

## **Owners Held Accountable for Housing Conditions**

The City of Irving is working to ensure that residents who live in multifamily housing are provided with safe, sanitary living conditions through increased code enforcement efforts.

Apartment owners who fail to properly maintain their buildings will be held accountable; their properties can be vacated and secured if not brought into compliance within the allowable timeframe. Owners of dilapidated apartments are given the opportunity to adhere to the city's minimum housing standards prior to the city taking action.

Apartments may be ordered to vacate by the Building and Standards Commission, or the fire or building official. Each evacuation results in the best possible communication to owners and tenants including written notices (mailed and posted on tenants' doors; posted on property in common areas) and verbal meetings with tenants (hosted by city staff and nonprofit agencies).

### **Relocation Assistance**

The timeframe to vacate a structure is based on the severity of the hazards. Non life-threatening conditions allow city officials to post notices that inform residents of the situation 30 to 60 days prior to the evacuation date. If extreme, hazardous conditions exist, however, tenants will be evacuated immediately with the city's assistance to ensure the safety of those involved.

One complex that recently underwent an emergency evacuation is Vista del Lago. The fire official made the decision to immediately vacate the property due to extreme, hazardous conditions created by the owner's failure to maintain the property. Violations such as breaches in firewalls and structural roof damage posed a great risk to residents and to firefighters in the event of a fire rescue. More than 1,000 code violations also were present and included violations such as raw sewage beneath the building and electrical hazards.

City staff was on hand and coordinated with local social service agencies to provide relocation assistance to the residents. Funding for the relocation came from fines and civil penalties collected from delinquent property owners.

### **Enforcement Results**

The city has taken the appropriate action to vacate and secure or demolish apartments that do not meet minimum standards.

"It's our goal to see that every Irving resident has a clean, safe place to call home," said Code Enforcement Director Teresa Adrian. "The apartments that have been vacated are not suitable for people to reside in and it's not fair for anyone to have to live in substandard conditions. It is our desire to ensure that every building is brought into compliance. Appropriate code enforcement action will be taken with those who

refuse to make the necessary repairs.”

**Bottom Line**

The city will continue to take an aggressive stance to eliminate substandard apartments from Irving to ensure a safe, high quality of life for every resident. For details, visit [www.cityofirving.org](http://www.cityofirving.org) or call (972) 721-4929.