



Rent Control News

Landlord / Tenant Forum

The Consumer Protection Division of the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office and the Rent Control Agency will be discussing landlords' and tenants' rights and responsibilities at a free forum on Wednesday, December 3, 2014, from 9AM—Noon at the Thelma Terry Center in Virginia Avenue Park. This forum is part of the City's ongoing effort to increase public awareness in Santa Monica of how local and State laws impact landlords and tenants.

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

Along with a general overview of the Rent Control Law, issues to be discussed include:

- ◆ When does a landlord have the legal right to enter a tenant's unit?
- ◆ What requirements may a landlord place on how rent is paid?
- ◆ What actions are prohibited by Santa Monica's Tenant Harassment Law?
- ◆ When are partial or permanent relocation benefits required?

All tenants, property owners, property managers, and advocates are invited to attend. A continental breakfast will be served and some parking is available at the park. Registration is required by November 26, 2014 but please register early as space is limited to 90 people. Please go to www.smconsumer.org for on-line registration, or – as a last resort for those without an internet connection – call 310-458-4994 for registration by phone.

Rent Control Welcomes Returning Board Member Todd Flora and New Board Members Nicole Phillis and Steve Duron

Todd Flora returns to the Rent Control Board after being elected to a second four-year term. Mr. Flora states he is up to the challenge of continuing the fight to preserve tenants' rights in Santa Monica. He describes his philosophy as "**TODD: Tenant-Oriented Decision-making and Deference.**"

Nicole Phillis is a community activist/attorney who states she is committed to protecting tenant rights while fairly upholding the Rent Control Law. Ms. Phillis served as chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, answered the Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights (SMMR) hotline, and recently provided comments to the City Council on tenant harassment.



Steve Duron is an attorney and active volunteer in the community who has served on the City's Clean Beaches and Ocean Parcel Tax Citizens Oversight Committee. Mr. Duron states he will strive for three key elements as he serves on the Rent Control Board: education, communication, and protection – with the goal of helping to secure our neighborhoods and keep our community diverse.



Ms. Phillis and Mr. Duron join current Board members Todd Flora, Christopher Walton and Ilse Rosenstein.

Santa Monica Rent Control Board

1685 Main Street, Room 202, Santa Monica, CA 90401

Commissioners: *Todd Flora, Ilse Rosenstein, Christopher Walton, Marilyn Korade-Wilson, William Winslow*

Executive Director: *Tracy Condon*

Hemos preparado también una copia de este boletín en español. Para obtener esta versión traducida, visite nuestro sitio web en español en www.smgov.net/rentcontrol/spanish o llame a nuestra oficina al (310) 458-8751.

Santa Monica's Water Shortage Update

As the unprecedented drought worsens, cities throughout California are mandating strict water conservation practices for all water users. On August 12th, the Santa Monica City Council declared a Stage 2 Water Supply Shortage, which will require a city-wide reduction in water use of 20%. On October 28th, the Council reviewed and commented on proposed updates to the Water Shortage Response Plan and considered proposed water use allowances and potential drought surcharges. Members of the public will have opportunities to provide input on the water allowances, drought surcharges, and other elements of the City's Water Shortage Response Plan. The Council also allocated funds to encourage and incentivize adoption of

water-conservation measures. One example is providing "Cash for Grass" rebates for replacing lawns with climate appropriate plants, mulch or water-saving irrigation.

Specific Stage 2 water allowances for all city water customers may begin in early 2015. Baseline allowances will correspond to water usage from calendar year 2013. Drought surcharges for use over the allowance may be implemented by the City Council in 2015. There will be an extensive educational effort to encourage long-term behavioral changes in water usage.

As happened in the drought of the early 1990s, if the City Council implements water drought surcharges, the Rent Control Board will consider adopting

regulations to allow owners to pass through a proportionate share of the drought surcharge. Before adopting a regulation, the Board will hold public hearings to determine an equitable method to handle surcharges.

