

DIVISION 4. - RENTAL OF RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS

FOOTNOTE(S):

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Editor's note—Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, adopted December 10, 2013, enacted provisions intended for use as division 4, sections 14-131—14-144. Inasmuch as there are already provisions designated as sections 14-136—14-139, and at the discretion of the editor, the provisions of Ord. No. 2013-08 have been re-designated as division 4, sections 14-130.1—14-130.14.

Sec. 14-130.1. - Purpose.

The city recognizes the need for safe, decent, well maintained residential property within the city. The State of Florida regulates residential rental properties with five or more units. This regulation is intended to ensure that residential rental units (four units or less on a residential rental property) meet minimum standards for the health, safety, and welfare of all city residents, and that responsible persons are readily available to respond and take appropriate action when necessary to prevent or remedy the occurrence of nuisances.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13; Ord. No. 2015-02)

Sec. 14-130.2. - Definitions.

International Property Maintenance Code or property maintenance code refers to the minimum standards for maintenance of residential properties as set forth in the 2009 edition of the International Property Maintenance Code; as it may be amended from time to time.

Residential rental property means the contiguous lot or parcel of real property under single ownership on which one or more residential rental units are located.

Residential rental unit means any building, structure, living unit, room, enclosure, mobile home, or part thereof, located within the city which is rented or offered for rent as the primary residence of any person, or which is rented or offered for rent to serve or which does serve as the residence of such person for a continuous period of more than thirty (30) days. Residential rental unit does not include living quarters provided by any institution or facility, whether public or private, incidental to the provision of medical, geriatric, educational, counseling, religious, or similar services; a property or unit which is occupied under a contract for sale; transient lodgings occupied for less than a 30-day period and which are not the primary residence of the transient occupant.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13, Ord. No. 2015-02; Ord. No. 2015-07)

Sec. 14-130.3. - Applicability.

The requirements of this division shall apply to all residential rental properties with one to four units located within the city, and the owners of all such units and properties and their agents.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)

Sec. 14-130.4. - License required.

(a) It shall be unlawful to rent or lease, or offer to rent or lease, any residential rental unit without a current residential rental license for the unit, a copy of which shall be posted or available at the residential rental property.

(b) No license shall be issued or renewed for a residential rental unit unless the residential rental property and unit are in compliance with the requirements of this article and applicable provisions of the Land Development Code.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)

Sec. 14-130.5. - License application; registration statement.

(a) Application for a residential rental license for each residential rental unit shall be made in writing on forms supplied by the city.

(b) The application shall include a registration statement providing the following information:

(1) The street address of the residential rental property.

(2) The number of residential rental units located on the property, type of each unit (e.g.: detached single-family dwelling unit, apartment, sleeping room, etc.), and the unit number or other identifying designation of each unit.

(3) Name, address, and phone number of the property owner or owners.

(4) Name, address, and phone number of any designated agent authorized to act on behalf of the owner. If the owner is not a natural person, a natural person shall be designated as agent.

(5) Name, address, and phone number of any person authorized to make or order repairs or services for the property, if the person is different than the owner or designated agent.

(6) Name, address, and phone number of a natural person 18 years of age or older who can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week, regarding the residential rental unit. This contact person may be the owner, the owner's agent, or any other person other than a resident of the rental unit who has agreed to be the contact person.

(c) After submission of the application and registration statement, the residential rental property owner or designated agent shall have a continuing obligation to notify the city in writing within 15 calendar days of any change in the information provided in the registration statement. Failure to notify the city of changes shall be a violation of this article.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)

Sec. 14-130.6. - Inspection; issuance of license and renewal.

(a) After the receipt of the initial complete application satisfying the requirements above and the application fee, the City shall schedule the inspection of the residential rental property and units to determine compliance with all applicable provisions of the Land Development Code, including the International Property Maintenance Code, and shall issue the license or provide the applicant with written notice of any defects upon the completion of the inspection.

