

## CHAPTER 9

### EVICCTIONS

#### **9000. Scope of Regulations**

These regulations are designed to implement and clarify the just cause eviction requirements of §1806 of the Santa Monica City Charter. The authority for promulgation of these regulations derives from §1803(g) of the Santa Monica City Charter.

#### **9001. Notice of Eviction**

Any notice served upon a tenant to terminate a tenancy pursuant to §1806 shall contain a specific statement of the reasons for the termination with specific facts to permit a determination of the date, place, witnesses and circumstances concerning the reason for the eviction.

#### **9002. Evictions Under §1806(a)(8)**

(a) Definition of Landlord for Purposes of this Regulation.

- (1) Only a natural person who has at least a 50 percent ownership interest in a property shall be considered a landlord.
- (2) No corporation, partnership, limited partnership, trust company, as defined in California Financial Code, Section 107, or association shall be considered a landlord.

(b) Number of Allowable Evictions Under §1806(a)(8).

A "landlord" as defined in §9002(a)(1) may evict a tenant from a controlled residential rental unit for the use and occupancy of himself or herself or for one of the relatives enumerated in subsection (c) for one unit only on a given property.

- (1) A tenant evicted from a unit for owner or relative occupancy who subsequently re-occupies the unit may not again be evicted from that unit for owner or relative occupancy by that same owner for four years from the date of the first notice to vacate.
- (2) A tenant who has prevailed in a trial on the merits in an eviction for owner or relative occupancy may not have his or her tenancy terminated by that owner for owner or relative occupancy for four years from the date of judgment.
- (3) The landlord or enumerated relative must intend to occupy the unit as his or her primary place of residence.
- (4) If any landlord as defined in §9002(a)(1) or enumerated relative already occupies one unit on a property, no eviction pursuant to §1806(a)(8) may take place.
- (5) No eviction for this purpose is permitted if a vacancy exists on the property and the vacant unit is comparable to the unit for which eviction is sought.

(c) Persons for Whom a Tenant May Be Evicted.

A landlord may evict a tenant from a controlled rental unit if the landlord seeks to recover possession in good faith for the use and occupancy of herself or himself, or her or his children, parents, grandparents, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law.

(d) "Good Faith" Requirements.

This subsection illustrates, but does not exhaust, the factors to be considered in determining whether the landlord is evicting a tenant in good faith under §1806(a)(8).

- (1) A landlord is not acting in good faith if the landlord or enumerated relative for whom a tenant has been evicted does not intend to move into the unit within 60 days of the date that the tenant vacates the unit and does not intend to thereafter occupy the rental unit for a minimum period of two (2) years as his/her principal place of residence, unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- (2) Where proof is presented that an ownership interest was granted for the primary purpose of qualifying a person as a landlord for purposes of eviction under §1806(a)(8), the landlord is not proceeding in good faith.
- (3) A landlord who has served an eviction notice on a tenant under §1806(a)(8) is not proceeding in good faith if the landlord has other vacant rental units in the property where the tenant currently resides or in any other residential rental property s/he owns in Santa Monica or the greater Los Angeles area, from the date of the notice to quit until the date of judgment of unlawful detainer and does not offer each of the available vacant units to the tenant being evicted. A vacant unit shall include any unit for which the landlord has received notice that a tenant intends to vacate and any unit which is being refurbished or repaired and is not currently rented.
- (4) If the unit from which the tenant was evicted pursuant to §1806(a)(8) becomes vacant within two (2) years, the tenant shall have the right of first refusal to re-occupy the unit at the rent in effect when the notice terminating tenancy was served. The landlord shall give the tenant written notice of the vacant unit and the tenant's right to re-occupy it and shall give the tenant a reasonable time to accept or reject the unit. If the landlord fails to give the tenant such notice, the landlord may assert applicable extenuating circumstances as a defense in any subsequent proceeding to enforce this section.
- (5) The court in making a determination regarding the presence or absence of good faith in an eviction should consider, along with any other factors deemed relevant: whether the tenant has recently reported violations of the Charter Amendment to the Board; whether the landlord has vacant rental units in other residential rental properties in the greater Los Angeles area; whether the landlord has previously attempted to evict these or other tenants; whether vacancies existed prior to service of the notice terminating tenancy, but at a time when the intent to evict was being formed; whether the tenant being evicted is paying a low rent in relation to other units on the property; whether the eviction is an attempt to move the tenant into a higher priced rental unit; and any additional relevant information.

(e) Eviction Notice Requirements Under §1806(a)(8).