Santa Monica's website at www.smgov.net/water provides detailed information about the water conservation measures the City is taking, along with water-saving tips for residential and commercial water users. You will also find information about rebates for fixture installations and changes you can make to your property to assist in the conservation of water.

For more information or assistance call the Santa Monica Office of Sustainability and the Environment at (310) 458-2213.

Voters Approve Change in Assessment of Annual Registration Fees

As of press time, semifinal official results show that on November 4th, Santa Monica voters passed Measure FS, limiting the maximum annual Rent Control Board registration fee to \$288 per controlled rental unit, and limiting the portion of the fees that landlords may pass through to tenants to 50% of the fee.

How Will the Approval of Measure FS Affect the Rent Control Board's Financing?

Before passage of Measure FS, the City Charter imposed no dollar-amount limit on the registration fee the Board could require property owners pay to cover the Agency's reasonable and necessary expenses. With the passage of Measure FS, the City Charter continues to require the Board to set the fee each year at a level necessary to finance its "reasonable and necessary" expenses, but it now caps the fee at a maximum of \$288. Any increase above that amount will need to be approved by the voters. Based on current projections, initial increases to the registration fee will be modest, with the fee increasing to the maximum \$288 only in 10 to 12 years.

How Will the Approval of Measure FS Affect Owners of Rent-Controlled Properties?

Before the passage of Measure FS, the Board could decide what portion of the registration fee, if any, property owners could pass through to tenants as a surcharge on their rent. Historically, the Board had allowed property owners to pass

through 100% of the fee, but in 2013, the Board limited the pass-through to about 90%. Measure FS now limits the pass-through to 50%.

How Will the Approval of Measure FS Affect Tenants?

Beginning with the registration fee assessed in July of 2015, the portion that tenants may be charged will go down. Currently, property owners may pass through to tenants \$13 per month (\$156 per year) of the registration fee. In June of 2015, the Board will adopt the fiscal year 2015/2016 budget. If the fee remains the same at \$174.96 per unit, the tenants' share starting in September of 2015 would be \$7.29 per month. Based on current projections, the pass-through is not anticipated to reach \$12 per month for 10 to 12 years.

Thank You to Commissioners Korade-Wilson and Winslow

The Rent Control Board and staff want to thank outgoing commissioners Marilyn Korade-Wilson and William Winslow, who each served as Chairperson of the Board during their tenure.

Ms. Korade-Wilson served the community with dedication and fairness for two terms. During his term, Mr. Winslow shared his insights and expressed his commitment to justice for all concerned.

Stay in Touch Electronically

SM Alerts

Did you know the City of Santa Monica has a notification system that can provide you with critical information during a natural disaster, police activity or other emergency? When you sign up for SM Alerts, public safety officials can quickly disseminate vital information to you if an emergency occurs. SM Alerts lets you know what's happening, where to go and what to do to keep your family safe. You can choose multiple ways to be contacted — by phone, text message, email and other options. You can even register to receive SM Alerts for specific locations in the city, such as your home address, a relative's home or your child's school.

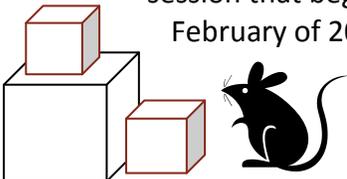
Be prepared and sign up today! Visit www.smalerts.net or call the Office of Emergency Management at 310-458-2263.

Too Much Stuff?

Learn about a step-by-step program to help reduce unmanageable clutter.

WISE & Healthy Aging offers a series of workshops designed to help you get control and provides support while you learn ways to reduce the burden of your acquisitions.

Call Sheila Segal LMFT,
Director of Peer Counseling
at (310) 394-9871, ext. 373
to sign up for the winter
session that begins in
February of 2015.



Upcoming Seminars

Four annual Rent Control tenant/owner seminars will be held at the usual spring, summer, and fall intervals. The spring seminars are tentatively scheduled for the dates indicated below. Check our website at www.smgov.net/rentcontrol or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/santamonica-rentcontrol for calendar updates.

