

Section 8 Tenant Newsletter

IN THE ISSUE

STAY INFORMED

Section 8 strongly encourages you to be informed about any updates on policies and procedures that may impact your Section 8 assistance. Provide your e-mail address to your Advisor.

This will give you a faster way to be informed about any HACLA news. Your e-mail address will be maintained as confidential information, it will be used for Section 8 communications only and it will not be disclosed to third parties.

ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS

All reexaminations of family income and composition are conducted through the mail or online.

At this time Section 8 is not conducting in-person annual review appointments.

Price Gouging is Illegal During State of Emergency

On January 7th, California Gov. Newsom declared a State of Emergency in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties due to the extreme wind and fire conditions. During a State of Emergency, price gouging above 10% is temporarily prohibited for the next 30 days. This means that businesses cannot increase the price of food, repairs, construction, housing, emergency and medical supplies, and gasoline more than 10%. This also includes rent increases, as well as hikes in hotel and motel prices for evacuees who are seeking emergency housing. Rental property owners across the state should note that price-gouging protections apply wherever displacement increases demand for housing. Price gouging is subject to criminal prosecution, and can result in one year in jail and/or a fine of up to \$10,000. The rent cap protections under the current state of emergency for the Palisades Fire is in effect through February 6, 2025, unless further extended by Governor Newsom or Mayor Bass.

Dial 3-1-1 to report illegally hiked rents and prices, or email

att.pricegougingtaskforce@lacity.org

Source: <https://housing.lacity.gov/emergency-resources-available-for-those-impacted-by-the-wildfires>

How LA County Protects Renters from Price Gouging After the Wildfires

The LA County Board of Supervisors declared local emergencies because of the Eaton Fire and Palisades Fires. This means, in most circumstances, businesses cannot increase the price of goods and services by more than ten percent (10%) for consumers impacted by an emergency. But did you know this also applies to hotel and motel rooms, rental housing, animal boarding, and short-term rentals?

After a declared state of emergency, renters are protected from rental housing price gouging and unfair rent hikes. Both state law and local regulations prohibit rental housing prices from increasing by more than 10% during these difficult times.

When Are Price Gouging Rules In Effect?

If the Federal, State or Local Government (including the President, Governor, Mayor, or County Board of Supervisors) declares a state of emergency or a local emergency, businesses owners and landlords cannot increase prices by more than ten percent (10%) for consumers impacted by an emergency for the following items:

- Rent
- Gasoline
- Short Term Rentals
- Animal Boarding facilities
- Food
- Construction
- Hotels and Motels
- & other lodgings
- Repairs
- Storage Facilities
- Rental Housing
- Emergency & medical supplies

How Long Do Protections Last?

Price gouging protections will remain in effect for 30 days after a declared emergency and can be renewed. Price-gouging protections for any contractor-related services are in effect for 180 days.

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What is Rental Housing Price Gouging?

After a declared emergency, renters are protected from rental housing price gouging and unfair rent hikes. Both state law (Penal Code Section 396) and the County Code (Chapter 8.09) prohibit rental housing price increases exceeding 10% during a declared state of emergency.

Rent Increase Rules

- **New and Existing Rentals:** Landlords cannot increase rental housing prices by more than 10% of the previously charged price or advertised price following a declaration of emergency. For rental housing not previously rented or advertised, the price cannot exceed 160% of the fair market value established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- **Daily Rentals:** For daily rental housing like VRBO or Airbnb listings, the daily price cannot be increased by more than 10% following the declaration of an emergency. If these properties were previously rented on a daily basis and switch to full-time or monthly rentals after the declaration, the rental price cannot exceed 160% of the fair market value established by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

State, County, and local tenant protections remain in place and in some instances may be more restrictive/protective than applicable price gouging protections. Contact DCBA to learn more.

Prohibited Practices

A landlord cannot justify an unlawful price increase by offering additional services like gardening, cleaning, or utilities, or by offering a shorter lease term. Landlords cannot charge a higher rate simply because an insurance company is willing to pay it. The law considers it a separate misdemeanor for a landlord to evict a tenant and re-rent the property at a rate prohibited by anti-price gouging statutes.

How to Report Price Gouging

If you believe you have been improperly overcharged for goods, services, or housing, keep your records and receipts. Here's how to file a price gouging complaint:

Online: online complaint reporting tool <https://dcbawp.3diengage.com/> Phone: 800-593-8222,
Email: complaints@dcbalacounty.gov

Current or prospective renters who believe they have been victims of rental housing price gouging should also report it to the California Attorney General at oag.ca.gov/report.

For more information about price gouging and other common consumer issues after a disaster, visit: dcbalacounty.gov/disasterready , Source: https://dcbalacounty.gov/pricegouging/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

New Business System

To ensure that HACLA is using technology platforms to improve customer service and better assist participant families as required by HACLA's Vision Plan Strategy No. 5, Section 8 will transition to a new business system. **Your housing assistance will not be impacted by this transition.**

HACLA will conduct annual reexaminations online using RentCafe. This free online service will allow you to complete your annual reexamination 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from any smartphone, mobile device, or computer with Internet access. You will need to register on RentCafe to complete your annual reexamination. Only the head of household needs to register. **There is no action required from you at this moment.** You will receive an notice from the Housing Authority with additional information, including due dates, when it is time for you to start your online reexamination.

Customer Contact Center (CCC)

CCC has a single telephone number **(833) HACLA-4-U or (833) 422-5248** for use by all applicant and participant families and the general public.

The Housing Authority will be closed on January 20th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Tenant Newsletter: <https://www.hacla.org/en/about-section-8/participant-information/participant-newsletters>