisdiction.

c. (1) A city shall not adopt an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment that sets standards or requirements regarding the sale or marketing of consumer merchandise that are different from, or in addition to, any state law. For purposes of this paragraph:

(a) “*Consumer merchandise*” means merchandise offered for sale or lease, or provided with a sale or lease, primarily but not exclusively for personal, family, or household purposes, and includes any container used for consuming, carrying, or transporting such merchandise.

(b) “*Container*” means a bag, cup, package, container, bottle, or other packaging that is all of the following:

(i) Designed to be either reusable or single-use.

(ii) Made of cloth, paper, plastic, including foamed or expanded plastic, cardboard, corrugated material, aluminum, glass, or postconsumer recycled or similar material or substrates, including coated, laminated, or multilayer substrates.

(iii) Designed for consuming, transporting, or protecting merchandise, food, or beverages from or at a food service or retail facility.

(2) An ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment adopted prior to March 30, 2017, that violates this paragraph is void and unenforceable on and after March 30, 2017.

(3) This paragraph “c” shall not apply to city solid waste or recycling collection or city solid waste or recycling programs.

d. A city shall not adopt an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment, or use any other means, that restricts an owner of real property from refinancing existing debt on, selling, or otherwise transferring title to the property by requiring the owner to take or show compliance with any action with respect to the property or pay any fee before, during, or after refinancing existing debt on, selling, or transferring title to the property.

4. A city may not levy a tax unless specifically authorized by a state law.

5. A city shall not adopt or enforce any ordinance imposing any registration or licensing system or registration or license fees for or relating to owner-occupied manufactured or mobile homes including the lots, lands, or manufactured home community or mobile home park upon or in which they are located. A city shall not adopt or enforce any ordinance imposing any registration or licensing system, or registration or license fees, or safety or sanitary standards for rental manufactured or mobile homes unless a similar registration or licensing system, or registration or license fees, or safety or sanitary standards are required for other rental properties intended for human habitation. [This subsection](#) does not preclude the investigation and abatement of a nuisance or the enforcement of a tiedown system, or the enforcement of any rules of the department of health and human services or local board of health if those rules apply to other rental properties or to owner-occupied housing intended for human habitation.

6. A city shall not provide a civil penalty in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars for the violation of an ordinance which is classified as a municipal infraction or if the infraction is a repeat offense, a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars for each repeat offense. A municipal infraction is not punishable by imprisonment.

7. A city which operates a cable communications system shall manage the right-of-way on a competitively neutral and nondiscriminatory basis. Additionally, a city-operated cable communications system shall be required to pay the same fees and charges and comply with other requirements as may be imposed by the city by ordinance or by the terms of a franchise granted by the city, or as may otherwise be imposed by the city, upon any other cable provider. [This subsection](#) does not prohibit a city from making an equitable apportionment of franchise requirements between or among cable television providers, in order to eliminate duplication. [This subsection](#) shall not be construed to prohibit a city-operated cable communications system from making transfers of surplus as otherwise allowed or from making in-kind contributions as otherwise allowed.

8. *a.* A city may adopt and enforce an ordinance requiring the construction of a storm shelter at a manufactured home community or mobile home park which is constructed after July 1, 1999. In lieu of requiring construction of a storm shelter, a city may require a community or park owner to provide a plan for the evacuation of community or park residents to a safe place of shelter in times of severe weather including tornadoes and high winds if the city determines that a safe place of shelter is available within a reasonable distance of the manufactured home community or mobile home park for use by community or park residents. Each evacuation plan prepared pursuant to [this subsection](#) shall be filed with, and approved by, the local emergency management agency. If construction of a storm shelter is required, an ordinance adopted or enforced pursuant to [this subsection](#) shall not include any of the following requirements:

(1) That the size of the storm shelter be larger than the equivalent of seven square feet for each manufactured or mobile home space in the manufactured home community or mobile home park.

(2) That the storm shelter include a restroom if the shelter is used exclusively as a storm shelter.

