

Kimball, Tirey & St. John LLP

Legal Alert

Inglewood – Rent Control, Just Cause Eviction Policies and Relocation Assistance Program – Interim Ordinance No. 19-07

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On March 5, 2019, the City of Inglewood adopted a temporary moratorium on rent increases to 5% each year for multi-family residential properties built on or before February 1, 1995. The ordinance also prohibited landlords from terminating tenancies except for “just cause,” such as nonpayment of rent and criminal or drug-related activity. The ordinance took effect as of March 5, 2019 and it was extended until June 18, 2019. A copy of the temporary rent control ordinance can be found at: <https://www.cityofinglewood.org/DocumentCenter/View/12930/Urgency-Interim-Ordinance-Rent-Control>.

On April 16, 2019, the City of Inglewood agreed to pursue a permanent rent control ordinance. While such ordinance has yet to be adopted, the City proposed that rent increases would be capped at 8% each year, but if a tenant vacates in response to a rent increase exceeding 4% landlords would be required to provide relocation assistance to the tenant. The City further proposed that only one rental increase of any amount will be allowed in a 12-month period.

What units are exempt from rent control?

Under the City’s current ordinance, landlords with rental units in Inglewood may not increase rent thereof by more than 5% and terminate a tenancy without “just cause” unless they are:

1. Rental units that are owned by government;
2. Rental units that are rent controlled, regulated, or subsidized by any governmental unit, agency, or authority. Units that are governmentally subsidized are exempt only if federal, state, or administrative law or regulations specifically exempt the unit from rent control.
3. Rental units in motels, hotels, inns, tourist houses, rooming houses, and boarding houses if the units are not occupied by the same tenant for more than thirty days;
4. Rental units built after February 1, 1995;
5. Single-family homes, condominiums, and other rental units that are separately alienable from the title of any other dwelling;
6. Commercial units;
7. Housing accommodation in any hospital, convent, monastery, extended care facility, convalescent home, nonprofit home for the aged, or dormitory operated by an educational institution; and
8. Rental units exempt from rent control pursuant to the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act or any other applicable state or federal law.

What is “just cause” under the ordinance?

The temporary ordinance specifically states “just cause” evictions shall include nonpayment of rent; criminal activity; and/or illegal drug use. The temporary ordinance is silent on whether failure to comply with a lease term constitutes “just cause.” Therefore, a notice to perform covenant or quit

may not be sufficient to support an unlawful detainer case without alleging substantial and/or repeated breaches.

If a landlord fails to terminate tenancies for “just cause,” then the tenant may allege the landlord’s failure to comply as an affirmative defense in an eviction case. The tenant may also sue for wrongful eviction for actual damages, including damages for emotional distress. If a tenant prevails in the wrongful eviction action, they may be entitled to an award for attorney’s fees and costs.

Under the permanent rent control measure, the City proposed to expand the definition of “just cause” to include nuisance, waste, and breach of lease.

Does the ordinance regulate initial rent for which a unit is rented?

No, the ordinance does not regulate initial rent for which a unit is rented.

Additional Resources:

- [Inglewood Municipal Code](#)
- [City of Inglewood website](#)
- For a consultation about Inglewood’s laws, contact KTS attorney Tiffany Truong at (800) 577-4587 or by email at tiffany.truong@kts-law.com. This service is provided on an hourly fee basis.

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