*All seminars are held at the Santa Monica Main Public Library
601 Santa Monica Blvd., 2nd Floor Multipurpose Room.*

Owning Rental Property in Santa Monica

March 3 (tentative), Tuesday
9:30AM—Noon

Designed for owners and managers, this seminar explains the basics of the Santa Monica Rent Control Law. Topics include rents, housing services, maintenance, eviction limitations, restrictions on change of use, and services available at the Rent Control office.



**Please register for any seminar
you would like to attend.**

Call (310) 458-8751 or send an
email to rentcontrol@smgov.net.

Legal Resources in the Community

The Rent Control Law limits the reasons tenants may be evicted. When tenants facing possible eviction contact the Rent Control Agency, they are advised to speak with an attorney. The Rent Control Agency cannot give legal advice nor represent individuals in court, so we refer people to an agency that can provide legal assistance.

The Santa Monica office of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) recently received additional funding from the City of Santa Monica to add an attorney to their Santa Monica office. Additional resources are now available to assist tenants facing eviction or experiencing harassment.

Legal Aid Foundation of LA (LAFLA)

1640 5th St., Suite 124, Santa Monica
An appointment is necessary.
(310) 899-6200
www.lafla.org

Tenant Seminar

May 5 (tentative), Tuesday
6:30PM—9:00PM

This seminar informs tenants of the services available through the Rent Control office such as how rent and housing services are defined, the eviction protections under the law, and remedies that are available for issues related to rents, amenities, and maintenance.

Although some of the referrals we provide are intended for those of limited incomes, other services are available for those who do not meet the income requirements. In addition to LAFLA, Rent Control often refers citizens to these other legal resources:

■ Santa Monica Self-Help Legal Access Center

Santa Monica Courthouse,
1725 Main St., Santa Monica
Walk-ins only. Provides help with responses to eviction lawsuits, civil harassment and restraining orders. Hours are limited.
Open Monday – Thursday 8:30AM—4PM (closed 12:00PM—1:30PM)

■ Eviction Defense Network

1930 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 208, Los Angeles. Call (213) 385-8112 or walk in. No appointment is necessary. Provides legal representation on a sliding scale based on income.
Open Monday – Friday 9:00AM—6:00PM (last intake at 3:30PM)
www.evictiondefensenetwork.org

■ Santa Monica Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service

Provides referrals to attorneys. Fee is \$25 for referral but includes a free initial half-hour consultation.
(310) 581-5163
www.smba.net



Printed on recycled paper with soy ink 

TENANTS

The amount shown in the circle at left is the Maximum Allowable Rent (MAR) for your unit, per Rent Control records. The legal rent for your unit is the MAR plus allowable surcharges, which typically add \$13 to \$60 (more for condos) to your rent. If you moved in recently, our records may not have been updated. If the message is "Tenant Call," or if you have questions about your MAR, allowable surcharges, or any rent control topic, please call an Information Analyst at (310) 458-8751.

OWNERS

Each July, owners receive a report listing the MAR that is listed in Rent Control's records for every rental unit on their property or properties. If you are an owner, the circle at left should not include a MAR. If a MAR is listed, please call Rent Control at (310) 458-8751.

Rent Control is closed every other Friday.
Please call before coming to be sure it's a Friday we're open.

INFO



Public Counter: 1685 Main St., Room 202
M-Th / Alternate F: 8:00 -4:30



Telephone: (310) 458-8751
M-Th: 7:30-5:30 / Alt F: 8:00 -5:00



Website: www.smgov.net/rentcontrol



Email: rentcontrol@smgov.net



www.facebook.com/santamonicarentcontrol

Inside the Fall 2014 issue . . .

- ◆ *Landlord / Tenant Forum*
- ◆ *Voters Approve Measure FS*
- ◆ *Water Shortage Update* ...and more

Para obtener una traducción de este boletín en español, vea el aviso con las instrucciones correspondientes en el interior de este boletín.



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