

## ***Avoid Criminal Prosecution and Civil Penalties***

Landlords, agents, managers and owners face criminal prosecution and civil sanctions for maintaining public nuisances on rental property, failure to properly maintain rental property, or knowingly permit illegal activity to occur on their property. This pamphlet is intended to provide information to assist you so that problems never reach such a level.

### **Criminal Prosecutions**

Violations of the California Penal Code and Health & Safety Code on Public Nuisance and Housing, as well as Sacramento County Code on Nuisance, Building and Zoning violations are **Misdemeanors**. This means you could be sentenced up to 6 months of county jail, fined and placed on probation. Some violations are infractions.

### **Civil and Administrative Penalties**

In addition to criminal penalties, you could be liable for a civil penalty up to \$25,000. In addition to criminal prosecution and civil penalties, administrative penalties may also be imposed. The County may take action to abate the nuisance and assess the cost of the abatement against the property owner and/or the property as a lien.

## ***Who is Responsible?***

You are. Landlords, agents, managers, and owners are responsible for maintaining safe, clean, and sanitary housing. While tenants may also have responsibilities to maintain the property, this will *not* relieve you of the responsibility *and* the criminal, civil, and administrative consequences for your failure to act.

## ***Examples of Dangerous or Substandard Buildings***

### ***Dilapidated and Unsanitary Conditions***

- Inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, decay, damage, faulty construction or arrangement
- Inadequate light, air or sanitation facilities
- Rodents or other vectors
- Faulty electrical wiring or gas connections
- Inadequate or unsanitary sewage or plumbing facilities

### ***Attractive Nuisances for Minors***

- Abandoned wells, shafts, basements, or excavations
- Abandoned refrigerators and motor vehicles
- Structurally unsound fences or structures
- Lumber, trash, fences, debris, or vegetation, which may be a hazard for curious children

### ***Dangerous Conditions***

- Building that has been damaged by fire, earthquake, wind, flood, or other causes affecting the structural integrity of the building
- Dangerous accumulations of rubbish, waste paper, boxes, shavings or other highly flammable materials
- Obstructions to or on fire escapes, stairs, passageways, doors or windows which may interfere with the operations of the fire department or exit for occupants in case of a fire

**Owners are legally required to maintain their property to the standards set forth in the Sacramento County Codes as well as other provisions of federal, state, and local law which further the protection of life, limb, health, property, safety and welfare of the general public and occupants of residential buildings.**

## ***Examples of Public Nuisances on Property***

### ***Public nuisances***

- Are criminal offenses
- Reduce property value
- Interfere with the safety and quality of life for neighborhood residents

### ***Visual Blight***

It is illegal to:

- Keep and store personal property which constitutes visual blight within public view
- A few examples of such personal property are:
  - abandoned, wrecked, or dismantled automobiles
  - unseaworthy boats or vessels
  - automotive parts and equipment
  - appliances and furniture
  - containers and packing materials
  - rubbish and debris
  - scrap metal, wood, building materials
  - dirt, sand, gravel, concrete or other similar materials
  - graffiti

### ***Illegal Activities***

It is illegal to knowingly permit:

- Any illegal activity to occur on rental property, which is detrimental to the life, health, safety and welfare of the residents, neighbors or public.

*For more detailed information on Nuisance, Substandard and Dangerous Buildings, and Zoning: see Sacramento County Code Title 16; Zoning Code Title III Article 2; Calif. Code of Regulations, Title 24; California Penal Code Title X; and Health & Safety Code (17920 et al).*

**TEN THINGS YOU CAN DO TO  
MAINTAIN YOUR PROPERTY AND  
KEEP ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OUT**

1. Register for the Landlord Training Seminar “The Essentials of Fair Housing” by calling the Rental Housing Association (RHA) at 916.920.1120. The seminar is free.
2. Respond immediately to law enforcement, code enforcement, building officials and fire inspectors’ inquiries, contacts or investigations.
3. Work with law enforcement to rid your property of illegal activities.
4. Report any criminal activity occurring on your rental property.
5. Conduct routine inspections of your property.
6. Quickly perform necessary repairs.
7. Provide information and incentives for your tenants on how they need to maintain safe, clean, and sanitary conditions on your property.
8. Engage in effective tenant screening.
9. Start and/or continue to have an open and friendly relationship with your tenant(s). This simple step will not only foster good will, but also keep you informed of your rental property.
10. Be involved ... Stay involved ... Maintain a SAFE environment for your tenant(s) and your property by developing a Neighborhood Watch.

**Important Contacts:**

Call the Rental Housing Association (RHA) to register for the next Landlord Property Management class 916.920.1120.

Sacramento County Community Hazards & Nuisance Complaint Intake Center call 3-1-1.

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## What Every Landlord and Property Owner Should Know



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In Cooperation and Partnership with  
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