

Evictions, and what a notice actually means

For renters and buyers · about 3 minutes · reviewed August 21, 2026

The Ellis Act, an owner move-in, a nuisance notice - the city records the ground for every filing, and they do not mean the same thing at all.

From Scan the Block

Every public record on one San Francisco address, in a single report: the Assessor's file, permits and violations, zoning, hazards and the published earthquake maps, rent-control indication, and ten years of the surrounding blocks - each count compared with an average San Francisco area of the same size, and none of it scored. scantheblock.com

■ A COUNT OF NOTICES IS NEARLY MEANINGLESS

"Four hundred and twenty-two eviction notices within a thousand feet" sounds like a fact and is barely one. It merges two things that have almost nothing to do with each other: a dispute inside a tenancy, and a building being taken off the rental market.

San Francisco records the statutory ground for every notice filed with the Rent Board, so the report separates them. On one recent report the split was 400 about a tenancy and 14 where the building itself was coming off the market - the same total, two completely different readings.

■ THE GROUNDS THAT ARE ABOUT A BUILDING

These are the ones that say something about the property rather than about a tenant. If you are deciding whether to sign a lease, or what you are buying into, this is the group to read.

- Ellis Act withdrawal. A state law that lets an owner go out of the rental business entirely, withdrawing every unit in the building. It is the mechanism behind most whole-building clearances, and it carries long re-rental restrictions afterwards.
- Owner or relative moving in. The owner, or a close relative, taking a unit as their principal residence. Bounded by rules about how many units and for how long.
- Demolition, substantial rehabilitation and capital improvement - work that requires the unit empty. Capital improvement is usually temporary; demolition is not.
- Condominium conversion and development agreement - rarer, and both mean the building's future is already decided.

Note

An Ellis Act filing near a building you are considering renting is worth understanding rather than fearing: it applies to a specific building, and the report tells you the count in an area, not which address. But a cluster in a small radius is a real signal about a market.

■ THE GROUNDS THAT ARE ABOUT A TENANCY

Non-payment of rent, breach of lease, nuisance, illegal use, habitual late payment, denial of access, an

unapproved subtenant. These are disputes between a landlord and a particular tenant. They are by far the most common, and they tell you very little about a building - a large old building with many units will accumulate them simply by having many tenancies.

■ WHAT A NOTICE IS, AND IS NOT

- A filing, not an outcome. Most notices do not end in anyone leaving. Many are withdrawn, settled, or resolved once the underlying issue is.
- Not a finding against anyone. Nobody has been judged at the point a notice is filed.
- Not necessarily one ground. A notice can cite more than one, so the reasons deliberately do not add up to the total, and the report says when that has happened.
- Located to the filing address, which is how the city publishes it.

■ JUST CAUSE, AND THE THING PEOPLE MERGE

San Francisco requires a listed reason to evict - just cause - and that protection reaches far more housing than the rent cap does. Under Costa-Hawkins a single-family home or condominium is commonly exempt from price control while remaining covered for just cause.

So "not rent controlled" is usually a statement about how much the rent can rise, not about whether somebody can be asked to leave. Those are different questions with different answers, and conflating them is the most common mistake in this area - including among professionals.

■ WHERE THIS IS DECIDED

Not here. The San Francisco Rent Board administers the Ordinance, receives these filings, and settles disputes about them; the city also funds tenant counseling organizations. This report is a record of what has been filed nearby, which is often the part that is hard to assemble - bring it, and get advice from somebody whose job that is.

Note

This report is not a consumer report and may not be used to screen a tenant. It describes a place and never a person, so no filing here is attached to anybody's name.

■ READ THE RECORD ON AN ACTUAL ADDRESS

Everything described in this guide comes out of one report on one San Francisco address. Type an address at scantheblock.com and it takes a few seconds; re-opening a report you have already run is free, always. Reports are a web page and a PDF you can share, and every figure carries the caveat that qualifies it.

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■ ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Last reviewed August 21, 2026. Every rule described here is San Francisco's, not ours, and the city changes them - where a date or a threshold matters to a deal, confirm it against the city. This is general information about public records and not legal, tax or investment advice.

Scan the Block compiles and compares public records; it does not produce, review or endorse them. Reports describe a place and never a person, are not a consumer report and may not be used to screen tenants, and are not a valuation or a statutory hazard disclosure. Read this guide online at <https://scantheblock.com/guides/evictions>