



City of Clearlake

City Council

STAFF REPORT	
SUBJECT: Discussion and Consideration of Ordinance No. 279-2025, An Amendment to Section 9-4 of the Clearlake Municipal Code Regarding Residential Rental Registration and Inspection	MEETING DATE: September 4, 2025 6:00 p.m.
SUBMITTED BY: Michael Taylor, Associate Planner	
REPORT PURPOSE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Item <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only	

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THE CITY COUNCIL:

The City Council is being asked to discuss and hold a first reading of Ordinance No. 279-2025 (Attachment A), which proposes amendments to Section 9-4, Rental Housing Unit Registration, Inspections, and Inventory, of Chapter IX, Building and Housing, of the Clearlake Municipal Code. This ordinance is associated with Municipal Code Amendments MCA 2025-01 and the corresponding environmental determination, Categorical Exemption CE 2025-02. The proposed updates are intended to improve the City's rental housing registration and inspection program by clarifying existing requirements, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, and better aligning the ordinance with current housing safety goals.

Ordinance No. 279-2025 was originally introduced for first reading on March 20, 2025, and reintroduced on June 5, 2025. At both meetings, the City Council continued the item at the request of the Lake County Association of Realtors Task Force, which asked for additional time to review the proposed amendments and provide input. In response, the City Council granted the continuances to support meaningful engagement.

The Realtor Task Force submitted initial comments on April 17, 2025, after the first hearing. City staff reviewed the feedback, revised the ordinance accordingly, and met with the Realtor Task Force on May 22, 2025, to review the proposed modifications. During that meeting, the Realtor representatives indicated general support for the revised language.

Following the second continued hearing on June 5, 2025, the Realtor Task Force submitted a second round of comments on July 3, 2025, after further review of the draft ordinance. Staff incorporated additional revisions in response and provided the Realtors with an updated redline version on August 8, 2025. A subsequent meeting was held on August 19, 2025, during which staff and Realtor representatives discussed the revised draft, clarified points of concern, and

reached consensus on changes to be incorporated, as well as provisions acceptable to remain unchanged.

Staff are now returning the revised ordinance to the City Council for reconsideration of the first reading, with changes that reflect input received from the Realtor Task Force while maintaining consistency with the City's policy objectives.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

Section 9-4, was adopted by City Council on October 25, 2001, and came into effect on November 24, 2001, as Ordinance No. 102-01 (Attachment B). The ordinance mandates that landlords register their rental housing units and comply with required inspections to ensure safe, decent, and sanitary living conditions. Requiring registration and inspections of rental housing units aid in realizing those units that do not meet acceptable living standards and requires landlords to improve their properties offered for rental or lease.

The code's intent is to identify and correct violations of City codes, the California Building and Fire Codes, State Housing Law, and other applicable regulations that apply to rental properties. It aims to address conditions that pose immediate hazards or threats to the safety and welfare of residents and the public. Furthermore, conditions leading to severe dilapidation will be subject to strict enforcement. However, landlords will be given time to comply with code requirements, aiming to ensure all rental housing meets minimum standards set by local and State laws.

By establishing regulations for maintaining, sanitizing, and ensuring the safety of all residential rental properties, including single and multi-unit structures, motels, hotels, and their common areas, this section aims to safeguard public health and welfare. However, the code does not mandate retrofitting of units built to earlier standards unless required by State or local laws, provided the units are maintained safely.

Through these measures, the code seeks to achieve rental housing that meets the minimum housing and property maintenance standards, contributing to better living conditions for all residents.

Proposed Code Changes

As part of staff's ongoing efforts to enhance city municipal codes and ensure alignment with current standards, city staff is proposing several revisions for review (see "Attachment C", for specific text amendments).

1. Inspection Responsibility and Enforcement: Transition of the responsibility for inspections and enforcement from the Code Enforcement Department to the Building Department. This change aims to streamline processes and improve efficiency in code enforcement.
2. Updates to Code References: Update references to state building, fire, and residential codes, along with corresponding definitions. These updates ensure our codes are consistent with state regulations.
3. Clarification of Registration and Inspection Requirements: Update text to clarify registration requirements, inspection protocols, and procedures for reinspection. These revisions aim to provide clear and consistent guidelines for inspections.
4. New code additions: including phasing of inspections, a self-certification program, occupancy pending inspection certificate, change of ownership, and tenant rights and landlord limits on liability.

Program Fees

Resolution No.01-84 was adopted on November 8, 2001, to amend, at the time, the Clearlake Schedule of Fees establish fees for the rental property inspection program.

Current Rental Property Inspection Program Fees:

Annual Inspection	\$40.00 (site and 1st unit) \$15.00 (each additional unit)
Noncompliance re-inspection	\$30.00 (site and 1st unit) \$10.00 (each additional unit)

Under subsection 9-4.12 Fees-Adopted by Resolution of the Rental Housing Unit Inspection and Registration section, the City may adopt, and amend, from time to time, by resolution, the fees required to address current costs, future regulations and programs that may be related to the section. Staff are reviewing the current fees related to the amendments to the code and current implementation cost.

Staff has determined that the adopted program fees are outdated and may no longer cover the costs necessary to effectively implement and administer the program. The operational costs associated with the program should align with current economic conditions. Since the existing fees have not been updated to reflect these changes, an adjustment is necessary.

If the Council holds a first reading of the ordinance, staff will notice a public hearing regarding updates to the fees at a subsequent Council meeting.

MOTION:

1. Hold first reading of Ordinance No. 279-2025, read by title only, waive further reading and set second reading for next Council Meeting.
2. Move to continue the item and provide alternate directions to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A (Ordinance No. 279-2025)

Attachment B (Ordinance No. 102-01, Adopted October 2001)

Attachment C (Ordinance No. 102-01 - Redline)