

Apartment News

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Time for You to Up Your Housing Provider Game?

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Dealing with Biohazard Cleanup After a Tragic Incident: Essential Steps for Property Managers



BY ALAN COHEN,
CEO/OWNER, BIO
SOCAL

Unfortunately, at some point, one of your residents living alone may pass away and go undiscovered, or a crime or suicide may occur on your property. When this happens, you are thrust into emergency response mode. Authorities are contacted, concerns from residents arise, and you're faced with blood, biohazards, and a cleanup beyond what your maintenance team can handle. There are critical legal and procedural steps you must follow before the property

can return to generating revenue.

Critical First Steps

What you do next is crucial in minimizing damage and ensuring the safety of residents and staff. The coroner will often seal the apartment until the next of kin is notified, and in cases of extensive decomposition, they may not release the unit until a positive identification is made.

Once cleared, no one should enter or clean the unit unless your staff is prop-

erly trained in OSHA Standard 1910.1030. Exposure to bloodborne pathogens like Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), and HIV is dangerous.

Call a Licensed Biohazard Cleanup Company

Next, contact a biohazard cleanup company with a Trauma Scene Waste Management Practitioners (TSW) License issued by the California

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Department of Public Health. This certification ensures that the company follows proper health codes for cleanup and disposal. Any company hired to clean biohazards in California must have this license to legally handle, transport, and dispose of biohazard waste.

If the company cannot provide proof of their TSW license, do not hire them, as doing so may expose you to liability.

The Realities of Biohazard Cleanup

After a death or a traumatic incident, decomposition starts immediately. Blood and bodily fluids drain, attracting flies and maggots that contaminate the environment, with strong, unpleasant odors permeating through the unit and hallway. Biohazards will likely be found on floors, mattresses, sofas, and countertops, with gunshot wounds spreading blood across walls, cabinets, and other surfaces. These must be cleaned and decontaminated to ensure the safety of future residents and staff and

eliminate odors.

Unlike a simple spill, biohazards must be properly removed and decontaminated. A licensed professional will clean the unit quickly, restoring it to a rentable condition.

What to Expect from a Biohazard Professional

A reputable biohazard company will assess factors such as the cause of death, the condition of the body, how long it was undiscovered, the level of cross-contamination, odor, and the amount of biohazard waste. Upon arrival, biohazard professionals will discreetly inspect the unit and determine the cleanup plan. Soft materials like carpets, bedding, and furniture will need to be removed, while hard surfaces like floors and walls can be cleaned and decontaminated.

Addressing Hidden Hazards

Biohazards often extend beyond visible stains. Blood can seep through carpets and along seams in tiles, linoleum, or wood floors. If biohazards have penetrated beneath these surfaces, flooring, padding, and tack strips must be removed to properly clean, decontaminate, and seal the subfloor. Failure to do so can lead to future liability.

Odor Mitigation

Decomposition and blood odors can be persistent, even after biohazards are removed. To effectively combat this, choose a biohazard company that uses advanced odor-removal technologies like ozone and hydroxyl treatments and have the staff to remove the soft, porous items that remain. These methods neutralize odors without leaving harsh chemical smells or perfumes.

Conclusion

While the occurrence of a death or suicide on your property is distressing, hiring a licensed biohazard professional ensures that the unit is cleaned safely and thoroughly. With the right

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Regulatory Wins — continued from 32


- **HUD Rescinds Rules:** HUD terminated the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule. In December, under the Biden Administration, the Agency also rescinded a proposed rule on criminal screening. Under the Trump Administration, the Agency has removed many guidance documents and notices related to rental housing. NAA continues to monitor closely for rulemakings to be formally withdrawn and removed from the Federal Register.
- **BOI Scope Dramatically Limited:** The Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) pause on reporting enforcement for U.S. companies has been made permanent with FinCEN's issuance of an interim final rule taking effect on March 26, 2025. The interim final rule dramatically reduces the rule's scope of what BOI is subject to disclosure.
- **Revisiting "Waters of the United States:"** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it will work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) to review the definition of "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) to align it with the Supreme Court's finding in *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*. An appropriately scoped revision to the WOTUS definition would provide much-needed clarity and regulatory relief for developers across the country as they work to meet the nation's rental housing needs.
- **FCC Withdraws Bulk Billing Ban:** Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chair Brendan Carr withdrew a Biden-era proposal from circulation that would have banned broadband bulk billing arrangements between property owners and internet service providers, including jeopardizing existing contracts. The Commission's move ensures that residents can continue to benefit from economies of scale, decreased costs and increased access to high-quality internet services in rental communities.
- **Efficiency Standards Postponed:** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced actions to postpone mandated efficiency standards for home appliances, including air conditioners, washers and dryers and water heaters.
- **FTC Removes Confusing Blog Guidance:** The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) removed 300 blog postings from its website, including business guidance by blog which made it difficult for the rental housing industry to understand changes to their federal compliance responsibilities. Blog entries, such as "Price fixing by algorithm is still price fixing" and

"Becoming a gold star property manager: Lessons from the FTC's case against Greystar," circumvent the established rulemaking process under the Administrative Procedure Act and do not allow the public to comment as FTC imposed new standards. Using its blog, the FTC has reinterpreted or expanded its authority under existing laws.


What's Next

NAA is grateful for the Trump Administration's attention to these regulatory challenges. Without their swift action, federal overregulation of the rental housing industry would continue to impact the cost and availability of affordable housing for millions of Americans.

NAA continues to advocate against policies that exacerbate longstanding affordability challenges and instead for real housing policy solutions.

To learn more about NAA's federal regulatory advocacy, contact publicpolicy@naahq.org. 

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expertise, you'll have peace of mind knowing the property is ready for future tenants. 

About the Author:

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