

Unfit for Human Habitation

The La Crosse River Marsh is a watershed and wetland. It is also a place that is unfit for human habitation.

Our City Ordinance has a lot to say about places that are unfit for human habitation. A simple search with keywords – unfit for human habitation – on our Municipal Code webpage ([Code of Ordinances | La Crosse, WI | Municode Library](#)) results in 24 hits that include

[Sec. 103-295. - Designation of unfit dwellings](#)

[Sec. 103-368. - Unfit for Human Habitation registration requirement](#)

[Sec. 103-328. - Minimum standards for basic equipment, lighting, ventilation, heating and electrical service](#)

and many others.

The regulation of places for safe and sanitary human dwelling in La Crosse is a prominent concern that is protected in our City regulations. This is a charge that our local government carries, and it is the responsibility of the Common Council to respond to ongoing threats to this concern, whenever necessary, by the establishment of new regulation and policy for the preservation of safe dwelling spaces.

When people build encampments, they are creating dwelling places that are in practical terms their homesteads. We have to admit that the structures of these homesteads are categorically different than the simple placement of a tent where someone can sleep overnight.

I believe that if we continue to allow people in La Crosse to build these homesteads that are unsafe and unsanitary, then we are condoning the use of dwellings that are unfit for human habitation. Our inaction in responding to this reality is in effect to condone it.

We as a Council are reneging on our responsibility to produce policy for local government that assures all who live within our City limits the security of safe dwelling space. We must stop permitting citizens of La Crosse to occupy dwelling places that are unfit for human habitation in 21st century America. It is a shame upon our City that we do not act to end the building of dwellings unfit for human habitation.