



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM

No. AM 630-2025

Meeting Date: August 26, 2025

From: Assembly Members Johnson and Baldwin Day

Subject: AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTERS 15.05 AND 15.10 TO REQUIRE RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS PROVIDE TENANTS FINANCIAL RELOCATION ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING ISSUANCE OF A NOTICE TO VACATE AND AMENDING TITLE 8 TO ENACT A NEW SECTION 8.30.200 AND TO MAKE FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH AN ENFORCEMENT ORDER OR A NOTICE TO VACATE PUNISHABLE AS MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES.

Last year, as reported by the Anchorage Daily News, tenants at Romig Court faced a severe and extended heating outage, forcing them to spend more than two months without dependable heat during Anchorage's freezing winter (Attached). The ordeal sparked serious concerns about habitability and safety, as well as scrutiny over how the California-based property owner was handling building maintenance and repairs.

This proposed ordinance is designed to improve housing safety, strengthen enforcement of municipal housing codes, and protect tenants displaced due to unsafe or uninhabitable rental conditions. It introduces mandatory relocation assistance for tenants who are displaced due to life safety issues, establishes criminal penalties for noncompliance with enforcement orders and notices to vacate, and clarifies the Municipality's authority to inspect and enforce housing standards.

Summary of Key Changes:

Helping Tenants When They're Forced to Move (AMC 15.05.060 – Amended)

Section 3 amends the notice of violation procedures of Title 15 to require residential property owners provide financial assistance to their tenants when their rental property is found to be unsafe and the Municipality must order tenants to vacate the property for their own safety. Specifically:

- The owner must pay twice the tenant's monthly rent, plus return any deposits and prepaid rent.
- These payments must be made within 7 days of the notice to vacate.

In the event the owner fails to make the required payments, this amendment provides the Municipality authority to step in, cover the costs through a to be established Relocation Assistance Fund, and then recover these funds from the property owner, adding daily penalties if the owner fails to repay the costs within 60 days.

Inspection Authority and Procedure (AMC 15.10.160 – Amended)

Section 5 updates the procedures and authorities under which the Municipality can conduct inspections of these residential properties:

- Code Enforcement officials can inspect properties when there's a complaint or reasonable cause to believe there is a violation.
- If the property is occupied, officials are authorized to request entry during reasonable hours of the day.
- If denied entry, Code Enforcement can get an administrative search warrant.
- To the extent possible, the Municipality will keep the identity of complainants confidential.

Criminal Enforcement (AMC 8.30.200 – New Section)

Sections 1, 2, and 4 enact and implement a new section of code making it a misdemeanor (a criminal offense) for the following acts:

- A landlord ignores an official order to fix, vacate, or demolish a property.
- A landlord doesn't provide the required relocation assistance.
- A tenant refuses to leave after being ordered to vacate.
- Anyone removes a posted notice from a building, without authority to do so.

Even businesses owning or managing the property can be held responsible if their employees break these rules.

In summary, the proposed ordinance: provides financial support to displaced tenants and ensures they are informed of their rights, encourages timely repairs and compliance with housing codes, expands the Municipality's ability to enforce housing standards through both civil and criminal remedies, and balances the need for enforcement with protections for property owners and tenants alike.

No direct labor costs are expected as a result of this ordinance. As part of the 2025 budget cycle, the Assembly allocated \$75,000 to establish a Relocation Assistance Fund. The Administration expects this amount to be sufficient to support tenants in situations where a landlord fails to provide relocation assistance within seven calendar days of receiving a notice to vacate. The ordinance also authorizes the Municipality to seek reimbursement of these costs, impose civil penalties if needed, and take legal action to recover funds – allowing the program to sustain itself over time.

We request your support for the ordinance.

Prepared by: Assembly Counsel's Office

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