(b) The license shall be renewed each year in the same manner as, and concurrent with, the business tax receipt renewal as provided in Chapter 62 of this Code.

(c) Each residential rental property and unit regulated by this division shall be re-inspected every 24 months, contingent upon department resources and the number of units to be inspected. The city shall maintain a re-inspection schedule for currently licensed units. In addition, any currently licensed unit or property may be inspected upon reasonable notice. The property owner and agent shall permit the city to inspect all premises governed by this division to determine compliance, and shall fully cooperate with such inspections. The property owners or their agents shall notify tenants of planned inspections of their residential rental units and shall make every effort to obtain the tenant's written consent to entry for inspection purposes.

(d) A tenant may request an inspection of the residential rental property or unit in which he or she currently resides if violations of International Property Maintenance Code are suspected.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13; Ord. No. 2015-02)

Sec. 14-130.7. - Fees.

(a) There shall be an initial application fee of \$40.00 and a biennial license renewal fee of \$15.00.

(b) There shall be an initial inspection fee of \$50.00 per unit paid upon application and a biennial inspection fee assessed of \$70.00 per unit.

(c) A re-inspection fee of \$100.00 will be assessed for every re-inspection after the second inspection if the failure to correct noted code violations is due to owner/manager negligence.

(d) A penalty of ten percent (10%) shall be assessed for failure to submit a timely renewal fee during the first month of such delinquency, and an additional five (5%) percent penalty shall be assessed for each month of delinquency thereafter. However, the total delinquency may not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the annual license renewal fee.

(e) Failure to renew within four (4) months of expiration will result in code enforcement action. In addition to the late fee provided in subsection (d), the special magistrate may impose any fines and issue any orders authorized by law.

(Ord. No. 2015-14, Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)

Sec. 14-130.8. - Enforcement.

(a) The code enforcement special magistrate shall have jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of this division, and any person, firm, corporation, or agent determined to be in violation shall be subject to all penalties and remedies available to the special magistrate as provided by law.

(b) Any violation of this article may be treated as a civil infraction in accordance with the supplemental municipal code enforcement procedures as set forth in F.S. ch. 162, part II, as may be amended from time to time. Any code enforcement officer designated by the city manager is hereby empowered to issue a citation to a person when, based upon personal investigation, the officer has reasonable cause to believe that the person has committed a civil infraction in violation of a duly enacted provision of this article. For a person who does not contest the citation, initial violations shall carry a civil penalty of \$100.00 payable to the city clerk. A person may contest the citation in the county court and shall be subject to a maximum civil penalty imposed by the court of \$500.00.

(c) The city may institute any appropriate legal action or procedure to bring about compliance or remedy violations of this article.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)

Sec. 14-130.9. - Violations related to act or omission of tenant.

If a notice of violation arises due to acts or omissions of a tenant, and the tenant fails to make the necessary correction, the property owner or agent shall remedy the condition by whatever means necessary. No adverse action shall be taken against a licensee for failure to remedy a condition related to a tenant during the pendency of a bona fide eviction proceeding against the tenant which is diligently pursued by the licensee.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)

Sec. 14-130.10. - Suspension or revocation of license.

(a) Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this article shall subject the licensee to suspension or revocation of the license, in addition to other remedies and penalties provided by law.

(b) Repeated incidents occurring on the residential rental property which threaten public safety including but not limited to assaults, batteries, robberies, burglaries, prostitution, sexual offenses, or narcotics possession, use or sales, or other criminal activity, shall be grounds for license revocation.

(c) Repeated incidents of violation or continuing violation of state or local laws which violations adversely affect the rights of nearby residents to the quiet enjoyment of their property, including but not limited to violations of noise, animal control, solid waste, yard parking, storage, trash, and yard maintenance regulations constitute a public nuisance and shall be grounds for license revocation.

