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HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE - HSC

DIVISION 13. HOUSING [17000 - 19997] (*Division 13 enacted by Stats. 1939, Ch. 60.*)

PART 1.5. REGULATION OF BUILDINGS USED FOR HUMAN HABITATION [17910 - 17998.3] (*Part 1.5 added by Stats. 1961, Ch. 1844.*)

CHAPTER 5. Administration and Enforcement [17960 - 17992] (*Chapter 5 added by Stats. 1961, Ch. 1844.*)

ARTICLE 2.5. Tenant Relocation Assistance [17975 - 17975.10] (*Article 2.5 added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1.*)

17975. (a) Any tenant who is displaced or subject to displacement from a residential rental unit as a result of an order to vacate or an order requiring the vacation of a residential unit by a local enforcement agency as a result of a violation so extensive and of such a nature that the immediate health and safety of the residents is endangered, shall be entitled to receive relocation benefits from the owner as specified in this article. The local enforcement agency shall determine the eligibility of tenants for benefits pursuant to this article.

(b) For purposes of this section, "residential rental unit" includes a unit rented by a tenant for human habitation, regardless of the zoning designation or approved uses of the building, that is located in a building or portion thereof that is deemed or found to be a substandard building.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 487, Sec. 3. (SB 1465) Effective January 1, 2025.)

17975.1. (a) The relocation benefits required by this article shall be paid by the owner or designated agent to the tenant within 10 days after the date that the order to vacate is first mailed to the owner and posted on the premises, or at least 20 days prior to the vacation date set forth in the order to vacate, whichever occurs later.

(b) If there are fewer than 10 days between the first posting and mailing of the order to vacate and the vacation date, the relocation benefits shall be paid by the owner or designated agent to the tenant within 24 hours after the notice is posted and mailed. The local enforcement agency shall attempt to provide telephonic or written notice to the owner to notify the owner that the benefits are payable immediately. Failure to provide the notice as specified in this section shall not relieve the owner of any obligations imposed by this article.

(c) If a tenant is entitled to relocation benefits pursuant to Section 17975, the local enforcement agency shall provide either telephonic or written notice to the tenant of his or her entitlement to the benefits. Written notice may be satisfied by posting a written notice on the premises stating that tenants may be entitled to relocation benefits.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.2. The relocation payment shall be made available by the owner or designated agent to the tenant in each residential unit and shall be a sum equal to two months of the established fair market rent for the area as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development pursuant to Section 1437f of Title 42 of the United States Code. In addition, the relocation payment shall include an amount, as determined by the local enforcement agency, sufficient for utility service deposits. The relocation benefits shall be paid by the owner or designated agent in addition to the return, as required by law, of any security deposits held by the owner. The relocation benefits shall be payable on a per residential unit basis.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.3. (a) Any owner or designated agent who does not make timely payment as specified in Section 17975.1 shall be liable to the tenant for an amount equal to 1¹/₂ times the relocation benefits payable pursuant to Section 17975.2.

(b) Subdivision (a) shall not apply when relocation benefits are payable fewer than 10 days after the date the order to vacate is first mailed and posted on the premises, if the owner or designated agent makes the payment no later than 10 days after the order is first mailed and posted.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.4. (a) No relocation benefits pursuant to this article shall be payable to any tenant who has caused or substantially contributed to the condition giving rise to the order to vacate, as determined by the local enforcement agency, nor shall any relocation benefits be payable to a tenant if any guest or invitee of the tenant has caused or substantially contributed to the condition giving rise to the order to vacate, as determined by the local enforcement agency. The local enforcement agency shall make the determination whether a tenant, tenant's guest, or invitee caused or substantially contributed to the condition, giving rise to the order to vacate at the same time that the order to vacate the tenants is made.

(b) An owner or designated agent shall not be liable for relocation benefits if the local enforcement agency determines that the unit or structure became unsafe or hazardous as the result of a fire, flood, earthquake, or other event beyond the control of the owner or the designated agent and the owner or designated agent did not cause or contribute to the condition.

(c) In the situations described in subdivisions (a) and (b), the tenants of units within a multiunit structure who did not cause or substantially contribute to the uninhabitable condition shall be eligible for relocation benefits from the local enforcement agency that elects at its discretion to pay relocation payments in accordance with Section 17975.2 to those tenants.