(3) That the storm shelter exceed the construction specifications approved by a licensed professional engineer and presented by the owner of the manufactured home community or mobile home park.

(4) That the shelter be located any closer than one thousand three hundred twenty feet from any manufactured or mobile home in the community. However, this restriction shall not prohibit the adoption or enforcement of an ordinance that requires a minimum of one shelter to be located in a manufactured home community or mobile home park.

b. For the purposes of [this subsection](#):

(1) “*Manufactured home community*” means the same as land-leased community defined in [sections 335.30A and 414.28A](#).

(2) “*Mobile home park*” means a mobile home park as defined in [section 562B.7](#).

(3) “*Storm shelter*” means a single structure or multiple structures designed to provide persons with temporary protection from a storm.

9. A city shall not adopt or enforce any ordinance imposing any limitation on the amount of rent that can be charged for leasing private residential or commercial property. [This subsection](#) does not prevent the right of a city to manage and control residential property in which the city has a property interest.

10. A city which operates a utility that furnishes gas or electricity shall manage the right-of-way on a competitively neutral and nondiscriminatory basis. Such city utility shall be required to pay the fees and charges computed in the same manner as those fees and charges which are imposed by the city upon any other provider of a similar service within the corporate boundaries of the city. Such city utility shall also comply with the terms of the franchise granted by the city to the provider of a similar service. [This subsection](#) shall not be construed to prohibit the city utility from making transfers of surplus as otherwise allowed or from making in-kind contributions as otherwise allowed. However, a city shall not require

that transfers from the city utility be in excess of the franchise fee amount imposed upon the provider of a similar service unless otherwise agreed.

11. A city shall not adopt or enforce any ordinance or regulation in violation of [section 562A.27B](#) or [562B.25B](#).

12. *a.* A city shall not adopt, enforce, or otherwise administer an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment providing for any terms or conditions of employment that exceed or conflict with the requirements of federal or state law relating to a minimum or living wage rate, any form of employment leave, hiring practices, employment benefits, scheduling practices, or other terms or conditions of employment.

b. An ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment adopted prior to March 30, 2017, that violates [this subsection](#) is void and unenforceable on and after March 30, 2017.

13. *a.* A city shall not adopt, enforce, or otherwise administer an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment, or use any other means, to restrict, impede, regulate, or prohibit, intentionally or effectively, any of the following:

(1) The provision of natural gas service by a public utility as defined in [section 476.1](#), a competitive natural gas provider as defined in [section 476.86](#), or a retail propane marketer or retail propane dispenser as those terms are defined in [section 101C.2](#) to a person, business, municipality, or other wholesale or retail customer within or outside the incorporated area of the city.

(2) The purchase of natural gas or propane from a competitive natural gas provider as defined in [section 476.86](#) or a retail propane marketer or retail propane dispenser as those terms are defined in [section 101C.2](#), or the receipt of natural gas or propane service from a public utility as defined in [section 476.1](#), by any person, business, municipality, or other wholesale or retail customer within or outside the incorporated area of the city.

b. (1) Paragraph “*a*” does not apply to an ordinance granting, extending, amending, or renewing a franchise pursuant to [section 364.2, subsection 4](#), that does not restrict or impede the provision of natural gas service.

(2) Paragraph “*a*” does not apply to an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment relating to the rates, services, or governance of a public utility providing gas service to the public for compensation and subject to the jurisdiction of the utilities commission pursuant to [section 476.1B](#).

(3) Paragraph “*a*” does not apply to an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment that regulates a retail propane marketer or retail propane dispenser, as those terms are defined in [section 101C.2](#), adopted before July 1, 2021.

14. A city shall not adopt an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment, or use any other means, that requires the owner of real property to implement a policy relating to the use of facial coverings that is more stringent than a policy imposed by the state.

15. A city shall not adopt or enforce an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment imposing any requirement to obtain a permit or license, or to pay a fee, for an eligible business operated on an occasional basis for no more than eighty-nine calendar days in a calendar year by a person or persons under the age of eighteen. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “*eligible business*” means an on-site transactional business traditionally operated exclusively by a person under the age of eighteen, including a “*stand operated by a minor*” as defined in [section 137F.1](#), that a person under the age of eighteen is not otherwise prohibited by law from operating.

