



Rent Control News

Introducing... Rent 2020

Rent Control to Launch Web Portals to its Database and Document Archive

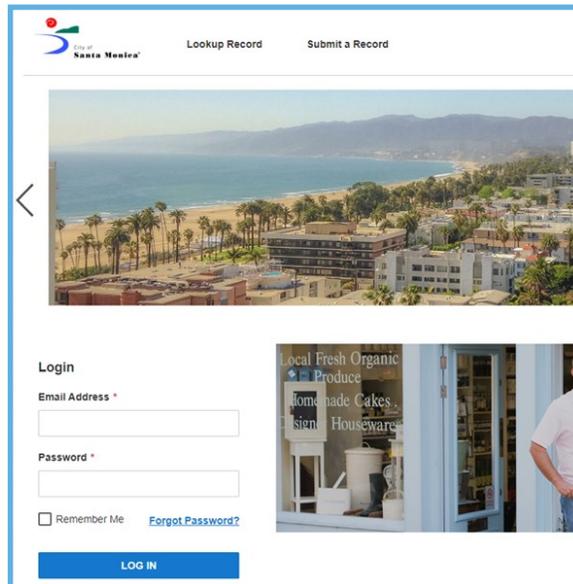
Rent Control is introducing a set of tools to enable tenants and property owners to access our records and to file most forms, petitions and other documents online. The new tools will roll out next spring and are part of a major upgrade to our information system for tracking each unit's Maximum Allowable Rent (MAR), property ownership, and other information.

Owners and authorized agents who register to access **Rent 20/20** will be able to specify which properties you own or manage and view information about them through a web-based portal. That means you'll have immediate access to important information for all of your properties, and it will be conveniently located in one place.

Other benefits of **Rent 20/20** include:

- Submittal of forms and petitions online with electronic signatures
– *no need to mail everything to us!*
- Streamlined tenancy registration
– *even easier than our current online registration process!*
- Online billing and fee payments
– *check the status of your account anytime!*
- Real-time form status updates
– *no more wondering if we've received or processed your forms!*

(cont. p2)



POD Important Program Update

Many seniors living on very low incomes in Santa Monica are at risk of displacement due to their inability to afford basic needs such as rent, utilities, food, and healthcare. Programs seniors depend upon, such as Medicaid and SSI, do not take into account the local cost of living or the unique characteristics of elder households. As a result, many long-term senior members of our community are struggling with economic insecurity.

The **Preserving Our Diversity (POD)** pilot program was launched to help these seniors live with dignity by meeting their basic needs through direct monthly cash-based assistance. The amount of cash-based assistance is determined by comparing a household's after-rent income to the amount needed by a typical one- or two-person senior household to meet its basic needs. The basic needs amount was derived from the UCLA Elder Index Basic Needs Budget, with adjustments regarding utility and transportation costs.

(cont. p2)

Santa Monica Rent Control Board 1685 Main Street, Room 202, Santa Monica, CA 90401

Commissioners: Steve Duron, Anastasia Foster, Nicole Phillis, Naomi Sultan, Caroline Torosis

Executive Director: Tracy Condon

Hemos preparado también una copia de este boletín en español. Para obtener esta versión traducida, llame a nuestra oficina al (310) 458-8751.

POD (cont.)

POD will provide monthly cash-based assistance to help each household achieve a minimum monthly after-rent income of \$700 for a one-person household or \$1,225 for a two-person household. The POD pilot program began in 2017 with 22 participants and the City Council approved a \$2 million expansion of the program in June of 2019 to assist an additional 200 to 400 seniors.

The City’s Housing Division is administering the program and is now accepting registrations. If you or someone you know are at least 65 years old with an after-rent monthly income below \$700 for a one-person household or \$1,225 for a two-person household, then the City of Santa Monica’s POD program may help. Households in long-term rent-controlled units were mailed letters in late October with POD registration forms.

To be eligible to apply:

- 1) Resident must be aged 65 or older; and
- 2) Household must have moved in to current Santa Monica rent-controlled unit prior to January 1, 2000; and
- 3) Annual household income must be equal to or less than very-low income (50% Area Median Income).

Household Size	Maximum Income
1 Person	\$36,550
2 Persons	\$41,800
3 Persons	\$47,000
4 Persons	\$52,200

Seniors interested in the program must first register.

Registration is the first step in a 3-step process: 1) Registration; 2) Application; 3) Enroll. Seniors wishing to participate in the program are encouraged to register as early as possible because program funds are limited, however the registration period will remain open.

- How to register:
- Online at www.santamonica.gov/pod
 - By phone at 310-458-8743 (Monday – Thursday: 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.)
 - Returning registration forms mailed to long-term residents

Please note: registering is not the same as applying. After registering, only those who meet the criteria listed above will receive an application from the City. All applications submitted to the City will be placed on a waitlist. Applicants will then be selected by lotteries.

Rent 20/20 (cont.)

We are also introducing free online access via a web portal to thousands of documents in our property archive. Users can search by property address or parcel number, filter the search by year and sort documents by type. Initially, we’ll provide documents from 2005 to the present with plans to expand that selection in the future.

► How to access the portals:

All Santa Monica tenants, property owners and managers who want to benefit from the features of **Rent 20/20** will need to create free accounts. **You can start now by sending an account request to Rent2020@smgov.net.** Property owners and managers should include your name and the parcel numbers or addresses of the properties you own or manage. When we are ready to launch, we’ll send you an email with login instructions.

Look Up A Rent Feature Enhanced

We’ve also enhanced the popular Look Up A Rent feature on our website. Look Up A Rent lets you look up a property address and see the MAR for each unit. Now, we’ve added information about the unit’s size and, for units rented on or after January 1, 1999, the date the tenancy began. With more than 46,000 hits last year, it’s the most frequently visited page on our site.



