

REPEALED ORD: 99112

**Ordinance No.** 89201

AN ORDINANCE establishing minimum housing standards for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and the general welfare in buildings used for human habitation in the City of Seattle; establishing a housing advisory board to assist the Superintendent of Buildings in the enforcement of such standards; defining offenses and providing penalties.

FILE NO. 118922

**Council Bill No.** \_\_\_\_\_

INTRODUCED: APR 13 1960	BY: Public Safety
REFERRED: APR 13 1960	TO: Public Safety
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REPORTED: APR 18 1960	SECOND READING: APR 13 1960
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PRESENTED TO MAYOR: APR 19 1960	APPROVED: APR 20 1960
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REPEALED ORD. - 99112

ORDINANCE NO. 39261

Council Bill No.

INTRODUCED BY	BY	Public Safety
ENTERED TO	TO	
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REPORTED	APPROVED	
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FILE NO.

ORDINANCE \_\_\_\_\_

AN ORDINANCE establishing minimum housing standards for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and the general welfare in buildings used for human habitation in the City of Seattle; establishing a housing advisory board to assist the Superintendent of Buildings in the enforcement of such standards; defining offenses and providing penalties; and amending Ordinance 88069.

WHEREAS, it is hereby found and declared that there exist, within the City of Seattle, buildings or portions thereof, occupied or designed for human habitation, which buildings are substandard because of failure to repair, or lack of proper sanitary facilities and maintenance, or lack of adequate lighting or ventilation, or improper maintenance, or structural or other defects, or any combination of these factors, and this has resulted in such buildings becoming so deteriorated, dilapidated, neglected, overcrowded with occupants, or insanitary as to be dangerous and a menace to the health, safety, morals or welfare of the occupants thereof and of the public; Now, Therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Chapter 1 - Title and Scope

Section 101. This ordinance shall be known as the "Housing Code", and will be referred to herein as "this Code".

Section 102. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Code is to establish minimum housing standards for the protection of the public peace, health, safety, morals, and the general welfare.

Section 103. SCOPE. Such standards shall apply to buildings or any portion thereof which are used, or designed to be used, for human habitation together with appurtenant structures and premises.

Chapter 2 - Administration

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Section 201. ADMINISTRATION.

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(a) ADMINISTRATOR. The Superintendent of Buildings is hereby authorized and directed to enforce the provisions of this Code, with the advice and assistance of the Housing Advisory Board.

(b) HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD. There is hereby created the Housing Advisory Board of The City of Seattle, which Board shall

consist of seven members, each to be appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Council, to serve without compensation for a term of three years, subject to removal by the Mayor, approved by the Council. No member of the Board shall be an officer or employee of The City of Seattle.

Original appointees to said Board shall serve staggered terms of: two for one year, two for two years, and three for three years respectively. No member of said Board shall serve more than two successive terms. Said Board shall advise and assist the Superintendent of Buildings in the enforcement of this Code.

The Board shall review complaints involving alleged violations of this Code, brought before it by the Superintendent of Buildings, and make recommendations to said Superintendent with respect thereto.

The Board may adopt rules and regulations for its own government, not inconsistent with the provisions of this or any other ordinance of the city. Meetings of the Board shall be held at the call of the chairman and at such other times as the Board may determine.

All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the public. The Board shall keep minutes of its proceedings, showing the action of the Board on each question which shall be immediately filed in the office of the Board and shall be a public record.

(c) RIGHT OF ENTRY. Upon presentation of proper credentials, the Superintendent of Buildings may enter at reasonable times, any building, structure, or premises in the city to perform any duty imposed upon him by this Code.

Chapter 3 - Definitions.

Section 301. GENERAL. For the purpose of this Code, certain terms, phrases, words, and their derivatives shall be construed as

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specified in this Chapter. Words used in the singular include the plural, and the plural the singular. Words used in the masculine gender include the feminine, and the feminine the masculine.

APARTMENT. A suite of rooms for occupancy by one family, containing space for living, sleeping, preparation of food and containing a toilet and bathing facilities.

APARTMENT HOTEL. A building containing apartments, hotel rooms and/or bachelor apartments.

APARTMENT HOUSE. Any building, or portion thereof, containing three or more apartments.

APPROVED. Approval by the Superintendent of Buildings as the result of investigations and tests conducted by him, or approved by the Superintendent of Buildings by reason of accepted principles or tests by national authorities, technical or scientific organizations.

