

**LOCAL LAWS
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
FOR THE YEAR 2020**

No. 55

Introduced by Council Members Rivera, the Speaker (Council Member Johnson), Kallos, Van Bramer, Rosenthal, Chin, Ayala, Levin, Lander, Koslowitz, Louis, Vallone, Lancman, Constantinides and Menchaca.

A LOCAL LAW

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to personal liability provisions of leases for commercial tenants impacted by COVID-19

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 10 of title 22 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 22-1005 to read as follows:

§ 22-1005. Personal liability provisions in commercial leases. A provision in a commercial lease or other rental agreement involving real property located within the city that provides for one or more natural persons who are not the tenant under such agreement to become, upon the occurrence of a default or other event, wholly or partially personally liable for payment of rent, utility expenses or taxes owed by the tenant under such agreement, or fees and charges relating to routine building maintenance owed by the tenant under such agreement, shall not be enforceable against such natural persons if the conditions of paragraph 1 and 2 are satisfied:

1. The tenant satisfies the conditions of subparagraph (a), (b) or (c):

(a) The tenant was required to cease serving patrons food or beverage for on-premises consumption or to cease operation under executive order number 202.3 issued by the governor on March 16, 2020;

(b) The tenant was a non-essential retail establishment subject to in-person limitations under guidance issued by the New York state department of economic development pursuant to executive order number 202.6 issued by the governor on March 18, 2020; or

(c) The tenant was required to close to members of the public under executive order number 202.7 issued by the governor on March 19, 2020.

2. The default or other event causing such natural persons to become wholly or partially personally liable for such obligation occurred between March 7, 2020 and September 30, 2020, inclusive.

§ 2. Subdivision a of section 22-902 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as amended by local law number 185 for the year 2019, is amended to read as follows:

a. A landlord shall not engage in commercial tenant harassment. Except as provided in subdivision b of this section, commercial tenant harassment is any act or omission by or on behalf of a landlord that (i) would reasonably cause a commercial tenant to vacate covered property, or to surrender or waive any rights under a lease or other rental agreement or under applicable law in relation to such covered property, and (ii) includes one or more of the following:

1. using force against or making express or implied threats that force will be used against a commercial tenant or such tenant's invitee;
2. causing repeated interruptions or discontinuances of one or more essential services;
3. causing an interruption or discontinuance of an essential service for an extended period of time;
4. causing an interruption or discontinuance of an essential service where such interruption or discontinuance substantially interferes with a commercial tenant's business;

5. repeatedly commencing frivolous court proceedings against a commercial tenant;
6. removing from a covered property any personal property belonging to a commercial tenant or such tenant's invitee;
7. removing the door at the entrance to a covered property occupied by a commercial tenant; removing, plugging or otherwise rendering the lock on such entrance door inoperable; or changing the lock on such entrance door without supplying a key to the new lock to the commercial tenant occupying the covered property;
8. preventing a commercial tenant or such tenant's invitee from entering a covered property occupied by such tenant;
9. substantially interfering with a commercial tenant's business by commencing unnecessary construction or repairs on or near covered property; [or]
10. engaging in any other repeated or enduring acts or omissions that substantially interfere with the operation of a commercial tenant's business;
11. threatening a commercial tenant based on such person's actual or perceived age, race, creed, color, national origin, gender, disability, marital status, partnership status, caregiver status, uniformed service, sexual orientation, alienage or citizenship status, status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of sex offenses or stalking;
12. requesting identifying documentation that would disclose the citizenship status of a commercial tenant, an invitee of a commercial tenant or any person seeking entry to the covered property in order to patronize such commercial tenant; [or]
13. unreasonably refusing to cooperate with a tenant's permitted repairs or construction activities[.]; *or*

14. attempting to enforce a personal liability provision that the landlord knows or reasonably should know is not enforceable pursuant to section 22-1005 of the code.

§ 3. This local law takes effect immediately.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK, OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK, s.s.:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a local law of The City of New York, passed by the Council on May 13, 2020 and approved by the Mayor on May 26, 2020.

MICHAEL M. McSWEENEY, City Clerk, Clerk of the Council.

CERTIFICATION OF CORPORATION COUNSEL

I hereby certify that the form of the enclosed local law (Local Law No. 55 of 2020, Council Int. No. 1932-A of 2020) to be filed with the Secretary of State contains the correct text of the local law passed by the New York City Council and approved by the Mayor.

STEPHEN LOUIS, Acting Corporation Counsel.