Department of Housing and Community Development
Rental Accommodations Division
Housing Resource Center
1909 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020 | (202) 442-9505

**Steps for Registering a Rental Accommodation**
**Rental Accommodations Division Guideline**

This is a general guide for the process of (1) obtaining a basic business license for a housing provider (commonly called a landlord) to operate and (2) register rental housing.

Rental Housing Act of 1985. The Rental Housing Act of 1985 (Act) (D.C. Official Code 2001 ed., as amended, § 42-3501.01 *et seq.*) and regulations (title 14, chapters 3900-4300 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations* (DCMR), 2004 ed., as amended) regulate rental housing in the District of Columbia.

The Act includes the Rent Stabilization Program (commonly called "rent control"). The Act requires that all rental housing must be licensed by the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (DLCP), inspected for housing code compliance by the Department of Buildings (DOB), and registered with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Rental Accommodations Division (RAD).

Under the Act, there are two types of rental housing:

- A "**market rate**" rental accommodation means that the lease agreement controls the relationship between a housing provider and tenant and states all the terms for a tenant to occupy the rental accommodation such as the amount of the rent and how often the housing provider may increase the rent; or

- A "**rent-stabilized**" rental accommodation means that in addition to the lease agreement which states the terms for a tenant to occupy the rental accommodation, a housing provider can increase the rent only once year and may increase the rent at a rate according to the Act unless the housing provider receives special approval from RAD to increase the amount of rent under certain circumstances.

Registration Requirement. **All** rental housing must be licensed to operate by DLCP and must be registered with RAD. If a housing provider does not register their rental accommodation, then that property is legally and *automatically* rent-stabilized until the housing provider complies with registration requirements. A housing provider may not legally adjust the rent until the rental accommodation is registered and in substantial compliance with the housing conditions code.

## STEP 1: Request a Housing Conditions Code Inspection

Department of Buildings (DOB)
(202) 671-3500 | dob.dc.gov
1100 4th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Request a basic business license rental housing inspection and complete the online application

at inspections.dob.dc.gov/forms/business_license_rental_housing_inspection/step_1.

It will take approximately 7 business days to schedule and receive an inspection result.

## STEP 2: Request a Clean Hands Certification

D.C. Office of Tax and Revenue
(202) 727-4829 | mytax.dc.gov
1101 4th Street, S.W., Suite W-270
Washington, D.C. 20024

“Clean Hands” means that individuals and businesses are denied city goods or services (such as licenses, permits, grants, contracts) if there is a debt owed to the District of Columbia of more than $100 for fees, fines, taxes, or penalties, or failure to file required District Tax Returns.

Apply for a Clean Hands Certificate (Form FR-500) online at mytax.dc.gov > Business > Request a Certificate of Clean Hands or you may apply in person. For more information see https://mytax.dc.gov/WebFiles/faq/faq.html.

You will need your taxpayer identification number and a scanned copy of a valid government-issued identification.

You should receive your Clean Hands Certificate within 3 business days.

## STEP 3: Apply for a Basic Business License

Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (DLCP)
(202) 671-4500 | dlcp.dc.gov
1100 4th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Apply for a basic business license from DLCP’s Business Licensing Division. You can apply online at dlcp.dc.gov/service/get-business-license or apply in person at the DLCP Business Center at 1100 4th Street, S.W., 2nd Floor. You will pay a basic business license fee and rental unit registration fee ($30 per rental unit per year) when you apply for your license. Both fees are collected by DLCP.

If the rental accommodation consists of 2 or more rental units, apply for a certificate of occupancy.

After the property passes inspection and the license application is approved, DLCP will email you the basic business license or you may download a copy from DLCP’s online portal.

## STEP 4: Register the Rental Accommodation at RentRegistry.dc.gov

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Rental Accommodations Division (RAD_
1909 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020
(202) 442-9505 | dhcd.dc.gov | RentRegistry.dc.gov

You must register the rental accommodation using **RentRegistry.dc.gov**. You must open a user account and create a password. You will need the following documentation to complete your registration:

- a copy of a valid basic business license for the rental accommodation;
- a copy of a valid certificate of occupancy if the rental accommodation has 2 or more rental units;
- proof of ownership in the form of a recorded copy of your deed;
- if the rental accommodation is rent-controlled, you must provide the rate of return on your investment and have a worksheet showing how the figure was derived; and
- if you are claiming an exemption from rent stabilization (for example because the property is government-subsidized or constructed after 1980, additional documentation will be required.

Payment at registration is not required because the rental unit registration fee is collected by DLCP when the housing provider obtains a basic business license.

Additional information, training video links, and user manuals are available at dhcd.dc.gov/page/rentregistry-rent-control-database.

If you have questions, please email RAD at raddatabase.inquiries@dc.gov

RAD will review and process your online registration filing. If accepted for filing, the RentRegistry will assign a registration number and date stamp the registration application. If corrections are required, you will receive an email notification with instructions.

Within 15 days of receiving a date stamped registration, you must serve each tenant with a copy of the date stamped registration application. Service requirements may be found at section 14-4101.6 and section 14-4200.16 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations* (2004 ed., as amended).