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# THE SYSTEMATIC CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM (SCEP) Rent Stabilization Bulletin

## WHAT IS THE SYSTEMATIC CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM?

The Mayor adopted the Systematic Code Enforcement Program (SCEP) program on July 1, 1998 (Ordinance No. 172,109, effective 7/15/98), based on recommendations of a Blue Ribbon Citizen's Committee to develop a routine inspection program of the City's rental housing by the adoption and enforcement of standards, regulations and procedures to remedy the existence and prevent the development or creation of dangerous, substandard or unsanitary and deficient residential buildings and dwelling units. Thus, owners of all dwelling units, efficiency dwelling units, guest rooms, and suites, as defined in LAMC, Section 12.03, and duplexes in the City of Los Angeles, rented or offered for rent for living or dwelling purposes, and the land, buildings and structures appurtenant thereto, are subject to inspection at least once every four years.

This program, through systematic inspections, guarantees that those who reside in rental units in Los Angeles have a safe, livable space, which meets requirements set forth in the California Health and Safety Code and the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

## HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Under SCEP, the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) inspects the City's residential rental properties with two (2) or more dwelling units once every four years to ensure compliance with State and local health and safety codes. When violations of the codes are found, LAHD issues orders to property owners, which generally provide a compliance period of 30 days to complete the needed repairs. After the compliance period has expired, LAHD conducts a re-inspection to verify compliance with orders issued. If all the violations are found to be corrected, the case will be closed. If violations are found to be remaining, the property is referred to a General Manager's Hearing. It may be possible for two extensions of up to 30 days each to be granted at the property owner's request, depending on the progress made and nature of remaining violations.

The goal of the SCEP program is to ensure conformance with State and local health and safety codes, to preserve the City's rental housing stock, and to protect the health, safety and welfare of their occupants and of the public.

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## Questions & Answers

### *What is the fee for a habitability inspection?*

Effective January 1, 2022 the SCEP fee is \$67.94 annually per rental unit. A landlord may pass through 50% of the annual SCEP fee per rental unit as a monthly surcharge of \$2.83, provided that the landlord has paid the SCEP fee to LAHD and given the tenant an advance written thirty-day notice. (See RAC Guideline 370.00, Pass Through of the SCEP Fee.)

### *What happens if deficiencies are not corrected within a specified time?*

If violations are not corrected within a specific time, the property may be subjected to other enforcement actions, including recommendations that the property be placed in the Rent Escrow Account Program (REAP), or that civil or criminal prosecution be initiated. In order to enforce habitability requirements in residential rental units subject to the Housing Codes of the City, the SCEP now includes the REAP program, LAMC 162.00, and Rent Reduction Program (RRP) established by the RSO.

### *What conditions may be considered deficiencies?*

Deficient conditions include but are not limited to:

- Lack of proper maintenance or the existence of unsanitary conditions in a building or on its premises;
- Deteriorated or defective interior walls, ceilings, floors or floor coverings;
- Deteriorated or defective exterior walls or roof coverings, wood trim or fascia; or lack of weatherproofing;
- Broken or missing windows, window screens or foundation vent screens;
- Lack of quick-release mechanisms on security bars over sleeping room windows;
- Defective, missing or improperly installed smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors or other life safety items;
- Lack of required light, ventilation, required minimum floor area, or required ceiling height in a habitable room;
- Defective or missing required light fixtures, electrical outlets, switches, etc., or exposed/unsafe electrical wiring;
- Deteriorated, leaking, missing or improperly installed plumbing faucets, valves, fixtures or other such items;



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- Lack of required hot water, water heater strapping, positive vent connections, combustion air/or properly installed temperature-pressure relief valve, with its drain extended to an approved location;
- Lack of required heat due to missing, defective or improperly installed heating unit;
- Any unapproved use, unapproved occupancy, additions, alterations, or improvements made without permits and approval from the City of Los Angeles Department of Building & Safety.

### ***When will SCEP inspections be conducted?***

Inspections are conducted approximately once every four years. All property owners and tenants are notified of the inspection at least 30 days prior to the scheduled inspection date via mailed and/or posted notice.

### ***What is the Complaint-Based Inspection Program?***

LAHD's Complaint-Based Inspection Program provides a system for tenants or concerned citizens to file habitability complaints regarding multi-family residential rental units.

### ***How does the Complaint-Based Inspection Program work?***

Tenants who live in a multi-family rental unit, or apartment, and believe there are Housing Code violations existing in their unit or the surrounding common areas, may file a complaint with LAHD. An inspector will be assigned to investigate the complaint and, if violations are found, an order will be issued to the property owner, which generally provides a compliance period of 30 days to complete the needed repairs. After the compliance period has expired, LAHD conducts a re-inspection to verify compliance with orders issued. If all the violations are found to be corrected, the case will be closed. If violations are found to be remaining, the property is referred to a General Manager's Hearing. It may be possible for two extensions of up to 30 days each to be granted at the property owner's request, depending on whether significant progress is made and the nature of remaining violations.

### ***How is the complaint filed?***

The tenant may file a complaint by using any one of the following procedures: by accessing the LAHD website at: [housingapp.lacity.org/ReportViolation](https://housingapp.lacity.org/ReportViolation) and completing and submitting the form on-line; by requesting a complaint form from the Public Information Hotline; by filing a complaint on the telephone Hotline 866-557-RENT [7368]; or in person at any LAHD Public Information Counter.



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### *What is a General Manager's Hearing?*

If repairs are not made within the specified time, the owner will be summoned to an administrative hearing to determine the reason for non-compliance. Based on the determination, a substandard order may be recorded against the property. After the hearing, the owner will be required to pay for all subsequent inspections to determine compliance. The owner may file an appeal of the General Manager's decision 10 days after the decision's notice is sent.

#### **THIS INFORMATION IS OFFERED FREE OF CHARGE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.**

While this publication is designed to provide accurate and current information about the law, readers should consult an attorney or other expert for advice in particular cases, and should also read the relevant statutes and court decisions when relying on cited material. Laws and guidelines are frequently amended. The LAHD recommends that you verify information in the event that new changes are not yet reflected in this publication. The LAHD does not assume and hereby disclaims any liability to any party for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause.

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