



RENTER PROTECTION ORDINANCE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These FAQs apply to Ordinance NO. _____ approved by the Capitola City Council on March 26th, 2020.

GENERAL:

- **Who does this ordinance apply to?**

This ordinance applies to residential and commercial tenants who are unable to pay their rent due to a reduction of income, loss of wages, or substantial out of pocket medical expenses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **What is the goal of this ordinance?**

1) To protect the health, safety, and welfare of our community; 2) to provide stability to renters during this time of unprecedented economic challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic; and 3) to avoid further displacement, homelessness, loss of jobs, and loss of businesses.

- **Is this ordinance retroactive?**

No. This ordinance will apply to any eviction resulting from economic losses or medical expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic, effective immediately upon its adoption on March 26th, 2020.

- **How long is this ordinance in effect?**

This ordinance will be in effect until May 31, 2020, unless the City extends or rescinds the ordinance.

TENANTS:

- **Will tenants still be responsible for any unpaid rents?**

Yes. This ordinance does NOT relieve tenants of their rental obligations. Renters should contribute the amount that they are able each month and will be responsible for paying any back rent due to their landlords. Back rent must be paid within ninety (90) days after the ordinance terminates.

- **How and when should tenants notify their landlord if unable to pay their rent?**

Tenants are encouraged to notify their landlord as soon as they know they will be unable to pay their rent. Tenants are REQUIRED to inform their landlord in writing before the day rent is due and must provide documentation to their landlords showing:

- Substantial loss of income from a) job loss; b) layoffs; c) reduction in the number of compensable hours work; d) business closure; e) decrease in business income; f) need to miss work to care for a child or family member; g) similar-caused loss of income that resulting from the coronavirus; or h) substantial out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the coronavirus.

- **What resources are available to tenants whose income has been reduced or lost as a result of the COVID-19?**

- The California Department of Labor and Workforce Development Coronavirus Resources website includes information on: paid family leave, disability insurance, unemployment insurance, paid sick leave, and worker's compensation. See the chart available at the bottom of the webpage detailing the different programs available and how to use them.
- PG&E has initiated a moratorium on service disconnections for non-payment for both residential and commercial customers, effective immediately and until further notice.
- Santa Cruz Municipal Water Utility is offering a hardship declaration form to utility customers whose ability to pay their bills have been disrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Utility service will not be discontinued for non-payment. Customers are asked to pay what they can.
- Soquel Creek Water District has a COVID-19 webpage which explains water service will not be terminated for nonpayment of customer bills due to financial difficulty directly resulting from the current COVID-19 crisis. In addition, customers who are facing these hardships and contact them at 831-475-8500 option 3 to make payment arrangements, will not be charged late fees.
- The City of Capitola maintains an Emergency Housing Assistance Program through the Community Actions Board (CAB). The program is designed to prevent very low income Capitola households from becoming homeless due to an unexpected financial event (such as job loss, sudden disability, or major medical expenses), that prevents them from making their regular monthly rent or mortgage payment. The program provides one-time emergency grants for up to four months of rent or mortgage payments. Contact CAB at 831-743-2147
- The City of Capitola also has a Security Deposit Assistance Program with the Santa Cruz County Housing Authority for income qualified tenants. This is an eviction prevention program and offers rental/mortgage assistance. Contact the Housing Authority at 831-454-9455.
- Santa Cruz County's Small Business Development Center has a Covid-19 small business survival guide and guidance on apply for loans and filling out forms. (831) 479-6136

LANDLORDS:

- **Can landlords still evict a tenant for non-COVID related issues?**

Yes. The goal of the ordinance is to provide stability for renters who may be experiencing economic hardship as result of COVID-19. Landlords are encouraged to delay all evictions, but may still terminate a lease for causes unrelated to COVID-19. Landlords are also encouraged to provide additional notice to tenants.

- **What resources are available to landlords who depend on rental income to pay their mortgages?**

Landlords are encouraged to reach out to their lenders immediately following notification from their tenants. The Governor's Executive Order, N-28-20, issued March 16, 2020, requests banks and financial institutions to halt foreclosures and related evictions resulting from missed mortgage payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.