

Evictions and Rental Ordinance Enforcement April 2020

Methods: We analyzed the records of 19,414 Detroit evictions filed in the 36th District Court between August 2017 and December 2019. During this time frame, the City of Detroit began enforcing the new rental ordinance on a rolling basis in 10 zip codes. However, we limited what we considered an enforcement zip code to 6 zip codes, due to the availability of data before and after each enforcement date. Enforcement zip codes: 48215 after 8/1/2018, 48224 after 9/1/2018, 48223 after 1/2/2019, 48219 after 2/1/2019, 48209 after 5/1/2019 and 48210 after 6/3/2019.

Main Findings:

- **Rental ordinance enforcement is associated with a higher eviction rate, measured by the average number of evictions per month in a given zip code.** The data shows an average of 30.6 evictions per month¹ in enforcement zip codes, compared to an average of 24.5 evictions per month in non-enforcement zip codes. This finding is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Overall, during the study period, there were 17,409 evictions in zip codes where the ordinance was not yet enforced, and 1,981 evictions in zip codes where the ordinance was enforced.
- We also compared the eviction rate across zip codes with varying numbers of rental properties with violations, as determined by our previous analysis.² Here, the eviction rate is defined as the average number of evictions per month. **The eviction rate in Detroit zip codes with the highest number of properties with rental violations (40 evictions per month) is four times higher than the eviction rate in zip codes with the fewest rental violations (10 evictions per month).**

Table 1. Evictions by Rental Violation Prevalence, 7/2017 - 12/2019

Zip Code Group	# of Sample Properties with Rental Violations	Renter Households, ACS 5 Year Est.	Rental Violation Rate, Per 100 Renter Households	Average Evictions Per Month
Zip Code Group 1 ³	294 properties	35,707	.37 - 1.73	40.5*
Zip Code Group 2	68 properties	30,920	.36 - .154	25.0*
Zip Code Group 3	47 properties	37,452	.11 - .153	32.1*
Zip Code Group 4	10 properties	22,111	.08 - .02	10.5*

n=600 properties *n=19,414 evictions*

**p<0.01*

¹ We use the month when the eviction is signed, not filed.

² Our random sample of rental property inspection records did not include all Detroit zip codes, notably zip codes 48201 and 48207, though residents in both zip codes are evicted at above average rates.

³ See Appendix B for a listing of zip codes by number of rental violations.

Other Eviction Trends

Frequency of Eviction By Zip Code

From September 2017 to September 2019, the number of evictions filed varied significantly from month to month, but the data does not show a clear increase or decrease in the number of evictions over the observation period.

Between August 2017 and December 2019, **the eviction rate was highest in 48224: 25 evictions per 100 renter households, followed by 48227, 48235, and 48228 (Table 2).** By contrast, in the 48212 zip code, the eviction rate was 2 per 100 renter households. See Appendix A for a full list of evictions by zip code.

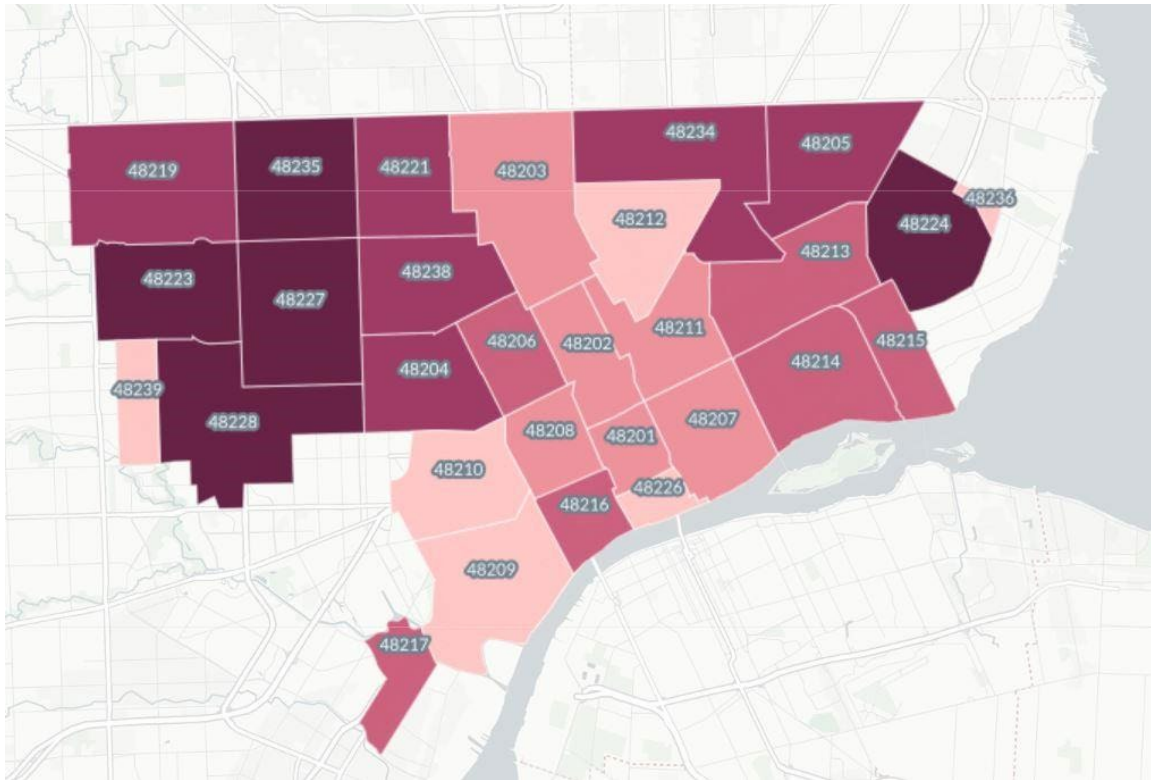
Table 2. Top 10 Zip Codes, by Evictions, 8/2017 - 12/2019