16. A city shall not adopt or enforce an ordinance or regulation that prohibits an owner, lessor, sublessor, managing agent, or other person having the right to lease, sublease, or rent out a dwelling unit from refusing to lease or rent out the dwelling unit to a person because of the person’s use of a federal housing choice voucher issued by the United States department of housing and urban development. Such an ordinance or regulation in effect on January 1, 2021, is void and unenforceable on and after January 1, 2023. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “*dwelling unit*” means the same as defined in [section 562A.6](#).

17. *a.* A city that operates and maintains parking meters or non-metered parking lots shall not enforce any ordinance related to fees at such parking meters against, and shall not charge a fee at any non-metered parking lot to, a person whose vehicle is lawfully displaying any of the following registration plates:

(1) Medal of honor special registration plates issued pursuant to [section 321.34, subsection 8](#).

(2) Ex-prisoner of war special registration plates issued pursuant to [section 321.34, subsection 8A](#).

(3) Purple heart special registration plates issued pursuant to [section 321.34, subsection 18](#).

(4) Registration plates displaying the alphabetical characters “DV” preceding the registration plate number pursuant to [section 321.166, subsection 6](#).

b. [This subsection](#) shall not be construed to limit a city’s authority to enforce other parking-related ordinances, including but not limited to ordinances regulating the length of time parking is allowed, parking along snow and emergency routes, and the hours and locations where parking is prohibited.

18. a. Unless expressly authorized by state law, a city shall not adopt, enforce, or maintain an ordinance, order, or rule for the purpose of making payments to individuals under a guaranteed income program.

b. The attorney general shall send a cease and desist order to any city that adopts or enforces an ordinance, order, or rule in violation of [this subsection](#).

c. If the city fails to comply with the cease and desist order, the attorney general shall bring an action in the name of the state for injunctive relief against any city that has adopted an ordinance, order, or rule in violation of [this subsection](#).

d. For purposes of [this subsection](#), the term “*guaranteed income program*” means a program under which individuals are provided with regular periodic cash payments that are unearned and that may be used for any purpose, but does not include a program under which an individual is required to perform work or attend training.

e. A guaranteed income program operating prior to or on May 1, 2024, may remain in effect until January 1, 2025, or until expiration of the program, whichever is earlier. A city shall not start a guaranteed income program or extend an existing guaranteed income program after May 1, 2024.

19. a. For purposes of this subsection:

(1) “*Construction site*” means the same as used in a storm water general permit adopted by rule pursuant to [section 455B.103A](#).

(2) “*Topsoil*” means the same as used in a storm water general permit adopted by rule pursuant to [section 455B.103A](#).

b. A city shall not adopt or enforce an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment relating to the preservation, compaction, placement, or depth of topsoil at a construction site that is more restrictive than those requirements provided in the national pollutant discharge elimination system general permit no. 2 as issued by the department of natural resources. A city may develop standards to evaluate topsoil quantities before and after construction and ensure compliance with general permit no. 2. A city may request that the department of natural resources review the soil of a construction site to verify that the national pollutant discharge elimination system general permit no. 2 as issued by the department of natural resources is proper for the construction site.

c. (1) A city may adopt or enforce an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment that regulates storm water runoff at a construction site only to the extent that such regulation for rainfall events having a return frequency ranging from five through one hundred years does not require a post-construction storm water flow rate that is more restrictive than the existing flow rate of a rainfall event having a return frequency of five years, with all such runoff rates based on the actual existing condition of the site at the time the construction commences.

(2) A city may adopt or enforce an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment that regulates storm water runoff from upstream properties adjacent to a construction site only to the extent that storm water runoff shall be allowed to pass through downstream storm water basins at the same flow rate as off-site storm water runoff entering the construction site.

