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Washington, D.C. – As the nation contends with the COVID-19 outbreak and millions are sheltering in place, having safe and secure housing is more important than ever.

With this in mind, the National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC), on behalf the 40 million Americans who call an apartment home and the 17.5 million jobs the industry supports, recommends apartment firms consider adopting the following principles to help America’s renters retain their housing during this crisis.

- **Halt evictions** for 90 days for those who can show they have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. (This would not apply to evictions for other lease violations such as property damage, criminal activity or endangering the safety of other residents of the community.)
- **Avoid rent increases** for 90 days to help residents weather the crisis.
- **Create** payment plans for residents who are unable to pay their rent because of the outbreak and **waive late fees** for those residents.
- **Identify** governmental and community resources to help residents secure food, financial assistance and healthcare and share that information with residents.
- **Communicate** to residents that it is a priority for the industry to partner with them to help them retain their housing.
- **Develop** a [response plan](#) for potential COVID-19 exposure.

We also recognize that most rental properties are owned by individuals and small businesses that have financial obligations, including mortgages, utilities, payroll, insurance and taxes. If residents cannot pay their full rent obligations because of the COVID-19 outbreak then owners are at risk of not meeting their own financial obligations. This puts the individual property and the larger community in which it is located at risk.

Congress must extend mortgage forbearance to rental property owners and extend similar protections to other financial obligations such as insurance premiums, utility service payments and tax liabilities. Forbearance is needed to prevent foreclosure and other adverse actions such as lien placements, utility shut offs, defaults, and judgements that would negatively impact the viability of the property's continued operation and ultimately put its residents at risk of additional disruption.

We also continue to call on Congress to provide disaster housing assistance for renters who are suffering from income disruption as a result of the pandemic.

At a time when many American workers are being encouraged to work from home, multifamily owners and operators are on the front lines, keeping residents cared for and safe in their apartment homes.

These are trying, even desperate times and all of us face grim uncertainty in the days ahead. However, by working together – apartment residents, owners and operators, and lawmakers at all levels of government – we can develop solutions to the evolving challenges and keep Americans housed.

Additional materials and resources on COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

Based in Washington, D.C., the National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC) is the leadership of the trillion-dollar apartment industry. We bring together the prominent apartment owners, managers and developers who help create thriving communities by providing apartment homes for 40 million Americans. NMHC provides a forum for insight, advocacy and action that enables both members and the communities they help build to thrive. For more information, contact NMHC at 202/974-2300, e-mail the Council at info@nmhc.org.