

1 [Administrative Code - COVID-19 Tenant Protections]

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3 **Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to prohibit landlords from evicting**  
4 **residential tenants for non-payment of rent that came due between July 1, 2021, and**  
5 **December 31, 2021, that was not paid due to the COVID-19 pandemic, provided the**  
6 **tenant has paid at least 25 percent of the rent owed; to prohibit landlords from**  
7 **imposing late fees, penalties, or similar charges on such tenants; and making findings**  
8 **as required by the California Tenant Protection Act of 2019.**

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10 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.  
11 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.  
12 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.  
13 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.  
14 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.  
15 **Asterisks (\* \* \* \*)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code  
16 subsections or parts of tables.

14

15 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

16

17 Section 1. Purpose and Findings.

18 (a) The City and County of San Francisco is facing an unprecedented public health  
19 and economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On February 25, 2020, the Mayor  
20 declared a state of emergency due to COVID-19 and the Board of Supervisors concurred in  
21 the emergency. On March 13, 2020, the Mayor adopted the first of a series of emergency  
22 orders to prevent the eviction of tenants who were unable to pay certain months' rent due to  
23 the financial impacts of COVID-19. The City later adopted an ordinance (Ordinance No. 93-  
24 20) to protect tenants from being evicted due to an inability to pay rent, if the tenant could not  
25 pay due to the financial impacts of COVID-19 and the missed rent payments originally came

1 due between March 16, 2020, and September 30, 2020. The City also created a COVID-19  
2 Rent Resolution and Relief Fund (Ordinance No. 227-20) to provide support to eligible  
3 landlords whose tenants are unable to pay rent due to the financial impacts of the COVID-19  
4 pandemic.

5 (b) At the state level, the Legislature adopted the Tenant, Homeowner, and Small  
6 Landlord Relief and Stabilization Act of 2020 (hereafter, "SB 91"), which enacted additional  
7 eviction protections for tenants who were unable to pay their rent due to COVID-19. But SB  
8 91 applies only to rent payments that originally came due between March 1, 2020 and June  
9 30, 2021, inclusive, and does not protect tenants from being evicted due to rent payments that  
10 originally came due on or after July 1, 2021.

11 (c) Regardless of whether the Legislature extends SB 91, there is an ongoing  
12 emergency in San Francisco. The pandemic appears to be slowly coming under control, but  
13 the end is not in sight, and the threat of mass evictions starting July 1, 2021 is a looming crisis  
14 for tenants who could be directly affected, as well as for the City as a whole. The City has a  
15 shortage of affordable rental housing, a significant percentage of its households are renters at  
16 risk of permanent displacement should they be forced to leave their current homes, and many  
17 potentially impacted renters are also essential workers who will be needed immediately if the  
18 pandemic takes a turn for the worse. The Board of Supervisors is considering an emergency  
19 ordinance to suspend evictions due to the non-payment of rent that originally comes due on or  
20 after July 1, 2021 (File No. 210602), but the emergency ordinance would last only 60 days  
21 unless renewed. The threat of mass evictions starting in July 2021 (or if applicable, 60 days  
22 after the adoption of the emergency ordinance) is a looming crisis for tenants who could be  
23 directly affected, as well as for the City as a whole. State and federal relief programs have  
24 been delayed and ~~and~~ only began processing San Francisco applications in May 2021, and  
25 these funding delays have in turn impacted the City's efforts to administer relief to landlords

1 and tenants. See, e.g., *Los Angeles Times*, “Cash to help California renters goes unspent  
2 with eviction protections expiring soon” (May 20, 2021), available at  
3 <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-05-20/california-renters-unspent-financial->  
4 [assistance-eviction-protections-expiring](https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-05-20/california-renters-unspent-financial-)); and *48 Hills*, “Not one dollar of state rent-relief  
5 money has arrived in SF” (May 13, 2021, available at <https://48hills.org/2021/05/not-one->  
6 [dollar-of-state-rent-relief-money-has-arrived-in-sf/](https://48hills.org/2021/05/not-one-)). A short-term extension of SB 91’s  
7 evictions protections through the end of the calendar year is necessary to help tenants during  
8 this transitional phase.

9 (d) The Board of Supervisors finds it is in the public interest to prevent tenant  
10 displacement in San Francisco due to COVID-19 to the maximum extent permitted by law.  
11 Pursuant to the City’s authority to regulate evictions, and consistent with SB 91, this ordinance  
12 applies to rent payments that originally came due between July 1, 2021 and December 31,  
13 2021, inclusive. Nothing in this ordinance shall affect or impair the application of any other  
14 City law or SB 91 with respect to rent payments that originally came due before July 1, 2021.

15 (e) This ordinance is intended to prevent residential tenants from being evicted due  
16 to having suffered an adverse financial impact arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic. As  
17 compared to the just cause protections of the California Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (“AB  
18 1482”), this ordinance further limits the permissible reasons for termination of a residential  
19 tenancy and provides additional tenant protections. The Board of Supervisors therefore finds  
20 that this ordinance is more protective of tenants than AB 1482, and intends that this ordinance  
21 shall apply rather than AB 1482.