In an eviction pursuant to §1806(a)(8), the notice of termination of tenancy shall contain the name of the present tenant, the monthly rent currently charged, the name, relationship to landlord, and current home address of the person proposed to occupy the apartment. If the unit is a condominium or stock cooperative unit, the notice must include a copy of the removal permit, the vested rights declaration, or a final tract map recorded on or prior to April 10, 1979. The notice of termination of tenancy shall be filed with the Rent Control Board within three (3) days of service upon the tenant.

- (f) If the individual specified in the notice terminating tenancy fails to occupy the unit as his or her principal place of residence within sixty (60) days after the tenant vacates, the landlord shall both:
- (i) Offer the unit to the tenant who vacated it.

- (ii) Pay to said tenant all reasonable expenses incurred in moving from and/or back to the unit. Such payment shall include, but not be limited to, reasonable payments to moving companies for local moves, utility deposits, storage costs, fees to agencies or individuals who provide services to locate apartments, and security deposits. If the landlord has already paid the tenant under the Relocation Ordinance to vacate, the amount of that payment shall be deducted from the sum required in this regulation.
- (g) If a vacancy occurs in any unit on the property within one year of the date that the tenant vacates his or her unit, the landlord shall offer the vacant unit to the tenant who was displaced.
- (h) **Comparable Vacant Units.** A unit is comparable under section 1806(a)(8)(ii) if the square footage of the two units varies by no more than 15% and they contain the same number of bedrooms. Unit location and unit amenities shall not be considered in a determination of comparability unless the landlord demonstrates that the location of the tenant-occupied unit or an amenity found only in the tenant-occupied unit is required due to a documented medical need of the landlord or relative intending to move into the unit.
- (i) The remedies provided by this regulation shall be in addition to other remedies provided in the last paragraph of §1806 or by other statutory or decisional law.
- (j) A landlord shall not recover possession of a unit pursuant to Section 1806(a)(8) where there is a comparable unit occupied by a tenant who moved onto the property more recently than the tenant from whom the landlord seeks to recover possession, notwithstanding the existence of a rental agreement for a specific term between the landlord and the more-recent tenant. For purposes of this provision, “comparable unit” shall mean a unit of the same number of bedrooms, with square footage that varies no more than fifteen (15%) from the unit for which the landlord is attempting to recover possession. Unit location and unit amenities shall not be considered in a determination of comparability unless the landlord demonstrates that the location of the longer-term, tenant-occupied unit or an amenity found only in the longer-term, tenant-occupied unit is required due to a documented medical need of the landlord or relative intending to move into the unit.

[9002(j) Amended 6/1/89; Effective 6/10/89]  
 [9002(b) Adopted 4/29/93; Effective 6/17/93]  
 [9002(h), (j) Amended 4/12/01; Effective 4/21/01]  
 [9002(b), (d), (e), (h), (j) Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]  
 [9002(b)(3) Repealed and Renumbered 8/3/06; Effective 8/12/06]  
 [9002(d), (f) Amended 4/13/23; Effective 4/27/23]

**9003. Retaliatory Eviction**

If a landlord retaliates against a tenant because of the exercise by the tenant of his/her rights under the Charter Amendment, the eviction or attempted eviction shall be unlawful.

**9004. Post-Eviction Use Must Be for Residential Purposes Only**

A landlord may evict a tenant under §1806 only if the use and occupancy of the rental unit is to be for residential purposes, unless the landlord has obtained a removal permit in accordance with §1803(t) of the Rent Control Charter Amendment, or a claim of vested rights pursuant to Chapter 6 of these regulations, or the landlord has filed the requisite documents with the Rent Control Board initiating the procedure for withdrawing rental units from rent or lease under Government Code §7060, et seq. and Chapter 16 of Board regulations.

[9004 Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]

**9005. Eviction for Purpose of Removal of Rental Unit**

- (a) A landlord may not evict a tenant pursuant to subdivision (a)(9) of §1806 until the landlord has secured either a removal permit pursuant to §1803(t) of the Rent Control Charter Amendment, or a claim of vested rights pursuant to Chapter 6 of these regulations, or a non-residential rental exemption.
- (b) A landlord seeking to remove a controlled rental unit from the rental housing market who has not complied with subsection (a) above may not constructively evict a tenant by diminishing housing services, diminishing the tenant's rights under the rental agreement, or interfering with the use and enjoyment of the rented premises.
- (c) A landlord seeking to evict a tenant under subdivision (a)(9) of §1806, shall accompany the eviction notice with a copy of the Board's decision either granting a claim of vested rights under Chapter 6 of these regulations, granting a removal permit under §1803(t) of the Rent Control Charter Amendment.