BACHELOR APARTMENT. One room (which may include a kitchen niche or alcove) used for living and light cooking, which is occupied by not more than two persons.

BASEMENT. That portion of a building between floor and ceiling which is partly below and partly above grade, but so located that the average vertical distance from grade at exterior walls to the floor is less than the average vertical distance from grade to ceiling.

CEILING HEIGHT. The shortest vertical distance between a floor, platform, balcony, mezzanine, stair tread or landing or any similar space and a ceiling.

CELLAR. That portion of a building between floor and ceiling which is wholly or partly below grade and so located that the

average vertical distance from grade at exterior walls to the floor below is equal to or greater than the vertical distance from grade to ceiling.

DWELLING. Any building containing not more than two dwelling units.

DWELLING UNIT. A suite of two or more habitable rooms which are occupied or which are intended or designed to be occupied by one family with facilities for living, sleeping, cooking and eating.

EXIT. A continuous and unobstructed means of making departure from any place in a building to a street or alley including intervening doorways, corridors, ramps, stairways, smokeproof enclosures, horizontal exits, or any other permitted means.

FAMILY. One or more individuals living, cooking and eating together in a single dwelling unit, but not including a group of more than eight persons unrelated by blood or marriage. In the case of a rectory, parsonage, or convent, twelve persons are considered as a family.

FLOOR AREA, SUPERFICIAL. The net floor area within the enclosing walls of a room in which the ceiling height is not less than 5 feet, excluding built-in equipment such as wardrobes, cabinets, kitchen units, or fixtures.

GUEST. Any person hiring a room for sleeping purposes.

GUEST ROOM. Any room or rooms used, or intended to be used by a guest for sleeping purposes. Every 100 sq. ft. of superficial floor area in a dormitory is a guest room.

HABITABLE ROOM. Any room occupied as a kitchen, dining room, living room, parlor, bedroom, or library (in distinction from a closet, bathroom, water closet room, corridor, laundry, furnace or boiler room or other utility room, cellar or unfinished attic).

**HOTEL.** A building in which is conducted the business of lodging the public and which contains 6 or more guest rooms.

**HOUSEKEEPING UNIT.** A portion of a building, which building was originally constructed as a single-family dwelling which has been legally converted for multi-family occupancy, consisting of two or more rooms to be occupied by one family.

**INNER COURTS.** An open area used as a source of light or ventilation for a required window which area is entirely within the exterior walls of a building.

**KITCHEN.** A space designed to be used for the preparation of food.

**PERSON.** One or more natural persons of either sex, association, co-partnership, or corporation, whether acting by themselves or by a servant, agent or employee; the singular number includes the plural, and the masculine pronoun includes the feminine.

**REQUIRED WINDOW.** In any room, a window whose area is necessary to achieve the minimum required area of the opening for light and ventilation in that room.

**ROOMING HOUSE.** Any building or portion thereof, other than a hotel, containing not more than 5 guest rooms which are used by guests other than transients. All requirements for dwellings apply equally to rooming houses.

**STORY.** That portion of a building included between the surface of any floor and the surface of the floor next above, except that the highest story is that portion of the building included between the highest floor surface and the ceiling or roof above.

**SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDINGS.** The duly appointed head of the Building Department. As used in this Code, the term includes authorized representatives of the Superintendent of Buildings.

WINDOW. A glazed opening, including glazed doors, which open upon a yard, court, or recess from a court, or a vent shaft open and unobstructed to the sky.

Chapter 4 - Space and Occupancy Standards

Section 401. YARDS AND COURTS.

(a) SCOPE. This section shall apply only to yards and courts having required windows opening therein. Every required window shall face on a yard, court, street or alley, not less than 3 feet in width and unobstructed to the sky.

Exception: Every inner court serving kitchens and baths for ventilation shall be not less than 3 ft. in width.

Other inner courts shall be not less than 6 ft. wide.

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Section 402. ROOM DIMENSIONS.

(a) CEILING HEIGHTS. Habitable rooms shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 ft. in at least 50% of the room and no portion of any room having a ceiling height of less than 5 ft. shall be considered as contributing to the minimum areas required by Sub-section (b) of this section.

(b) FLOOR AREA. Every dwelling unit, apartment or housekeeping unit shall have at least one room which shall have not less than 120 sq. ft. of superficial floor area and no habitable room except kitchens shall be less than 7 ft. wide. Every room which is used for both cooking and living or both living and sleeping purposes shall have not less than 150 sq. ft. of superficial floor area provided that where clearly established management policy limits occupancy of a bachelor apartment to one person then such apartment may have a superficial floor area of not less than 120 sq. ft. Every room used for sleeping purposes, shall have not less than 80 sq. ft. of superficial floor area. Where more than two persons



occupy a room used for sleeping purposes, the required superficial floor area shall be increased at the rate of 50 sq. ft. for each occupant in excess of two.