Zip Code	Number of Evictions	Evictions Per 100 Renter Households
48224	1,586	25.5
48227	1,435	19.8
48235	1,439	19.0
48228	1,868	19.0
48223	818	18.9
48219	1,723	18.7
48234	1,002	17.2
48238	847	16.3
48221	887	15.9
48205	1,251	15.3

Source: Author analysis of 36 District Court Detroit eviction data (8/2017- 12/2019),

American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014-2018)

Figure 1. Evictions Per 100 Renter Households, 8/2017-12/2019

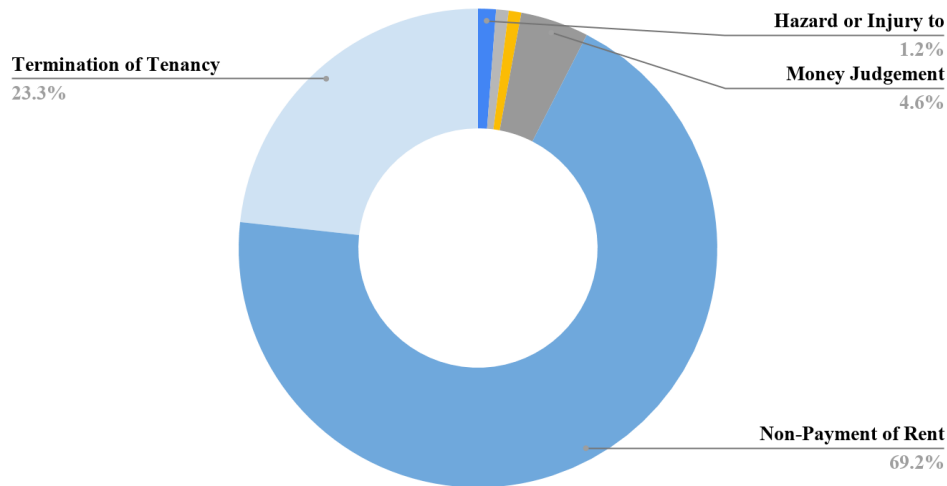


- 2 - 6.8
- 7.8 - 9.1
- 9.2 - 12.7
- 14 - 18.7
- 18.9 - 25.5

Most Common Listed Reasons for Eviction

We also analyzed a sub-sample of 825 Detroit eviction records filed in the 36th District Court between August 2017 and 2019. **By far, non-payment of rent is the most common reason for eviction filed with the courts, followed by termination of tenancy (Figure 2).** In our sample, it was relatively uncommon for landlords to file evictions due to hazard or injury to rental units.

Figure 2. Listed Reason for Eviction



Tenant Presence in Court

In our sample of 825 eviction filings, more than half (54 percent) of tenants appeared in court for their eviction proceedings. 45 percent of tenants in the sample did not appear in court, and thus did not have the opportunity to argue their side of the case. According to experts, this high rate may indicate that renters do not think they will succeed in court; indeed, only 4.4 percent of tenants in 2017 evictions filed were represented by an attorney, while 83 percent of landlords were represented.⁴

⁴ MacDonald, C. (2019, March 12). Group wants renters to have lawyers in eviction cases. *The Detroit News*.

Appendix A
Eviction Rate, By Zip Code, 8/2017-12/2019

Zip Codes	Evictions Per 100 Renter Households	Evictions	Renter Households (ACS, 2014-2018)
48224	25.5	1,586	6,225
48227	19.8	1,435	7,234
48235	19.0	1,439	7,564
48228	19.0	1,868	9,853
48223	18.9	818	4,338
48219	18.7	1,723	9,233
48234	17.2	1,002	5,819
48238	16.3	847	5,185
48221	15.9	887	5,578
48205	15.3	1,251	8,182
48204	14.0	640	4,582
48206	12.7	428	3,359
48215	12.2	338	2,769
48216	11.2	160	1,431
48213	11.1	460	4,129
48217	10.3	116	1,124
48214	9.2	549	5,956
48207	9.1	805	8,828
48202	9.0	497	5,520
48203	8.9	519	5,816
48208	8.1	217	2,670
48211	7.9	101	1,280

48201	7.8	603	7,691
48209	6.8	343	5,019
48226	6.8	242	3,547
48236	6.2	79	1,269
48210	6.1	247	4,069
48239	2.6	93	3,594
48212	2.0	97	4,769
48225	1.0	24	2,351

Appendix B
Zip Codes, By Prevalence of Rental Violations in Sample

	Zip Code	Rental Properties with Rental Violations⁵	Rate, Per 100 Renter Households
Group 1	48224	108	1.73%
	48223	50	1.15%
	48219	67	0.73%
	48215	20	0.72%
	48221	21	0.38%
	48235	28	0.37%
Group 2	48209	18	0.36%
	48234	13	0.22%
	48227	15	0.21%
	48239	7	0.19%
	48210	7	0.17%
	48238	8	0.154%
Group 3	48204	7	0.153%
	48214	8	0.13%
	48228	13	0.13%
	48206	4	0.12%
	48205	9	0.11%
	48202	6	0.11%
Group 4	48211	1	0.08%
	48213	3	0.07%

⁵ The zip codes are sorted into groups by the rate of rental properties with failed inspections, not the aggregate number of rental properties with violations. The rate was calculated by dividing the number of properties (shown in Column 3) with failed inspections by the number of rental households in each zip code, as reported by the American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2014-2018) and listed in Column 4, Appendix A.



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	48203	3	0.05%
	48208	1	0.04%
	48226	1	0.03%
	48212	1	0.02%

n=600 inspection records