(3) A city may impose a storm water runoff requirement that is more restrictive than what is allowed or required by this paragraph at the construction site if the city meets all of the following conditions:

(a) The city pays for all study, design, and engineering costs for implementing the storm

water runoff requirement that includes an analysis by a licensed professional engineer of the difference in costs between the requirements of this paragraph and the more restrictive city storm water runoff requirement.

(b) The city pays for the difference of costs between the requirements of this paragraph and the more restrictive requirement imposed by the city for installation of equipment or practices required for a property owner to comply with the storm water runoff requirement.

(c) If the storm water runoff requirement results in the city using a person's private property, whether by easement or otherwise taking an interest in the property, the city pays the property owner the fair market value of the property taken for any additional land required beyond the requirements of this paragraph.

(d) A city shall not impose a special assessment or otherwise recover the costs from the property owner for the portion of the costs attributable to the city.

(e) The costs attributable to the city shall only apply to the storm water management practices addressed in this paragraph.

20. A city shall not adopt or enforce an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment that imposes restrictions, qualifications, or requirements on developers, contractors, or subcontractors related to a developer's or contractor's employee compensation or training beyond what is expressly authorized by state law. A city shall not make receipt of any incentives, or the eligibility for such incentives, contingent upon compliance with any such restrictions, qualifications, or requirements, except as required under federal law.

21. A city shall not adopt or continue in effect any regulation, including in the form of an ordinance or resolution, that governs fuel-powered equipment as provided in [chapter 214A, subchapter IV](#).

22. A city with a civil service commission established under [chapter 400](#) shall not adopt, enforce, or otherwise administer an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment, or use any other means, to establish a board or other entity for the purpose of citizen review of the conduct of officers as defined under [section 80F.1, subsection 1](#), paragraph "f".

23. a. A city shall allow a minimum of one accessory dwelling unit on the same lot as a single family residence in accordance with the following conditions:

(1) An accessory dwelling unit shall comply with all applicable building regulations as defined in [chapter 103A](#).

(2) An accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed one thousand square feet or fifty percent of the size of the single family residence, whichever is larger.

(3) An accessory dwelling unit shall be prohibited or limited only to the extent that a state historic building code restriction, as adopted by a city in accordance with [section 103A.43, subsection 3](#), a deed restriction, or a rule of a common interest community, as defined in [section 499C.1](#), limits or prohibits the construction or use of an accessory dwelling unit. The imposition of an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment regulating accessory dwelling units that is more restrictive when applied to a common interest community than when applied to a single family residence is prohibited.

(4) If a manufactured home as defined in [section 435.1, subsection 3](#), or a mobile home as defined in [section 435.1, subsection 5](#), is used as an accessory dwelling unit, the manufactured home or mobile home shall be converted to real property by being placed on a permanent foundation and assessed for real estate taxes pursuant to [section 435.26](#).

b. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph "a" or by state law, a city shall not impose any of the following limitations or restrictions:

(1) Requirements related to the placement or appearance of an accessory dwelling unit that are more restrictive than those imposed on a single family residence including but not limited to the following: maximum building heights; minimum setback requirements; minimum lot sizes; minimum building frontages; maximum lot coverages; density requirements; and aesthetic or architectural standards or requirements. Additionally, a city shall not require an accessory dwelling unit to match the exterior design, roof pitch, or finishing materials of the single family residence.

(2) Regulations on the use of an accessory dwelling unit as a rental property that are more restrictive than those provided for in [subsections 9 and 16 of this section](#), [section 414.1, subsection 1](#), paragraph "e", and [chapter 562A](#).

(3) A requirement that the lot containing a single family residence and an accessory dwelling unit have additional parking beyond that required for a single family residence or payment of a fee in lieu of providing additional parking.

(4) Restrictions on the occupancy of either the single family residence or the accessory dwelling unit by any of the following manners: requiring the property owner to be a resident; requiring a familial, marital, or employment relationship to exist between the occupants of the single family residence and the occupants of the accessory dwelling unit; or restricting the occupancy of an accessory dwelling unit based on income or age.

