

Spring Lake South

A Neighbor's Guide to Property Care

Shared reference points for keeping our neighborhood a place we're all proud of

Why this guide exists

Spring Lake South's Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (DCCR) has always asked each of us to care for our homes and lots. Article II, Section 13 states:

"It shall be the sole responsibility of each lot owner to take all steps necessary to prevent his/her lot and any dwelling, improvements and/or structures located thereon from becoming unsightly or unkempt or from falling into a state of disrepair so as to decrease the beauty of the Subdivision."

The DCCR does not define "unsightly" or "unkempt," and reasonable people can picture different things when they read those words. (Section 41 sets out the same responsibility in nearly identical terms, and Section 7 asks that all landscaping be "well maintained at all times.") This guide exists to close that gap. It does not create new rules or amend the DCCR in any way — it simply describes, in everyday terms, what well-cared-for property in Spring Lake South generally looks like, so that every homeowner and every board, now and in the future, is working from the same page.

Nearly every home here already meets or exceeds everything in this guide. If that's you — and it almost certainly is — nothing changes. Think of this document as a reference to pull out on the rare occasion a question comes up, not a checklist anyone will be graded against.

How to read this guide

Each section describes what we're collectively aiming for, along with reference points the board uses when a question arises. A few notes on spirit and intent:

- These are guideposts, not tripwires. A dandelion after a rainy week or a lawn that ran long during a vacation is normal life, not a problem. The guide is concerned with sustained, noticeable neglect — the kind that stands out to any passerby.
- Numbers are reference points, not measurements. Nobody will be walking the neighborhood with a ruler. Where a number appears (grass height, for example), it's there so "unkempt" means the same thing to everyone, rather than depending on who happens to be on the board.
- Life happens. Illness, travel, a death in the family, a contractor who won't call back — the board understands, and a quick heads-up is always welcome. The goal is a well-kept neighborhood, not a perfect one.

If something slips: how the board approaches it

The board's job is to be a good neighbor first and an enforcer a distant last. When a property care question comes up, here is what to expect:

- A friendly heads-up. The first contact is always informal — a note or a conversation, with no record kept. Most things end here, because most things are simply an oversight.
- Time to take care of it. Reasonable time is given to address the item — typically two to four weeks, longer for weather-dependent or contractor-dependent work. If circumstances make that hard, tell us; the board will work with you.
- A written reminder, only if needed. If an item remains unaddressed with no communication, the board will follow up in writing, referencing the specific item and this guide.
- Formal steps under the DCCR, only as a last resort. These exist because the DCCR requires the board to protect the subdivision for everyone, but they are genuinely intended never to be needed.

These reference points apply to every home in Spring Lake South equally — including every board member.

Questions and suggestions

This guide belongs to the neighborhood, and it will only get better with input from the people who live here. If a reference point seems off, if something is missing, or if you'd simply like to talk through a situation, reach out to any board member. The guide will be reviewed periodically and updated as the community's needs change.

Adopted by the Spring Lake South Board of Directors as an interpretive guide to DCCR Article II, Sections 7, 13, and 41. It creates no new rules and does not amend the DCCR.

Spring Lake South - Property care reference guide

Lawns

Topic	What we're all aiming for	Helpful reference points
Mowing	Lawns mowed regularly through the growing season; a height of 3–4 inches is healthiest for turf.	A lawn is generally considered overgrown once it exceeds about 6 inches.
Lawn weeds	Turf that is mostly grass. Occasional dandelions or clover are a fact of life in Michigan.	Weeds become a concern when they are prevalent across the lawn rather than scattered. Spring and fall treatments handle most issues.
Edges	Clean lines where grass meets driveways, walkways, and the road.	Grass or weeds spreading onto pavement is the usual sign edging is due.
Fall leaves	A reasonable effort to clear leaves through the fall season.	Heavy accumulations left to sit through winter are what the guide is meant to address — not every last leaf.

Tip: deep, infrequent watering (rather than light daily sprinkling) is the easiest way to avoid brown patches and lawn disease during dry stretches.

Beds, shrubs, and trees

Topic	What we're all aiming for	Helpful reference points
Garden beds	Beds that look tended — mostly free of weeds.	As a reference, beds are generally fine until weeds cover roughly a tenth of the bed or more.
Mulch	Mulched beds refreshed as needed.	A 2–3 inch layer keeps beds tidy and suppresses weeds; bare, weedy patches are the sign it's time.
Shrubs	Shrubs kept to a maintained shape and size.	A once-a-year trim is enough for most plantings.
Ground cover	Ground cover that stays within its intended area.	A trim once or twice a year keeps it from creeping into lawn or pavement.
Tree limbs	Branches clear of sidewalks and the road for safety.	Aim for at least 6 feet of clearance over walkways and 10-12 feet over the curb and roadway.

Home exterior

Topic	What we're all aiming for	Helpful reference points
Paint & siding	Exterior surfaces (including porches) in sound, presentable condition.	Touch-ups are worth scheduling once chipped, faded, or peeling areas become noticeable — roughly a tenth of a surface is a useful reference.
Dirt & algae	Siding and porches free of heavy buildup.	A seasonal wash usually takes care of the green film that shaded north sides tend to collect.
Driveways & walks	Pavement in good repair.	Significant cracks, spreading weeds in joints, and prominent stains are the usual candidates for attention.

Everyday and seasonal items

Topic	What we're all aiming for	Helpful reference points
Trash & recycling containers	Containers stored out of view from the street.	Setting them out the evening before pickup and bringing them in that day works for everyone's schedule.
Curbside items	Items for disposal or giveaway placed at the road only around pickup days.	For anything else, a quick post on the neighborhood page usually finds a taker within a day or two.
Holiday decorations	Decorations taken down within a reasonable time after the holiday.	Weather permitting, of course — Michigan winters get a vote on timing.
Toys & outdoor items	Yards and porches generally clear of stored items when not in use.	The garage is the natural home for bikes, toys, and equipment between uses.
Building & landscaping materials	Leftover materials, equipment, and project debris cleared once a project wraps up.	The DCCR asks that stored materials not sit out beyond roughly 30 days; sooner is always better.

A note on lawn ornaments, sculptures, and statues: unlike everything above, this one is an explicit DCCR restriction rather than a guideline. Article II, Section 13 requires prior written permission before any ornament, sculpture, or statue is placed on a lot. When in doubt, just ask the board first.