Section 403. LIGHT AND VENTILATION.

(a) LOCATION. Every habitable room and bath shall have a window. Aggregate window area per room shall be not less than 1/10 of the floor area nor 10 sq. ft., whichever is greater.

Exception: A kitchen or a bath shall have an aggregate window area of not less than 3 sq. ft. in each such room.

(b) WINDOWS. Required windows shall open on a street, yard, or court either directly or through a porch, having a minimum ceiling height of not less than 7 ft. Such porch shall be at least 50% open on at least one side or on both ends. 1/4 of the required window area in all rooms shall be openable.

(c) LIGHTING. Every habitable room shall be provided with not less than two electrical convenience outlets or one such convenience outlet and one supplied electric light fixture. Every water closet compartment, bathroom, laundry room, furnace room and public hallway shall contain at least one supplied electric light fixture.

(d) ARTIFICIAL VENTILATION. An approved system of artificial ventilation or air conditioning may be used in lieu of openable windows. Such system shall provide not less than four air changes per hour.

Section 404. SANITATION.

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(a) DWELLING UNITS. Every dwelling unit or apartment shall contain a water closet, a lavatory, and a bath tub or shower.

(b) HOUSEKEEPING UNITS. Buildings containing housekeeping units shall contain not less than one water closet, one lavatory and

one bath tub or shower convenient to and serving each two such units.

Exception: In buildings where such housekeeping units are of sufficient area to permit legal occupancy by more than 8 persons sharing one water closet, lavatory, bath tub or shower, then a separate water closet, lavatory, and bath tub or shower shall be provided in each such unit.

(c) BACHELOR APARTMENTS. Buildings containing bachelor apartments shall contain not less than one water closet, one lavatory, and one bath tub or shower for each 4 such apartments.

Exception: In buildings where size of apartments or clearly established management policy limits occupancy to an average of less than 2 persons per apartment, sanit facilities shall be provided on a basis of not less than one water closet, one lavatory and one bath tub or shower for each 8 occupants thereof.

(d) HOTELS AND APARTMENT HOTELS. Where private water closets, lavatories, and baths are not provided, there shall be provided on each floor at least one water closet and lavatory and one bath accessible from a public hallway. Additional closets, lavatories, and baths shall be provided on each floor at the rate of one for every additional 10 guests or occupants, or fractional number thereof in excess of 10.

(e) KITCHEN. Every dwelling unit, apartment or housekeeping unit, shall be provided with a kitchen. Every kitchen shall be provided with a kitchen sink. No wooden sink or sink of similar absorbent material shall be permitted. Bachelor apartments shall be provided with an approved cooking appliance, a kitchen sink and storage facilities.

(f) FIXTURES. All plumbing fixtures shall be connected to a sanitary sewer or to an approved private sewage disposal system. All plumbing fixtures shall be connected to an approved system of water supply and provided with hot and cold running water, except water closets shall be provided with cold water only. All toilets shall be flush type in good working order.

(g) MAINTENANCE. All sanitary facilities shall be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition.

#### Chapter 5 - STRUCTURAL STANDARDS.

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#### Section 501.

(a) GENERAL. Roofs, floors, walls, chimneys, fireplaces, foundations and all other structural components of buildings shall be capable of resisting any and all normal forces and loads to which they may be subjected.

(b) SHELTER. Every building shall be weather protected so as to provide shelter for the occupants against the elements and to exclude dampness. No basement shall be used for human habitation unless it is watertight and dampproof and conforms to all requirements of size, lighting and ventilation for habitable rooms.

#### Chapter 6 - Mechanical Standards

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#### Section 601.

(a) HEATING. Every dwelling unit, apartment, bachelor apartment, housekeeping unit and guest room shall be provided with heating facilities capable of providing an inside temperature of 70° F. under ordinary minimum winter conditions. All heating devices and appliances shall be of approved type and in good and safe working order. Installation shall be in accord with the present codes.

(b) VENTILATION. Ventilation for rooms and areas containing fuel-burning appliances shall be adequate for proper combustion.

