



Contra Costa County

County Administrator's Office • 651 Pine Street • Martinez, CA 94553 • www.contracosta.ca.gov

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Susan Shiu, PIO, 925-313-1183

Susan.Shiu@contracostatv.org

Board of Supervisors Passes Eviction Protection and Rent Freeze Ordinance

Protections Apply in all 19 Cities and Unincorporated Areas of Contra Costa

(Martinez, CA) – The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors used its emergency powers under state law to pass a comprehensive eviction protection and temporary rent freeze urgency ordinance for all residential and commercial properties in the County during a special Board meeting on Tuesday, April 21, 2020. The vote was unanimous.

The urgency ordinance temporarily prohibits evictions of residential and commercial real property tenants in Contra Costa County impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and establishes a moratorium on rent increases. This law applies to properties in all 19 cities in the County and in all unincorporated areas. To the extent that a city has adopted a law on the same subject matter, then its provisions would apply in that city.

“My colleagues and I on the Board of Supervisors are deeply aware of the economic impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has on our residents, including the fear of eviction brought on by job losses,” said Supervisor Candace Andersen, Board Chair. “We hope the passage of this ordinance to protect renters against eviction and the freeze on rent increases will give residents and businesses critical time and support as we respond to the emergency and the changing situation.”

“At the same time, we also recognize the impact on landlords. This is not a forgiveness of the rent owed, but a longer period to pay it,” said Supervisor Andersen. “We hope that property owners and their tenants will work together to reach fair and equitable ways to have the owed rent paid.”

Protections granted to residential and commercial renters include:

- Prohibition on Evictions Due to Unpaid Rent - A property owner cannot evict a tenant for failure to pay rent if a tenant demonstrates loss of income or out-of-pocket medical expenses related to COVID-19. This prohibition lasts through May 31, 2020 unless extended by the Board of Supervisors based on the continuation of the local emergency.
- Ban on No-Fault Evictions - A property owner cannot evict a tenant for any "no-fault" reason except to protect the health and safety of the owner or another tenant, or to

allow the owner or their immediate family to move into the residential unit. This ban lasts through May 31, 2020 unless extended by the Board of Supervisors.

- Moratorium on Rent Increases - Temporary freeze on rent increases through May 31, 2020 (this date may be extended if the local emergency lasts longer). State law prevents this freeze from applying to residences built after 1995; single family homes, townhouses/condos unless owned by a corporation, real estate investment trust, or LLC; owner-occupied duplexes; hotels; care facilities for adults/elderly; school dorms; group housing. State law also prevents this freeze from applying to leases entered before April 21, 2020 that have prescheduled rent increases.
- Grace Period to Pay Back Rent - Tenants who demonstrate loss of income or out-of-pocket medical expenses related to COVID-19 have 120 days after May 31, 2020 (or any extension of this emergency law) to pay past due rent. This does not relieve a tenant of their obligation to pay rent.
- No Late Fees - Property owner may not charge or collect late fees for unpaid rent from a tenant who demonstrates loss of income or out-of-pocket medical expenses related to COVID-19. This ban on late fees extends until 120 days after May 31, 2020 (or any extension of this emergency law).
- Retroactivity of Eviction Protections - These protections apply to eviction notices and lawsuits served or filed after March 15, 2020.
- Tenant's Right to Recover Damages - An owner who violates this new law by attempting to evict a tenant or retaliating against the tenant can face a civil action by the tenant for injunctive relief and/or money damages.

Read the full document [Ordinance No. 2020-14 \(PDF\)](#), which is also available on the county website.

For COVID-19 information and resources, visit Contra Costa County at www.contracosta.ca.gov and Contra Costa Health Services at <https://cchealth.org/coronavirus>. If you have questions, contact our Call Center 1-844-729-8410, open daily from 8 am to 5 pm (available in English and Spanish). For assistance after hours in multiple languages, please call 211 or 800-833-2900 or text HOPE to 20121. For the latest updates, follow @CCCounty and @CoCoHealth on Twitter.

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