(d) An owner or designated agent shall not be liable to make any payment as prescribed by this section if the local enforcement agency does not provide for an appeals process for the order to pay relocation benefits.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.5. (a) If the owner or designated agent fails, neglects, or refuses to pay relocation payments to a displaced tenant or a tenant subject to displacement, except in the situations described in Section 17975.4, the local enforcement agency may advance relocation payments as specified in Section 17975.2. If the local enforcement agency, pursuant to locally adopted policies, offers to advance relocation payments in accordance with Section 17975.2, the local enforcement agency shall be entitled to recover from the owner any amount paid to a tenant pursuant to this section except payments made pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 17975.4. The local enforcement agency shall also be entitled to recover from the owner or designated agent an additional amount equal to the sum of one-half the amount so paid, but not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), as a penalty for failure to make timely payment to the displaced tenant, and the local enforcement agency's actual costs, including direct and indirect costs, of administering the provision of benefits to the displaced tenant.

(b) Any amounts paid by the local enforcement agency, except pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 17975.4, and any applicable penalties and actual costs may also be placed as a lien against the property by the local enforcement agency by recording the lien in the county recorder's office of the county in which the real property is located.

(c) Any local enforcement agency that elects, at its own option pursuant to subdivision (a), to advance relocation payments to displaced tenants when the owner or designated agent fails, neglects, or refuses to pay relocation payments to displaced tenants, shall prior to instituting any action to collect from the owner or designated agent relocation benefits paid pursuant to this section, or to impose a lien therefor, send to the owner or designated agent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, at the owner's address as shown on the last equalized assessment roll, an itemized accounting of all benefits paid by the local enforcement agency to the owner's tenants, and any penalties or costs the local enforcement agency is seeking to recover as authorized pursuant to subdivision (a). If the owner or designated agent contends that not all of the benefits are chargeable to the owner or designated agent because the recipients were not displaced tenants, no benefits were payable pursuant to Section 17975.4, or on other grounds, the owner or designated agent shall submit a written appeal to the director of the local enforcement agency within 20 days after receipt by the owner or designated agent of the itemized accounting. The director, or the director's designee, shall hold an administrative hearing for the purpose of determining the amount of benefits paid that are chargeable to the owner or designated agent, and any penalties or costs the local enforcement agency may recover pursuant to subdivision (a). The local enforcement agency shall provide an administrative appeal process for any appeal of a decision of the director or the director's designee. The final decision of the local appellate body shall be subject to Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure. If the owner fails to obtain a more favorable decision than that set forth in the itemized accounting, the owner or designated agent shall be liable to the local enforcement agency for the costs of the administrative hearing and appeal, not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000). The failure to receive the itemized accounting shall not relieve the owner of any obligation to the city or county.

(d) Nothing in this article shall be construed to require the local enforcement agency to pay any relocation benefits to any tenant, or assume any obligation, requirement, or duty of the owner pursuant to this article.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.6. Notwithstanding subdivision (b) of Section 17975.1 and subdivision (a) of Section 17975.5, if there are fewer than 10 days between the first posting and mailing of the order to vacate and the vacation date, and if the local enforcement agency advances relocation benefits to any tenants, prior to the expiration of the 10-day period, the owner shall not be required to reimburse the local enforcement agency for a charge identified on the itemized accounting described in subdivision (c) of Section 17975.5 if the owner contests the charge within 30 days after the itemized accounting is mailed to the owner or designated agent pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 17975.5. The owner or designated agent shall pay the charge that was the subject of the appeal pursuant to

subdivision (c) of Section 17975.5 within 30 days after an adverse decision by the director of the local enforcement agency on the appeal is mailed to the owner.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.7. The remedies under this article are cumulative and in addition to any other remedies available under federal, state, or local law.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.8. Any order by a local agency that requires a tenant's displacement and is issued to an owner, designated agent, or tenant, shall be accompanied by a summary of the provisions of this article. Failure to provide a summary shall not relieve any person of the obligations imposed by this article.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.9. While it is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this article to provide an expedient means by which to provide relocation funds to tenants, nothing in this article shall be construed to limit the rights available to owners, designated agents, or tenants under any other provision of law. Furthermore, nothing in this article shall be construed to deprive an owner of procedural due process rights guaranteed by law, including, but not limited to, a right to file a judicial action against a local enforcement agency that has failed to proceed in a manner required by law.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)

17975.10. When seeking reimbursement under an optional local program intended to advance relocation payments to displaced tenants when the owner fails, neglects, or refuses to pay relocation payments to displaced tenants pursuant to the provisions of this article, the local code enforcement agency shall first explore the potential of using funds from any available federally funded program that provides tenant relocation assistance in cases of local code enforcement activities.

(Added by Stats. 2004, Ch. 473, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2005.)