Get Early Access to the Document Portal!

Landlords and tenants who sign up now will be given access to the document portal before the general go-live this spring.

Don’t wait – sign up today!

The screenshot shows the 'Rent Control Board' document portal interface. It features a search bar with a dropdown menu for 'Search Type' (set to 'Portal - Parcel Number') and a text input for 'Parcel-Number' (containing '4266013002'). Below the search bar are 'Search' and 'Reset' buttons. To the right, a 'Results' table displays a list of documents with columns for 'Parcel Number', 'Street Number', 'Street Name', 'Unit ID', 'Document Detail', and 'Docur'. The table contains 12 rows of data, including tenant contact info and ownership changes for various units on Montana Ave.

Keeping in Step with New Rent Control Board Regulations

Expiration of Removal Permits

At their October meeting, the Board adopted new regulations to address the recent California Appeals Court ruling in favor of the Board asserting jurisdiction over units that were formerly granted removal permits but were not actually removed from the residential rental market. Removal permits are granted in limited situations such as when a landlord proves a unit is uninhabitable and cannot be made habitable in an economically feasible manner. The regulations clarify three basic things:

1. a removal permit allows an owner to take a controlled unit off the rental housing market;
2. if a removed unit is ever offered or used for residential rental purposes, it is again subject to rent control;
3. removal permits expire if not acted on in a timely fashion:
 - Permits issued before October 15, 2018 expired if they were not acted on by October 15, 2019;
 - Permits issued to take units off the market because they are uninhabitable or because they prevent the owner from realizing a fair return expire if not acted upon within 90 days;
 - Permits issued to allow for new development that includes low-income housing and new controlled units expire if not used within two years.

All regulations can be found on the Rent Control Board's website.

Calculation of Rent Decrease

At their April meeting, the Board adopted Regulation 4203 addressing how rent decreases due to maintenance-related conditions and/or lost/reduced housing services are calculated. The new regulation stipulates that if a tenant files a petition for a rent decrease and following a hearing a decrease is granted, the rent reduction is calculated from the date the petition was filed. The new regulations now compensate for the period during which a tenant had to pay full rent while maintenance-related problems or reduction of housing services existed. Formerly, reductions were effective on the first rent-due date at least 30 days after the decrease decision was issued and did not take into consideration the time during which the petition process was ongoing.

As a result of adopting Regulation 4203, the Board also amended Regulation 4004(a), which allows a rent decrease petition to be dismissed at any time before the date of the originally scheduled hearing, upon verification that the conditions listed in the petition have been corrected by the landlord. The amended regulation provides landlords an incentive to remedy conditions early while reducing the period during which the tenant may have to live with reductions in maintenance or services.

Rent-Controlled Units Must be Rented to Individuals

Addressing concerns that some controlled rental units in Santa Monica are being used for purposes other than long-term residential use, the Board adopted Regulation 2008 last year to clarify that rent-controlled units may only be used to provide long-term permanent housing for individual human beings. The practice of renting controlled units to corporations so that they may then be rented to short-term visitors, as a business for the corporation rather than as housing for residents, is contrary to the Board's mission of alleviating the housing shortage by protecting the availability of *housing*. The Court of Appeal has made clear that "housing" is long-term, permanent housing for a person who occupies a controlled unit as his or her primary residence. This practice of renting to non-human business entities so that they may use controlled units for purposes other than housing worsens an already existing housing crisis in contravention of the goals of the rent control law.

Renting controlled units to corporations, that by definition cannot occupy a unit as "housing," is tantamount to removing the housing from the residential rental market, a procedure that is regulated by the rent control law. Unlawful removals can result in the Board taking legal action against a landlord.

Upcoming Seminars

2019 Landlord/Tenant Forum

Join us Wednesday, December 4th, for the sixth annual Landlord/Tenant Forum co-sponsored by the Rent Control Agency and the Consumer Protection Division of the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office. As with past events, we'll bring you up to date on the hot topics for Santa Monica landlords and tenants along with updates on landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities. This year's event will include a guest speaker from the City's Code Enforcement Division.

The forum is part of the City's ongoing effort to increase public awareness of how local and state laws impact landlords and tenants.

Topics to be discussed include:

- Santa Monica Rent Control updates
- New developments in California landlord/tenant law
- Construction-related tenant harassment
- Section 8 voucher discrimination
- Permanent relocation benefits
- General Q&A

The event will be held December 4, 2019, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. at the Thelma Terry Center in Virginia Avenue Park, located at 2200 Virginia Avenue in Santa Monica. (Sign-in opens at 8:30 A.M.) All Santa Monica tenants, property owners, property managers, and advocates are invited to attend. A continental breakfast will be served. Limited parking is available, but carpooling and alternative transportation are recommended.

► Registration is required by December 2nd. Please register early as space is limited.

Register at smconsumer.org or call (310) 458-8691.



Printed on recycled paper with soy ink



TENANTS

The amount in the circle at left is the MAR for your unit, per Rent Control records. **If you moved in recently, our records may still list the MAR for the previous tenancy. In most cases, owners may reset the rent with each new tenancy.** In addition to the MAR, an owner may pass-through to tenants half (\$8.25 per month) of the registration fee Rent Control charges for each unit.

*For tenancies that began before March 1, 2018 and on properties not sold or reassessed since then, owners may also add surcharges based on the property tax bill. With the fee and surcharges, the legal rent for your unit may be \$8 to \$43 higher than the MAR shown. If the message is "Tenant Call," or if you have questions about your MAR, fees or surcharges, please call Rent Control 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 Board
1685 Main Street, Room 202
Santa Monica, CA 90401

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First Class Mail
U.S. Postage Paid
Santa Monica, CA
Permit No. 128



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

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