22  
23 Section 2. The Administrative Code is hereby amended by revising Section 37.9, to  
24 read as follows:

25 **SEC. 37.9. EVICTIONS.**

1           Notwithstanding Section 37.3, this Section 37.9 shall apply as of August 24, 1980, to all  
2 landlords and tenants of rental units as defined in Section 37.2(r).

3           (a) A landlord shall not endeavor to recover possession of a rental unit unless:

4                   (1) The tenant:

5                           (A) Has failed to pay the rent to which the landlord is lawfully entitled  
6 under the oral or written agreement between the tenant and landlord:

7                                   \* \* \* \*

8                           (B) Habitually pays the rent late; or

9                           (C) Gives checks which are frequently returned because there are  
10 insufficient funds in the checking account;

11                           (D) Provided, however, that subsection (a)(1) shall not apply with  
12 respect to rent payments that initially became due during the time period when paragraph 2 of  
13 the Governor’s Executive Order No. N-28-20 (as said time period may be extended by the  
14 Governor from time to time) was in effect, and where the tenant’s failure to pay (i) arose out of  
15 a substantial decrease in household income (including, but not limited to, a substantial  
16 decrease in household income caused by layoffs or a reduction in the number of  
17 compensable hours of work, or substantial out-of-pocket expenses); (ii) that was caused by  
18 the COVID-19 pandemic, or by any local, state, or federal government response to COVID-19;  
19 and (iii) is documented. The types of documentation that a tenant may use to show an inability  
20 to pay due to COVID-19 may include, without limitation, bank statements, pay stubs,  
21 employment termination notices, proof of unemployment insurance claim filings, sworn  
22 affidavits, and completed forms prepared by the Rent Board. A tenant shall have the option,  
23 but shall not be required, to use third-party documentation such as a letter from an employer  
24 to show an inability to pay. The provisions of this subsection (a)(1)(D), being necessary for  
25 the welfare of the City and County of San Francisco and its residents, shall be liberally

1 construed to effectuate its purpose, which is to protect tenants from being evicted for missing  
2 rent payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nothing in this subsection (a)(1)(D) shall  
3 relieve a tenant of the obligation to pay rent, nor restrict a landlord's ability to recover rent due;  
4 ~~or~~

5 (E) Provided, further, that prior to January 1, 2022, subsection (a)(1) also shall  
6 not apply with respect to rent payments that initially became due between July 1, 2021 and December  
7 31, 2021, inclusive (hereafter, the "Transition Period"), if the tenant can show they were unable to pay  
8 the rent because of the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as set forth in subsection  
9 (a)(1)(D). Commencing January 1, 2022, subsection (a)(1) shall not apply with respect to the non-  
10 payment of rent that initially became due during the Transition Period if (i) on or before December 31,  
11 ~~2031~~2021, the tenant tenders one or more payments that, when taken together, are of an amount equal  
12 to or not less than 25% of the total rent that initially became due during the Transition Period; and (ii)  
13 the tenant can show they are unable to pay the remaining rent that initially became due during the  
14 Transition Period because of the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as set forth in  
15 subsection (a)(1)(D). Nothing in either subsection shall relieve a tenant of the obligation to pay rent,  
16 nor restrict a landlord's ability to recover rent due; or

17 (2) The tenant has violated a lawful obligation or covenant of tenancy other than  
18 the obligation to surrender possession upon proper notice or other than an obligation to pay a  
19 charge prohibited by Police Code Section 919.1, the violation was substantial, and the tenant  
20 fails to cure such violation after having received written notice thereof from the landlord.

21 \* \* \* \*

22 (E) Notwithstanding any lease provision to the contrary, a landlord may  
23 not impose late fees, penalties, interest, liquidated damages, or similar charges due to a  
24 tenant's non-payment of rent, if the tenant can demonstrate that it missed the rent payment  
25 due to the COVID-19 pandemic as set forth in subsection (a)(1)(D) and/or (a)(1)(E). A

1 landlord may not recover possession of the unit due to a tenant's failure to pay late such  
2 charges when subsection (a)(1)(D) and/or (a)(1)(E) ~~applies~~. The foregoing sentence shall not  
3 enlarge or diminish a landlord's rights with respect to such charges when subsection (a)(1)(D) and/or (a)(1)(E) ~~does~~ not apply; or

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5 \* \* \* \*

6  
7 Section 3. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or word  
8 of this ordinance, or any application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held to be  
9 invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision  
10 shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions or applications of the ordinance. The  
11 Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this ordinance and each and  
12 every section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, and word not declared invalid or  
13 unconstitutional without regard to whether any other portion of this ordinance or application  
14 thereof would be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional.

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16 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after  
17 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the  
18 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board  
19 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

20  
21 Section 5. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors  
22 intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles,  
23 numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal  
24 Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment

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