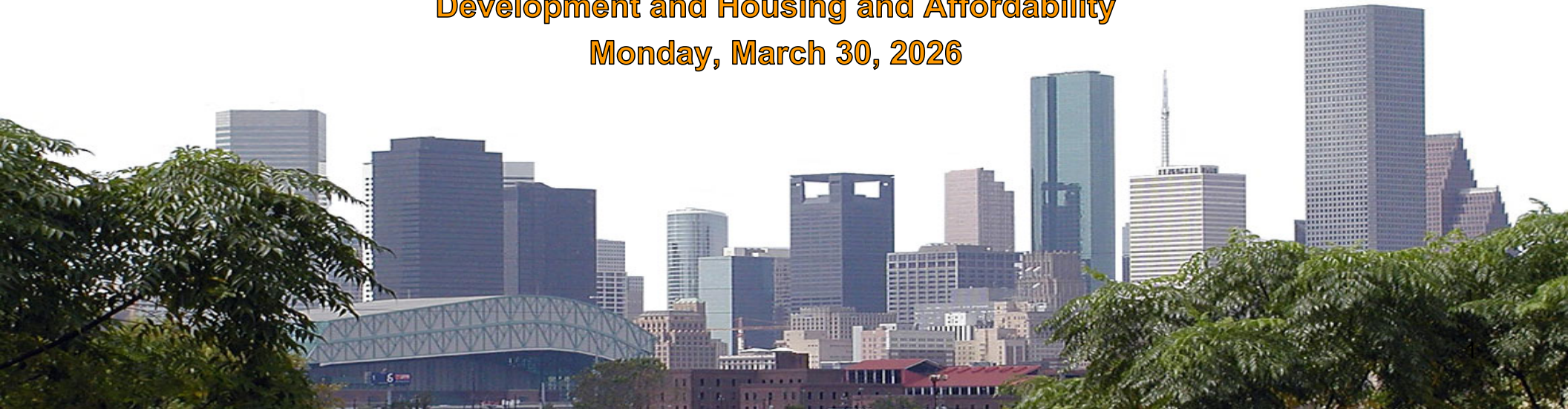


APARTMENT INSPECTION ORDINANCE

**City of Houston Joint Council Committee on Economic
Development and Housing and Affordability
Monday, March 30, 2026**



Community Feedback on Apartment Inspection Ordinance

Areas of Alignment:

- Clear inspection standards and processes
- Concern about implementation of the ordinance
- Desire for fair enforcement and clarity in rules.

Tenants Concerns:

- Mold remediation options for tenants
- Inspections of units conducted before the move-in date.
- Reimbursement for moving expenses.

Property Owner Concerns:

- Transfer of ownership concerns
- Appeal process for inclusion into the program.
- Concerns about liability insurance requirements
- Property owners are worried about the timeframe for resolving issues.

Key Purpose of the Ordinance

The proposed ordinance aims to:

- Identify high-risk multi-family rental buildings with unresolved health and life safety violations
- Improve monitoring and inspections
- Increase accountability for owners and managers
- Protect tenant health and safety
- Strengthen coordination between city departments

Apartment Standards Enforcement Committee (ASEC)

The ordinance establishes ASEC to coordinate responses to substandard apartment buildings. The role of this committee is to monitor compliance, review high-risk properties, and recommend additional regulations to City Council.

- Committee members include representatives from:
 - Houston Police Department
 - Houston Public Works
 - Houston Fire Department
 - Houston Health Department
 - Houston Housing and Community Development
 - Houston Solid Waste Department
 - Property owner representative
 - Tenant representative
 - Mayor's office (ex officio)



High Risk Rental Building (HRRB) Designation

A multifamily property may be designated as high risk if it receives 10 or more life-safety related citations within a 6-month period. If a multifamily property receives multiple citations in one day, that will count as one citation.

What qualifies as a violation to receive the HRRB designation?

- No valid certificate of occupancy
- Structural safety violations
- Fire safety system failures
- Electrical hazards
- Sanitation or plumbing violations
- Unsafe egress or life safety issues
- Failure to correct violations, including violations resulting in an order to vacate or emergency repair order

Registration Requirements

- Once designated as a HRRB, an owner or manager must:
 - Register the property in the High-Risk Apartment Inspection Program within **15 days** of receiving notice, or they must appeal the designation within that time.
 - Registration is valid for six months from the date of designation.
- If a designation is appealed, the appeal shall be heard by an impartial hearing officer who shall render a decision within **30 business** days of the date of filing.

Inspection Requirements

Owners or managers must be present during inspections and provide the building official with access to the property for inspection within **15 calendar days** of receiving notice. The building official must also:

- Conduct an initial inspection within **30 days** of the HRRB's registration in the program.
- Provide written notice of violations within **20 days**.
- Conduct follow-up inspections to ensure compliance.
- Verify completion of emergency repairs.

Compliance and Program Exit

The building official shall terminate a HRRB's registration in the program when:

- All violations are corrected, and
- The property maintains compliance with all applicable code requirements for 6 continuous months from the date of the last required corrective action, or
- The building no longer houses residents.

Repeat Offender Provisions

- Properties may be designated repeat offenders if:
 - Violations are not corrected within 6 months; or
 - The property receives 5 or more additional citations within 12 months
- Consequences of enrollment in the Repeat Offender Program may include:
 - Extended program participation
 - Enhanced inspections
 - Public recording of designation in county property records

Ownership Transfer Requirements

When a High-Risk property is sold:

- Owner must notify the building official at least **30 days** before transfer.
- All prospective buyers must be informed of violations at least **30 days** prior to closing of any sale.
- New owner has **180 days** to resolve violations.
- Possible **90-day** extension for good faith repair efforts.

Tenant Support and Transparency

The City will:

- Provide resources to support tenants.
- Publish the name and address of HRRB properties
- Help tenants report violations and safety issues
- Continued support for tenants reporting health and safety concerns.

Landlord Training Program

HRRB managers must complete mandatory training covering:

- Applicable city codes
- Safety and habitability standards
- Compliance procedures
- Contact information for relevant city departments

Enforcement and Penalties

Violations may result in:

- Misdemeanor charges
- Fines ranging from \$250 to \$2,000
- Each day of violation is considered a separate offense.

Impact of Ordinance

This ordinance is designed to focus City resources on the properties that pose the greatest risk to tenant health and safety.

It strengthens enforcement, improves coordination across departments, and creates a clear, structured process for addressing repeat violations.

Ultimately, the goal is to ensure safe housing for tenants and work with property owners to improve conditions at their properties that are code compliant.