



# What Rental Tenants Need To Know About The San Francisco Department of Public Health's Code Enforcement Inspection



**Department of Public Health  
Environmental Health Section**  
1390 Market Street, Suite 230  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 252-3800  
[www.sfdph.org/eh](http://www.sfdph.org/eh)



## **Complaint and Inspection:**

In San Francisco, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is responsible for the enforcement of the Health Code; it will respond to inspect the residence, whether it is a privately-owned unit or a public housing unit, following a complaint about poor hygiene or substandard housing condition. The Department also does pro-active focused inspections where needed.

## **Notices and Orders:**

**1. Notice to Abate (NTA):** When a landlord is cited for the violation of the Health Code by the DPH, he or she will be given a NTA that outlines the results of the investigation and the landlord's responsibilities. The NTA also instructs landlord to correct the violation within the time period provided. A copy of the Notice may be posted in a conspicuous place on the residence.

**2. Emergency Order:** DPH can issue an Emergency Order at any time for all or part of the work that needs to be done within 48 hours if conditions pose an immediate threat to the health of occupants, one example is the presence of lead hazards causing an imminent and substantial threat to the health of a lead-poisoned child.

**3. Order to Vacate:** The DPH may order occupants to vacate if a nuisance that might harm the occupants' health is discovered. A copy of the Order is required to be given to the landlord and the affected tenant(s) and posted in conspicuous places on the residence. The order specifies the time within which the residence is to be vacated and advises tenants that they may be eligible for assistance in accordance with the San Francisco Administrative Code. Without written permission of the City, the residence cannot be reoccupied.

**4. Notice to Pay Relocation Benefits to Affected Tenants:** The DPH will also issue the landlord this notice if the NTA and the Order to Vacate are given.

## **5. Notice of Hearing and Action by the DPH Director:**

If the nuisance is not abated and removed, the DPH Director shall either: (1) hold a Hearing for all the persons interested to show cause why the residence

should not be declared a nuisance and to express their other concerns or (2) abate and remove the nuisance as soon as practicable or (3) offer relocation services to the affected tenants. The landlord shall be indebted to the City for the costs, charges and fees incurred as a result of any action.

## **Retaliation is illegal:**

It is illegal for the landlord to retaliate against his or her tenants who assert their rights for safe and habitable homes. Retaliation can include:

- Unlawful rent increases;
- Attempts to unlawfully evict tenants; and
- Reductions in housing services.

## **Health Department's Code Enforcement Programs:**

1390 Market St., Suite 210, San Francisco, CA 94102

### **• Children's Environmental Health**

**Promotion:** Inspects homes for lead hazards.

☎: (415) 554-8930 Website: [www.sfdph.org/cehp](http://www.sfdph.org/cehp)

### **• Environmental Health Code Enforcement Program:**

Investigates complaints of public health hazards, other Health Code violations, and neglected private properties when needed.

☎: (415) 252-3805

Website: [www.sfdph.org/eh/hn/index\\_PubServices.htm](http://www.sfdph.org/eh/hn/index_PubServices.htm)

### **• Residential Hotels Program:**

Investigates complaints of unsanitary conditions in SRO housing.

☎: (415) 252-3866

Website: [www.sfdph.org/eh/hn/index\\_ResHotels.htm](http://www.sfdph.org/eh/hn/index_ResHotels.htm)

## **City's Other Code Enforcement Program for Housing**

### **• Department of Building Inspection (DBI)'s Housing Inspection Services:**

1660 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94102

☎: (415) 558-6220

Enforces Housing Code for establishing and keeping minimum maintenance standards for existing residential buildings to safeguard life, limb, health, property, and public welfare of the tenants.

**Free informational brochures printed in English, Chinese, and Spanish to explain Building and Housing Codes are available in DBI's offices and on its website ([www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi))**