[9005(a), (c) Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]

**9006. Exemption for Three Unit or Less Owner-Occupancy Required in Order to Evict For Reasons Other Than Those Listed in §1806**

A landlord may not evict a tenant for reasons other than those set forth in §1806 of the Charter Amendment unless the landlord has applied for and received an exemption for owner-occupancy by the Board.

**9007. Evictions Under Subsection 1806(a)(2) of the Rent Control Charter Amendment**

- (a) No tenancy may be terminated for violation of a covenant of a rental agreement, other than the covenant to pay the lawful rent, unless that covenant was a result of an express agreement between the landlord and the tenant. An express agreement must be in writing, signed by both parties, and the tenant must have knowingly consented to the change. A landlord may not unilaterally change the terms of tenancy under Civil Code §827 and then evict the tenant for violation of the added covenant unless the tenant has agreed in writing to the additional covenant.
- (b) As used in section 1806(a)(2) of the Rent Control Charter Amendment, regarding termination of tenancy for violation of an obligation or covenant of a tenancy, an obligation or covenant of a tenancy is defined as a material and substantial term of the tenancy, violation of which the landlord has not waived either expressly or impliedly through conduct or which the landlord is not estopped from asserting.

[9007 Amended 2/11/99; Effective 2/26/99]

[9007(b) Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]

**9008. Date of Application**

This section shall apply to all eviction proceedings in progress as of the effective date of this revised Chapter, and to all eviction proceedings commenced thereafter. Governing Board of Rialto Unified School District v. Mann, 18 Cal. 3d 819, 135 Cal. Rptr. 526, 558 P.2d 1 (1977).

**9009. Evictions Pursuant to 1806(a)(1) and (a)(2) - Earthquake Emergency**

- (a) Numerous residential rent controlled buildings and units in the City of Santa Monica have been substantially damaged due to the January 17, 1994 Northridge Earthquake and its aftershocks. These buildings and units have been posted by the City's building inspectors with notices of uninhabitability prohibiting entry ("red tags") or limiting entry ("yellow tags"). Red- and yellow-tagged buildings may not be occupied.
- (b) The Board finds that the determination by the City that a unit is not habitable by virtue of a red or yellow tag is prima facie evidence of its uninhabitability pursuant to Civil Code Section 1941, et seq.
- (c) Therefore, any tenant of a rental unit that has been deemed uninhabitable by the City of Santa Monica by virtue of a red or yellow tag shall not be evicted for failure to pay rent due on or after January 17, 1994, pursuant to Sections 1806(a)(1) and (a)(2) of the Charter (as it relates to any obligation or covenant to pay rent) during any period in which the red or yellow tag remains in effect.

[9009 Adopted 1/27/94; Effective 2/16/94]

[9009(c) Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]

**9010. No Evictions for Violating Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 4.44.040 Which Prohibits Smoking in Multi-Unit Common Areas**

- (a) Santa Monica Municipal Code ("SMMC") section 4.44.040 regulates smoking in common areas of multi-unit residential properties by providing a private right of action against an individual who smokes in a common area. Multi-unit common area is defined in SMMC section 4.44.010 as: "Any indoor or outdoor area that is multi-unit residential property (including rental properties and condominiums) that is accessible to and usable by the occupant of more than one unit, including but not limited to halls, walkways, lobbies, laundry rooms, common cooking areas, outdoor dining areas, patios, play areas, swimming pools, gardens, and parking lots."
- (b) SMMC section 4.44.040(a) states as the sole remedy a private right of action. Violators are not subject to criminal penalties.
- (c) SMMC section 4.44.040(c)(1) expressly states that "Nothing in this section may be used as grounds to terminate a tenancy. Nothing in this section shall render smoking in Multi-Unit Common Areas a violation of law pursuant to any rental housing agreement."
- (d) No violation of SMMC section 4.44.040 shall be used as grounds to terminate a tenancy under section 1806.
- (e) This regulation does not affect existing grounds for eviction as set forth in section 1806.

