



OWNING RENTAL PROPERTY IN SANTA MONICA

The City of Santa Monica Rent Control Law has been in effect since April 10, 1979.

Major provisions of the law:

- Control the amount that may be charged for a rental unit (the Maximum Allowable Rent);
- Determine the amenities and services that are included as part of the rent (for example, parking, appliances and laundry facilities); and
- Provide for only "good cause" evictions.

The Rent Control Board and its staff administer the law and provide assistance to tenants, property owners and other interested members of the public regarding rent control matters. This fact sheet highlights basic information about the law for current and prospective residential property owners in Santa Monica. It is not intended as legal advice nor as a substitute for reading the Rent Control Law and regulations.



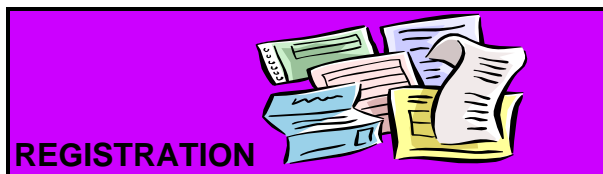
Most residential rental buildings in the City constructed prior to April 10, 1979 and a few units constructed after that date are covered by Rent Control. In addition to apartment buildings, rent control may also apply to single-family homes and condominiums, depending on the unit's history. To check on the rent control status, rent levels and/or amenities of a specific property, contact a Rent Control Information Coordinator at (310) 458-8751.

REGISTRATION – continued

Failure to register will prevent the property owner from using many provisions of the Law, including implementing annual rent increases and filing petitions with the Board. Registration forms must be filed under the following circumstances:

• When there is a change in ownership or owner's address:

Within 30 days of a change in ownership or title, the new owner needs to file a Change of Ownership Registration form with the Board. If the owner's mailing address changes, an amendment to the registration form advising the Board of the new mailing address must be filed within 30 days. It is important that the Board have the owner's correct mailing address for timely receipt of communications, legal notices and annual registration fee bills.



Whenever there is an ownership change or a unit is rented to a new tenant, a registration form must be filed with the Rent Control Board.

• **After a vacancy increase is implemented:**

As of January 1, 1999, owners may rent most units to new tenants for market rates. In negotiating the initial rent for tenancies starting after January 1, 1999, owners may offer whatever amenities they choose, without regard to the amenities that previously came with the apartment. The amenities provided when the apartment is rented will be at a minimum the unit's amenities for the duration of the tenancy. New rent levels and parking information must be registered with the Board within 30 days of re-rental on a form provided by the Board.

REGISTRATION FEES



Annual billing An annual registration fee is charged to all owners of rent-controlled property. The fees finance the administration of the Rent Control Law. Registration fee bills are mailed to all owners by July 1 of each year and payment is due by August 1. Owners who pay their fees on time may recover the cost by adding a prorated surcharge to their tenants' monthly rents. ***Fees not paid by the due date may not be collected from the tenants at any time.*** Owners who have not received their bills by mid-July should contact the Rent Control office.

Fee Waivers Registration fees may be waived for very-low income senior and disabled tenants, owners who occupy one of their units as their principal place of residence, and for units subsidized by a state or federal housing program. Contact the Rent Control office for an application and income guidelines.




MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE RENTS (MARs)

The MAR is the maximum legal rent that a landlord may charge for a controlled rental unit. Certain surcharges may be added to the maximum allowable rent. The rent control staff can provide the current MAR in the Board's records for any controlled rental unit. MARs are also available on the Rent Control Board's World Wide Web page at:

www.smgov.net/rentcontrol

RENT INCREASES



Annual general rent adjustment

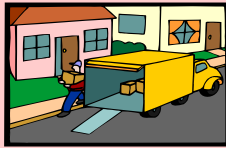
Each year, the Rent Control Board approves a general rent increase for all rent controlled units in the city. This increase compensates owners for increases in operating expenses. Rent Board staff analyze utility, water, insurance and other operating costs when recommending a general adjustment amount. The Rent Control Board Commissioners make the final decision after a public hearing. A copy of the general adjustment staff report is usually available in late May. Public hearings on the amount of the general increase are usually held in early June. Landlords and tenants are then notified by mail of the allowable increase. The general increases may be implemented on September 1, after tenants are given proper written notice. Landlords may not increase the rent if they are not in substantial compliance with all applicable Building, Health, Fire, and Safety codes and with the Rent Control Law.

