



Issue 2023.2

“Communication leads to community.”

Landlord Newsletter

Keep up With Changes to Smoke Detector Laws for Rentals

As laws change to improve the safety of rentals and well-being of renters, it is important to stay current with updates to the relevant laws. Measures that protect the health and safety of tenants and those around them are required components not only for continued participation as a Section 8 landlord, but to ensure your property investment is protected. One of the most frequent health and safety infractions we see is removed or non-operational smoke detectors. With recent changes to requirements around smoke detectors, we want to make sure our participating landlords are well aware of the current regulations.

- Smoke alarms must be installed in every bedroom.
- Smoke alarms must also be installed in hallways outside the bedrooms.
- Every level of a home must have a smoke alarm regardless of whether there is a bedroom on that floor.
- Carbon monoxide detectors must also be on every level.
- Any room with a gas appliance (e.g. heater or fireplace) must also have a carbon monoxide detector.
- Carbon monoxide detectors may be hard wired, plug-in, or battery operated, but must have a backup battery if they are hard wired or plug-in.
- Battery-only type smoke detectors must have a 10-year battery installed, which cannot be removed or replaced.
- Hard wired smoke detectors can have either a 9-volt or 10-year backup battery.
- Landlords are responsible for testing alarms annually and maintaining smoke alarms in working condition.
- Tenants have a duty to notify owner/landlord if the smoke alarm becomes inoperable (this should be written into the lease).

Use the checklist above to do your own inspection and verify your rentals are in compliance with state law.

AB 1482 (“Tenant Protection Act”) Limits Allowed Rent Increases for Renters

For the majority of rental properties in California, landlords cannot increase rent more than 10% total, or 5% plus the cost of living index (whichever number is lower) over a 12-month period of time. This limit is true for tenants assisted with vouchers or those paying full market rents. Be sure to check the current CPI rate when requesting a rent increase. While there are a few exceptions, the majority of rentals in California are covered by AB 1482.

***Our mission statement:** The mission of the Housing Authority of the County of Humboldt is to assist low-income families with safe, decent, and affordable housing opportunities as they strive to achieve self-sufficiency and improve the quality of their lives. The Housing Authority is committed to operating in an efficient, ethical, and professional manner, and treating all clients with dignity and respect. The Housing Authority will create and maintain partnerships with its clients and appropriate community agencies in order to accomplish this mission.*

More Important Reminders about California Tenant Law

With the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), which protects California residents from housing discrimination under various categories, renters are protected from discrimination based on some sources of income. Renters using a federal, state, or local housing subsidy cannot be denied housing based on the source of income that helps them to afford their rent. Under this law, landlords can no longer state “no Section 8 allowed”, as this would be considered source of income discrimination. One exemption from this requirement is homeowners who live in their home and rent out a room within the unit. All others including property management companies, private landlords, and anyone else renting residential property in California must comply.

Beyond disallowing any notices or advertising that denies acceptance of Section 8, there are other practices that are prohibited. Please review the list below to familiarize yourself with some of these disallowed practices:

- Stating a preference for tenants with specific sources of income
- Charging a higher deposit or rent, refusing to accept an application, or treating a tenant or applicant differently in any other way because they have a housing subsidy
- Refusing to enter into or renew a lease because the tenant has Section 8 or other rental assistance
- Terminating a tenancy because the existing tenant has received and plans to use a Section 8 housing voucher or any other housing assistance/subsidy
- Requiring any additional conditions in the lease agreement that aren't required of unassisted tenants (other than those required by the specific subsidy program)
- Restricting tenant access to any services or facilities at the property (e.g. community space, workout room, etc.) because the tenant has rental assistance
- Refusing to make repairs as needed because the tenant has rental assistance

Essentially, don't treat tenants/applicants any different than an unassisted applicant/tenant solely based on the fact that they are receiving rental assistance. You are still allowed and encouraged to screen any applicants for tenancy based on lawful screening criteria. While the housing authority runs credit and criminal background checks to ensure applicants meet our program criteria, these are typical checks that a landlord would do for applicants too.

General & Contact Information

Our lobby is open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Business hours are weekly Monday-Thursday, 9:00-4:30, and Fridays alternating 9:00-4:30 and closed.

Please call our main line during business hours at (707) 443-4583 x210 if you need assistance.

Address: 735 West Everding Street
Eureka, CA 95503

We have a payment drop box by our front door for easy submission of any amounts payable.

Call our main line at (707) 443-4583, then:

Caseworkers are based on tenant last name:

Begins with A-Gr..... x216

Begins with Gu-Pr..... x227

Begins with Pu-Z..... x233

Mandee for EHV program x231

Stephanie for accounting..... x221

Housing Advocate Jennifer..... x217

Front desk for all other questions regarding Housing Authority services..... x210

Switch to Direct Deposit!

Cut out the wasted paper and trips to the bank and receive your payment directly in your chosen account. For further information, Contact Stephanie at 707.443.4583 x234 or email stephanieg@eurekahumboldtha.org.

Free Rental Listings on AffordableHousing.com

Get the word out for free regarding your upcoming or currently available listings. Simply register and then add your listing(s). Then applicants will find you quickly and easily.

Thank You!

Thank you to our landlords who joined us for our second annual Landlord Appreciation Luncheon, that was held July 20, 2023 at Eureka's beautiful Wharfinger building. We had time to network, hear updates from Legal Services of Northern California and Humboldt Association of Realtors, and share program updates from the Housing Authority. We appreciate our landlords' support of the voucher programs and look forward to continuing to serve Humboldt County in 2024. If you missed the 2023 luncheon, hopefully we'll see you at the next one! If you have available rentals or questions about our programs, please contact Jennifer Toole, Housing Advocate, at jtoole@eurekahumboldtha.org.