Ventilating equipment shall be of approved types, maintained in a safe manner. Where mechanical ventilation is provided in lieu of the natural ventilation required by Section 403 of this Code, such mechanical system shall be in working order during the occupancy of any building or portion thereof.

Chapter 7 - Exit Standards

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Section 701. GENERAL. Every dwelling unit, apartment, bachelor apartment, housekeeping unit or guest room shall have access directly to the outside or to a public corridor. All buildings or portions thereof shall be provided with exit as follows:

- 1) Every dwelling unit, apartment, bachelor apartment, housekeeping unit or guest room above the first floor shall have two means of egress from any floor in the building.

Exception: Dwelling units or guest rooms on the second floor may have one means of egress, provided it is a stair leading directly to the outside.

- 2) Total exit width shall be not less than one foot for each 50 persons served and the primary exit shall be not less than 3 ft. wide.

Exception: No required exit shall be less than 2 ft. and 6 inches wide.

- 3) In a stairway, the rise of each step shall not exceed 8 inches and the run shall not be less than 9 inches. No stair serving two or more families shall be less than 3 ft. wide. Where two or more stairs are required, an approved fire escape may be accepted for one such stair.

- 4) Interior stairs and corridors when required to be enclosed, shall be enclosed with approved construction.

whose fire resistance shall be not less than that of wood lath and plaster.

- 5) In buildings serving more than 100 tenants, illuminated exit signs or lights shall be provided to indicate clearly the direction to, and the location of, exits.

#### Chapter 8 - Enforcement

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Section 801. STANDARDS. The standards set forth in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 are intended to be used as measures of the desired quality of buildings and failure to meet any standard or standards shall not be construed to constitute a violation of this Code, unless a building or portion thereof including any dwelling unit, apartment, housekeeping unit, or guest room, or the premises on which the same is located falls below said standards to an extent that endangers the health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the public or the occupants thereof.

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Section 802. INVESTIGATION AND NOTICE. The Superintendent of Buildings may require compliance with such standards if, after investigation, he finds that any building falls below standard to a dangerous extent as set forth in Section 801 herein by giving notice to the person responsible therefore by registered mail stating in what respects the building falls below the standards of Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 hereof, and setting forth a reasonable period of time within which such compliance should be made. Demolition and removal of the building within the period specified for compliance shall be deemed to constitute compliance with this Code.

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Section 803. FAILURE TO RESPOND. In the event the person responsible fails or refuses, within the time specified, to effect the improvements required by the Superintendent of Buildings pursuant to Section 802 of this Code, said Superintendent shall send a second

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ORD. 90893 ADDS SECTION 804-1. POSTING AMENDED ORD. 95965

ORD. 90893 ADDS SECTION 804-2. CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE.

ORD. 95965 ADDS SECTION 804-3. REVIEW BEFORE HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD.

ORD. 95965 ADDS SECTION 804-4. EMERGENCY ORDER.

registered letter requiring such person to appear before him and the Housing Advisory Board at a public hearing on a specified date not later than fifteen days from the date of the Superintendent's letter and show cause why he has not made the improvements required by said Superintendent.

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Section 804. HEARING BEFORE HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD. The hearing contemplated by Section 803 shall be public, and in the event that the Superintendent finds, and the Board concurs, that the affected building falls below the standards set forth in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this ordinance to the extent that public health, safety, morals or the general welfare are endangered and that the person responsible for such building has, after due notice, failed and refused to appear or to effect the improvements found necessary by the Superintendent of Buildings, then and in such event such person shall be deemed to be in wilful violation of the provisions of this ordinance. *in violation of provisions of Ord. No. 40193*

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Section 805. PENALTIES. Anyone wilfully violating or failing to comply with this ordinance shall, upon conviction thereof, be subject to a fine not exceeding Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00), or by imprisonment in the city jail for not more than ninety (90) days, or by both such fine and imprisonment, and each day's violation or failure to so comply shall constitute a separate offense; and in addition the City Council may by separate ordinance, after a public hearing declare any building which it finds does not meet the minimum standards required by this ordinance to the extent that the public health, safety, morals or the general welfare are endangered, to be a public nuisance; and provide that such building shall be demolished and removed by summary abatement under the direction of a city

officer so authorized and designated in such separate ordinance;  
and if it is necessary for the city to incur any expense in demolish-  
ing and removing such a building, the city may recover such costs in  
the manner permitted by law as in other cases where a public nuisance  
is found to exist and summary abatement is authorized by ordinance.

Section 806. Ordinance 88069, approved March 30, 1959, is  
hereby superseded.