

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM32.23	ACTION			Ward: All
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Taking Action to Protect Tenants - by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Mayor Olivia Chow

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Planning and Housing Committee. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Mayor Olivia Chow, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to establish a colour-coded rating system based on the dynamic building evaluation score of the building and that the colour-coded rating system be integrated into the RentSafeTO online Interactive Building Score Map.
2. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to include the following requirements as part of the colour-coded rating system:
 - a. require apartment building owners and operators to post a colour-coded rating sign in a form satisfactory to the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards near the entrance of each apartment building that is in a prominent location visible on the apartment building;
 - b. require apartment building owners and operators to ensure the colour-coded rating sign referred to in Recommendation 2.a. is well-maintained, secured, and posted at all times;
 - c. require apartment building owners and operators to ensure that, if the dynamic building evaluation score changes to a different colour-coded rating (e.g., from Green to Yellow) that the apartment building owner or operator is required to update the sign within 15 business days of receiving notice of the change of the confirmed apartment building's score; and
 - d. begin phasing in the program changes no later than July 31, 2026.
3. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, to report directly to the October 8, 9 and 10, 2025, meeting of City Council with the necessary amendments to Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings, and other chapters as required, to implement the colour-coded rating system referred to in Recommendations 1 and 2 above.

4. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to review potential budget impacts resulting from the implementation and enforcement of the colour-coded rating system, and report through the 2026 budget process on the resources required to implement the colour-coded rating system, including any potential fee increases to offset increased costs.
5. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to report back to City Council in 2026 on the program implementation plan for the coded-coded rating system referred to in Recommendations 1 and 2 above.
6. City Council request the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to consider, as part of their 2026 planned review of the updated evaluation tool and enforcement measures, the following elements to ensure building scores are more accurately reflecting the lived experience of tenants in RentSafeTO buildings, and a more robust enforcement mechanism is implemented:
 - a. more appropriate weighting for high risk, moderate risk and cosmetic categories that places higher emphasis on higher risk items;
 - b. a larger deduction applied to the reactive score as a result of enforcement actions (Orders, Notices of Violation and Emergency Orders);
 - c. how to ensure officers are trained to rate building elements consistently; and
 - d. how to adopt Administrative Monetary Penalties for property standards violations in apartment buildings.

Summary

Too many Torontonians live in homes that have pests, mold, appliances that don't work, and inadequate heat. That's why it's time to move forward with colour-coded RentSafe signs that will compel landlords to keep apartments clean, safe, and healthy.

This apartment rating system, based on the City's successful DineSafe program, will require landlords to post a colour-coded RentSafeTO sign displaying the City's rating in a prominent, public location on the building, along with posting the same information to the City's website. Apartments would have a red sign for serious health and safety violations, yellow for more minor infractions, and green for buildings that are in good repair.

Landlords and others have claimed that a red sign would "stigmatize" people in apartment buildings, but tenants have repeatedly told Council that mold and cockroaches are stigmatizing, not a sign. In fact, a 2020 survey conducted by the City found that 81 percent of respondents agreed with implementing the sign program. Importantly, ACORN, the Federation of Metro Tenant Associations, York South Weston Tenants Union, NoDemovictions and tenant associations across the city are in support of colour-coded signs.

Colour-coded signs are just one part of the changes being made to ensure the RentSafe program better supports tenants. In May, Council approved motions from Mayor Chow and Councillor Matlow to strengthen the City's ability to make fix issues like mold, pests and inadequate heat if a landlord is unwilling and stick the apartment owner with the bill. Other motions endorsed by Council that month improved the property standards complaints process and provided additional accountability for RentSafe staff.

While these are significant improvements, there is more work to be done to protect tenants. The current system provides little incentive for landlords to make timely repairs. There are buildings receiving scores of 70-80 percent despite having cockroaches, mold, or appliances that don't work. This is confusing and even infuriating for many tenants. It says that either the City doesn't know what's happening in their building or, worse, doesn't care. The rating system gives points for keeping the lobby clean, functioning elevators, and working laundry machines. The City doesn't need to congratulate landlords for the basics. That's what the rent is for.

To ensure greater enforcement and accountability, this motion seeks to align the rating with the lived experience of tenants by giving greater weight to property standards issues involving health and safety and dropping the importance of cosmetic categories.

This motion also requests staff to prioritize the adoption of Administrative Monetary Penalties for property standards violations which allow the City to increase the amount landlords can be fined.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM32.23