(d) Prior to initiating suspension or revocation proceedings, written notice shall be delivered (via certified mail) to the owner or designated agent identified in the registration statement. The notice shall specifically identify the provision of this article which has not been complied with, or shall specifically

identify the repeated or continuing incidents of violations of state or local laws, and shall state that failure to remedy the violation or further incidents of violations will result in revocation of the residential rental license for all units on the property.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13; Ord. No. 2015-02)

Sec. 14-130.11. - Suspension or revocation hearing.

(a) If the violation is not corrected after written notice, or if further violations occur, a hearing shall be held to determine whether the license should be suspended or revoked, as follows:

(1) Written notice to appear and show cause why the license should not be suspended or revoked shall be delivered to the property owner or designated agent identified in the registration statement by person delivery or by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the address of the owner or agent. The notice shall set the date, time, and place for the hearing.

(2) The hearing shall be held no sooner than 15 days after service of the notice to show cause. The hearing shall be conducted by the special magistrate appointed by the city commission. The special magistrate shall explain the rules of procedure governing the hearing. The city and the licensee shall have an opportunity to present evidence through witnesses and documentary evidence. All testimony shall be under oath. Testimony and evidence shall be limited to matters directly relating to the pending suspension or revocation. Irrelevant or unduly repetitive testimony or evidence may be excluded. To the maximum extent practicable, the hearing shall be informal. Reasonable cross examination of witnesses shall be permitted, but questioning shall be confined as closely as possible to the scope of direct testimony. The special magistrate may call and question witnesses or request additional evidence as he or she deems necessary and appropriate. The special magistrate shall decide all questions of procedure or standing.

(3) Lack of knowledge of, acquiescence, or participation in, or responsibility for, a public nuisance on the part of the licensee or agent shall not be a defense by such licensee or agent. However, proof that the licensee or agent has commenced and is diligently pursuing under state law the process of terminating tenancy and recovering possession of the residential rental unit from the tenant or tenants causing the violations, or has completed such process, shall be a defense.

(4) The special magistrate shall render a written decision within 30 days after the hearing concludes. The original shall be filed with the city clerk and a copy shall be delivered to the property owner or designated agent by personal delivery or by certified mail, return receipt requested. In addition, a copy shall be posted at the residential rental property.

(5) If the special magistrate finds that the violation or violations have been corrected, that no threat to public safety or public nuisance exists, or that the owner has completed the process of terminating the tenancy of those persons causing the violations, the action shall be dismissed. If the special magistrate finds the owner has commenced and is diligently pursuing the process of terminating tenancy of those persons causing the violations, the special magistrate shall continue the action until completion of the process under state law.

(6) If the special magistrate finds that the violation or violations have not been corrected, or that a threat to public safety or public nuisance exists and has not been corrected, he or she shall issue a final order suspending or revoking the license.

(7) A licensee aggrieved by a decision of the special magistrate may challenge the decision as provided by law for appeal of administrative decisions by filing a petition for writ of certiorari with the clerk of the circuit court no later than 30 days after the decision of the hearing officer is filed with the city clerk. The record will consist of the complete record of the proceedings before the special magistrate.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)

Sec. 14-130.12. - Obligation to terminate tenancies after license revocation.

(a) If the license is suspended or revoked pursuant to this article, the licensee shall have 15 days from the date of the order to commence proceedings to terminate any existing tenancies and recover possession of the residential rental property and unit or units under state law. The licensee shall diligently pursue the process to completion. Upon request, the licensee shall provide copies of all documents provided to the tenants or filed with the court to the city. After completion of the process and removal of any tenants, no unit or units shall be re-let to any person during the period of suspension or revocation.

(b) Re-letting a unit or units during a period of suspension or revocation shall constitute a violation of this division.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)

Sec. 14-130.13. - Reinstatement of license after suspension or revocation.

The special magistrate may establish terms and conditions from reinstatement of a license after a period of suspension or revocation, which terms and conditions shall include payment of the reasonable costs of the hearing. An application for reinstatement of a license shall be subject to the same fees and application and inspection process as an original application.

(Ord. No. 2013-08, § 1, 12-10-13)