



HEATHER FERBERT
CITY ATTORNEY
CITY OF SAN DIEGO

PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 6, 2025

Ibrahim Ahmed
(619) 666-4161
iaahmed@sandiego.gov

 [heatherferbert.ca](https://www.instagram.com/heatherferbert) | sandiego.gov/cityattorney

CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE ANNOUNCES CIVIL ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS TO ADDRESS UNLAWFUL SHORT-TERM RENTAL OPERATIONS IMPACTING NEIGHBORHOODS

SAN DIEGO – City Attorney Heather Ferbert announced today that her office has filed two civil enforcement actions to stop unlawful short-term rental operations at residential properties in Normal Heights and Hillcrest, citing violations of state law and the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) that have resulted in neighborhood disruption, unsafe living conditions, and the removal of long-term housing from the rental market. The lawsuits seek to halt ongoing violations, require code compliance, and protect the health, safety, and stability of affected communities.

In the first case, the City Attorney's Office has filed suit to stop the ongoing operation of an unlicensed short-term rental at 4745–4747 35th Street in Normal Heights. The Complaint alleges that 3YS, LP, Skytree Enterprises, and Yumi Yanagawa Willmott and James Morley Willmott have been operating the property as a short-term vacation rental since at least June 2023 without obtaining the required Business Tax Certificate, Short-Term Residential Occupancy (STRO) license, or necessary building and safety approvals.

The defendants are also alleged to have converted a detached garage into a short-term rental lodging space without permits or inspections. The Complaint further alleges that the same defendants operate at least four additional unlicensed short-term rental properties in San Diego, located at 4827 – 4833 Castle Avenue, 4118 – 4124 Gamma Street, 3637 36th Street, and 4233 – 4239 Swift Avenue, each lacking the required permitting, tax registration, or building safety review.

In the second enforcement action, City Attorney Heather Ferbert announced that her office has filed a civil enforcement action against the owner of a property located at 1280 Essex Street in Hillcrest for violating California's Unfair Competition Law (UCL), creating and maintaining a public nuisance, and violating provisions of the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) through the unlawful operation of an unpermitted hostel in a residential neighborhood. The property owner and resident, Andrew Fields, is alleged to have been operating the illegal lodging business at the property since 2016 without obtaining the permits, licenses, or safety approvals required for visitor accommodations. This enforcement action seeks to stop the unlawful operations and abate the public nuisance to protect the health, safety, and welfare of nearby residents.

Despite prior enforcement actions and civil penalties totaling \$152,000 ordered in 2020 for unpermitted construction and code violations in the 1280 Essex property, the defendant has continued to operate the property unlawfully. The property has been used for visitor lodging without a Certificate of Occupancy, Business Tax Certificate, Short-Term Residential Occupancy (STRO) license, or Rental Unit Business Tax payments as required by law. Additionally, the defendant constructed unpermitted sleeping quarters, including converted garage spaces and makeshift structures with illegal electrical and plumbing work, creating hazardous conditions.

Between April 2021 and September 2025, the San Diego Police Department responded to more than 20 calls for service at the Hillcrest property for noise, disturbances, excessive occupancy, and illegal parking, affecting nearby residents' quality of life.

"San Diegans deserve to feel safe in their homes and secure in their neighborhoods," said City Attorney Heather Ferbert. "When property owners sidestep permitting and licensing requirements, they shift the burden onto the community, from increased noise and safety risks to diminished housing stability. These lawsuits enforce the rules that protect our neighborhoods and ensures that those who choose to operate rentals do so responsibly and within the law."

In both actions, the city is seeking permanent injunctions to stop the unlawful lodging operations, require full compliance with state and local law, and impose civil penalties of up to \$2,500 per day per violation, in addition to recovering enforcement costs.

The Housing Protection and Civil Code Compliance Unit (HPU) of the City Attorney's Office partnered with the City's Building and Land Use Enforcement Division (BLUE) on both matters. The cases are being prosecuted by Lead Deputy City Attorney Paul Prather and Deputy City Attorney Angel Alcaraz respectively.

The Complaints are attached [here](#) and [here](#).

###



SAN DIEGO CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
1200 THIRD AVENUE, SUITE 1620
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101



[heatherferbert.ca](https://www.instagram.com/heatherferbert)



[LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sandiego-city-attorney)

Press releases can be accessed on the San Diego City Attorney's website: www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney