

## FACT SHEET

**WHAT:** On March 17, 2020, the City Council adopted a city law prohibiting evictions for tenants of residential and commercial properties for those unable to pay rent due to financial impacts related to COVID-19.

**WHY:** The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unanticipated financial hardships for many residents and businesses. To provide temporary financial relief, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an Executive Order authorizing cities to prohibit evictions of qualifying residential and commercial tenants. The city law was adopted by the City Council to make the Governor's order applicable in Buena Park, and it is intended to allow tenants to avoid displacement during these difficult times.

**TERM / DURATION:** The city law became effective on March 17, 2020. It is scheduled to remain in effect until May 31, 2020, which is the deadline set by the Governor's Executive Order. If the Governor extends this deadline, the city law will automatically extend unless terminated by the City Council.

**HOW IT WORKS:** Landlords may not evict a tenant for non-payment of rent, if the tenant is unable to pay rent due to financial impacts related to COVID-19. No late fees or penalties may be added by landlords for late payments.

**NOT A WAIVER OF RENT:** The city law does not change or eliminate a tenant's responsibility to pay rent, and subject to future direction from the Governor, tenants may have limited time to repay "back rents" once the city law expires. Tenants having the ability to continue to pay rent are encouraged to do so.

**QUALIFYING TENANTS:** Residential (including apartment tenants) or commercial tenants that experience a substantial decrease in household or business income as a result of: becoming sick or caring for a family member that is sick with COVID-19; a loss of employment or reduction in wages / business income because of COVID-19; complying with a "stay at home" or "self-quarantine" order from the government or a health professional; extraordinary out-of-pocket medical expenses; or, child care needs arising from school closures.



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**UTILITIES:** The city law does not protect tenants failing to make utility (gas, electric, internet, cable, satellite) payments. Tenants' individual circumstances vary significantly based on lease terms, but in general: if utility charges are included in a tenant's rent, the city law likely applies. In other cases, tenants should contact their individual utility providers. As to water service, the City Council has directed: (1) the waiver of all penalties for past-due charges during the local emergency, and; (2) that no water service be discontinued for lack of payment until at least June 1.

Southern California Edison – 1-800-655-4555

So Cal Gas – 1-800-427-2200

**WHAT ABOUT HOMEOWNERS:** In addition to federally-backed mortgages, more than 200 banks and credit unions (including four of the five largest in the country) have announced 90-day waivers of foreclosures and mortgage payments to those affected by COVID-19. Please contact your individual lender for more information.

**TENANT-LANDLORD ISSUES:** If you are experiencing issues as either a Buena Park landlord or tenant, please reach out to Fair Housing Foundation at 1-800-446-3247 or [info@fhfca.org](mailto:info@fhfca.org). Fair Housing is the City's housing advocate, who can provide information specific to your situation.