Individual rent increase petitions

Landlords may request rent increases in addition to the yearly general adjustment by filing an Increase Petition. Individual rent increases are usually sought for completed or planned capital improvements, lack of fair return, or increases in operating expenses not covered by the general rent adjustment. Call the Rent Control Hearings Department (310-458-8751) if you need assistance with filing an individual rent increase petition.

Vacancy Increases As of January 1, 1999, upon most vacancies landlords may charge market rent. This new rent will then be re-controlled at the new rate. New rent levels and parking information must be registered with the Board within 30 days of re-rental on a form provided by the Board. (Landlords may be able to increase rents for some condominiums and **single family homes** without a vacancy. Call Rent Control for more information.)

LAWFUL EVICTIONS



The Rent Control Law limits why a tenant may be evicted. Some causes for eviction result when the tenant does not meet the agreement s/he made with the landlord. These are considered "good cause" evictions and include things like: failing to pay the rent, violating an important condition of the rental agreement or causing a substantial nuisance.

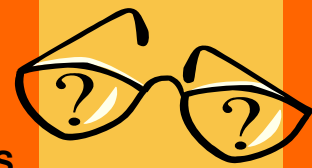
There are also lawful eviction situations in which the tenant is not at fault. "No fault" evictions include things like: the owner wants to occupy the apartment or is electing to get out of the rental

housing business. Most "no-fault" evictions require the landlord to pay relocation benefits to the displaced tenants.

Owners who find themselves in situations where evictions are necessary need to consult an attorney. There are several specific legal requirements that must be followed in order to complete this process.

For more information on evictions, contact the Rent Control office and request the Evictions Handout and applicable regulations.

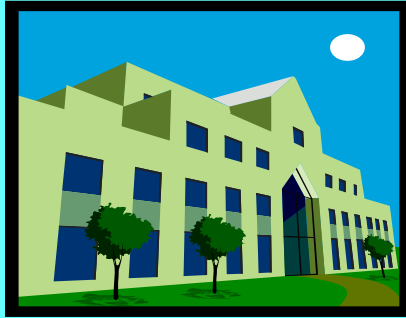
RENT DECREASES and



OTHER TOPICS

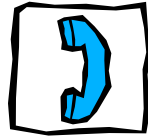
The Rent Control Law also allows tenants to request rent decreases when landlords do not maintain their rental property or do not continue to provide housing services. For more information on maintenance of rental properties and other topics not covered in this information sheet, please contact the Rent Control office and speak with an Information Coordinator. In addition to answering questions, they can mail out information sheets on the following topics:

- *New State Law Requires Improved Security for Apartments*
- *Maintenance of Rental Property*
- *Security Deposits*
- *Surcharges*
- *How to Prepare for a Rent Control Hearing*
- *The Rent Control Board: Commissioners and Meetings*
- *Frequently Asked Questions*



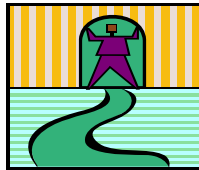
RENT CONTROL OFFICE HOURS

City Hall is closed every other Friday. Please call ahead before coming to the Rent Control office on a Friday to be sure we are open.



INFORMATION BY TELEPHONE

7:30 am - 5:30 pm, Monday – Thursday
8:00 am - 5:00 pm on alternate Fridays
(310) 458-8751



PUBLIC COUNTER HOURS

8:00 am - 4:30 pm
(except alternate Fridays)

SANTA MONICA RENT CONTROL BOARD

1685 Main Street, Room 202
Santa Monica, CA 90401
(310) 458-8751

www.smgov.net/rentcontrol