(5) A requirement of new or separate utility lines between the accessory dwelling unit and public utility service connections. However, if full utility access that includes a separate metering system for billing purposes cannot be provided to the accessory dwelling unit, then the city can require new or separate utility lines.

(6) Imposition of a different city impact fee structure or development standard for an accessory dwelling unit than those used for the single family residence on the same lot.

(7) The requirement of improvements or repairs to public streets or sidewalks beyond those imposed on the single family residence on the same lot.

c. A city shall approve an accessory dwelling unit permit application that meets the requirements set forth in paragraph “a” and by state law without discretionary review or hearing and consistent with the time frame assigned to the approval of a single family residence. An accessory dwelling unit permit application shall not have a review timeline or schedule in excess of a city’s normal review schedule for a single family residence. If the city denies an accessory dwelling unit permit, the reason for denial shall be provided in writing to the applicant and include any remedy necessary to secure approval.

d. A city ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment regulating accessory dwelling units in a manner that conflicts with this subsection is void. Nothing in [this subsection](#) prohibits a city from adopting an ordinance, motion, resolution, or amendment that is more permissive than the requirements provided in [this subsection](#).

e. For the purposes of [this subsection](#):

(1) “*Accessory dwelling unit*” means an additional residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a single family residence that is either attached to or detached from the single family residence.

(2) “*Detached*” includes being part of an accessory structure such as a detached garage.

(3) “*Dwelling unit*” means the same as defined in [section 562A.6, subsection 3](#).

(4) “*Single family residence*” means the same as defined in [section 562A.6, subsection 15](#), except to the extent that a single family residence may share utility lines with the accessory dwelling unit if full utility access that includes a separate metering system for billing purposes can be provided to the accessory dwelling unit.

[R60, §1071 – 1073, 1095; C73, §482, 524; C97, §668, 680, 947; S13, §668; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §5663, 5714, 6720; C46, 50, §363.36, 366.1, 420.31; C54, 58, 62, §366.1, 368A.1(10), 420.31; C66, 71, 73, §366.1, 368.2, 368A.1(10), 420.31; C75, 77, 79, 81, §364.3]

83 Acts, ch 123, §171, 209; 84 Acts, ch 1219, §31; 85 Acts, ch 195, §44; 86 Acts, ch 1202, §1; 86 Acts, ch 1245, §1118; 94 Acts, ch 1074, §4; 98 Acts, ch 1144, §3; 99 Acts, ch 33, §1; 99 Acts, ch 153, §9; 99 Acts, ch 186, §2; 2000 Acts, ch 1083, §2; 2000 Acts, ch 1203, §20; 2001 Acts, ch 153, §10; 2003 Acts, ch 178, §23; 2004 Acts, ch 1111, §2; 2008 Acts, ch 1191, §61; 2009 Acts, ch 21, §5; 2009 Acts, ch 179, §229, 231; 2011 Acts, ch 100, §14, 15; 2013 Acts, ch 77, §34, 36; 2014 Acts, ch 1092, §87; 2016 Acts, ch 1120, §2; 2017 Acts, ch 20, §3 – 5; 2018 Acts, ch 1013, §2; 2018 Acts, ch 1172, §75; 2020 Acts, ch 1074, §4, 93; 2021 Acts, ch 44, §2; 2021 Acts, ch 49, §2, 3; 2021 Acts, ch 139, §30, 31; 2021 Acts, ch 179, §2, 3; 2022 Acts, ch 1134, §26; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1114, 2664; 2024 Acts, ch 1011, §2; 2024 Acts, ch 1109, §3, 4; 2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369, 425; 2025 Acts, ch 6, §22, 23; 2025 Acts, ch 26, §5; 2025 Acts, ch 38, §2; 2025 Acts, ch 82, §1, 12; 2025 Acts, ch 152, §19 – 21

Referred to in [§13.2](#), [331.427](#), [364.22](#), [388.10](#), [455B.192](#)

See Code editor’s note on simple harmonization at the beginning of this Code volume

Subsection 22 effective August 16, 2025; 2025 Acts, ch 82, §12

NEW subsections 20 – 23