[9010 Adopted 4/23/09; Effective 5/1/09]

**9011. Buyout Offers; Disclosure of Tenant Rights**

- (a) ***Written notice required before offer is made.*** Under Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 4.57.020(b), a landlord must inform a tenant of certain rights before offering any form of compensation in exchange for a tenant's agreement to voluntarily vacate a controlled rental unit (a "buyout offer"). The information must be given in writing to each tenant in a unit with respect to which a buyout offer is made, on a form approved by the Administrator or his or her designee. The landlord must retain a copy of the form, along with a record of when it was given to the tenant, for

at least five years after it is signed as provided for by paragraph (6), below. The disclosures set forth in the form must include:

- (1) *The right to refuse.* The form must state that the tenant may refuse any buyout offer, and may not be retaliated against for refusing it;
  - (2) *The right to consult a lawyer.* The form must state that the tenant may consult with a lawyer of his or her choosing before deciding whether to accept a buyout offer;
  - (3) *A 30-day right to rescind.* The form must state that the tenant may rescind his or her acceptance of the landlord's buyout offer at any time during the thirty days after the tenant's acceptance. The landlord may not negate this right by requiring the tenant, as a condition of any buyout, to give the landlord written notice of intent to vacate. Any such notice given by the tenant in connection with a buyout is void as a violation of this regulation;
  - (4) *Offer within 6 months of buyout refusal.* The form must state that offering payments to a tenant to vacate within six months after the tenant has notified the landlord in writing that the tenant does not wish to enter into a buyout agreement or buyout negotiations may constitute bad faith harassment of the tenant under Section 4.56.020(f) of the Santa Monica Municipal Code;
  - (5) *Compare to other offers.* The form must contain a statement that the tenant may visit the Rent Board for information about other buyout agreements in rent controlled rental units in the tenant's neighborhood and other relevant information;
  - (6) *Landlord and tenant signatures.* The form must include a place for the landlord to sign, together with the date of the landlord's signature, verifying that he or she gave the tenant the required notice; and a place for the tenant to sign, together with the date of the tenant's signature, verifying that he or she received the notice;
  - (7) *Relocation fees.* The form must include the amount of relocation fees required under Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 4.36.040;
  - (8) *Minimum Amount.* The form must state the minimum buyout amount and that the tenant is entitled to at least that amount;
  - (9) Any other information deemed necessary by the Administrator or his or her designee to effectuate the purpose of Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 4.57.020(b).
- (b) Under Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 4.57.020, subdivision (e), a landlord must file with the City Clerk a copy of any buyout agreement no sooner than thirty-one days, and no later than 60 days, after the agreement has been signed by all parties. The Board will accept these filed agreements from the City Clerk, subject to the following restrictions:
- (1) The agreements must be maintained by the Board's legal staff in a file that is separate from any other file.
  - (2) All information included in the agreements by which an individual might reasonably be identified ("personally-identifying information"), including without limitation an individual's name, unit number, or specific street address, must be maintained as confidential.
  - (3) The Board shall collect data from the filed agreements—including without limitation the compensation paid as consideration for the agreement and the neighborhood of the affected unit—and shall make that data public; but only to the extent that no personally-identifying information is revealed.

- (c) **Enforcement.** This section's purpose is merely to facilitate landlords' compliance with existing city law with respect to the disclosure of tenant rights and filing of buyout agreements. The Board and its staff will not enforce those substantive requirements, but will refer violations to the City Attorney.

[9011 Adopted 3/12/15; Effective 3/18/15]

[9011 Amended 4/9/15; Effective 4/16/15]

[9011 Amended 3/14/24; Effective 3/21/24]

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[Chapter 9 Adopted 9/6/79; Effective 9/18/79]

[Chapter 9 Amended 9/23/82; Effective 9/30/82] – Complete Reworking of Chapter 9, All Sections Changed

[Chapter 9 Amended 4/13/89; Effective 4/23/89] – Reworking of Chapter 9, Only Sections 9000 & 9001 Were Unchanged

[9002(j) Amended 6/1/89; Effective 6/10/89]

[9002(b) Adopted 4/29/93; Effective 6/17/93]

[9009 Adopted 1/27/94; Effective 2/16/94]

[9007 Amended 2/11/99; Effective 2/26/99]

[9002(h), (j) Amended 4/12/01; Effective 4/21/01]

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[9004 Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]

[9005(a), (c) Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]

[9007(b) Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]

[9009(c) Amended 5/6/04; Effective 6/3/04]

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[9002(d), (f) Amended 4/13/23; Effective 4/27/23]

[9011 Amended 3/14/24; Effective 3/21/24]

NOTE: On 9/30/82 and 4/23/89, the Rent Control Board revised all sections (except for 9000 & 9001 on 4/23/89) of Chapter 9. For a complete history of Chapter 9 revisions prior to 4/23/89, please contact the Rent Control Board.