



## Rent Stabilization Board

May 15, 2020

Dear Property Owner:

Enclosed is the 2020/2021 registration material for Berkeley residential rental units. This material includes a billing statement, return envelope, and a Unit Status Form.

The Berkeley Rent Board adopted a fee of **\$250** for the 2020/2021 registration fee for each unit covered by the Rent Stabilization Ordinance. This is the same fee as last year and is due no later than **Wednesday, July 1, 2020.**

Due to the Shelter in Place order issued by the Berkeley Health Officer as a result of the novel coronavirus COVID-19, the office of the Rent Board will be closed until at least May 31, 2020. The office will reopen when the Berkeley Health Officer deems it safe to do so. Property owners should continue to check the City of Berkeley's website at [www.cityofberkeley.info](http://www.cityofberkeley.info) for updates on the Shelter in Place order. The Shelter in Place order does not affect the requirement to register.

Property owners can pay their registration fees in the following ways:

- 1) **U.S. mail.** Owners who choose to pay by U.S. mail must pay by check only. Please note that the City of Berkeley does *not* accept credit card information by U.S. mail. Payments postmarked by July 1, 2020, will be considered timely.
- 2) **Online registration.** Owners who wish to pay the fee via credit card or e-check may do so using the Berkeley Rent Board's online registration option. Go to the Rent Board's website at [www.cityofberkeley.info/rent/](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/rent/) and choose the purple "Register Online" button. In addition to online payment, owners and agents who are designated as the property's billing contact may create a user account, register new tenancies (i.e., file a Vacancy Registration Form), register formerly exempt units, and claim exemptions. This will allow for immediate adjustment of bills and full payment from the convenience of your home or office. For most owners, online registration is the easiest way to keep their properties properly registered.

**In order to take advantage of the Rent Board's online registration option, property owners must have first provided a valid email address to this agency. You will not be allowed to create a user account if the Rent Board does not have your email address on file.** If you are unsure as to whether we have your email address, please contact our office at [RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info). You may also call our office and leave a message at 510-981-RENT (7368).

**Registration fees are due no later than Wednesday, July 1, 2020.** The Rent Stabilization Ordinance imposes a **100% penalty** on all units for which payment is not received by the Rent Board or postmarked by the due date. The Shelter in Place order does not affect this deadline. Please return the bottom half of the billing statement with your payment in the enclosed return envelope on or before July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Register Online!

You may fully register your property and pay the 2020/2021 fee online. Go to our website at [www.cityofberkeley.info/rent/](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/rent/).

Also: Join our Constant Contact mailing list to receive real-time updates on registration fees, AGAs, workshops, and other important information.

For **units where the tenancy commenced prior to January 1, 1999**, the Board has again authorized a direct pass-through of the portion of the registration fees not already included in the Annual General Adjustments granted since 2005. The amount of the pass-through is \$10.00 per month and assures that even long-term tenants continue to bear their share of registration fee increases. The pass-through may be taken only after proper notice and under certain conditions (see enclosed instructions and sample notice).

The enclosed billing statement is based on the most recent information provided to our office. While online registration is now an option, you may also make changes to your units' status using the enclosed Unit Status Form. Please review the form carefully; if any information is incorrect, cross it out and write the correct information directly on the form.

**If a prior year's fee or late penalty appears on your statement, it is important to resolve this account immediately.** An outstanding balance may adversely affect your eligibility to impose Annual General Adjustment increases and may result in a collection action. Failure to pay registration fees may also limit your ability to evict tenants on the property.

If you have any questions concerning the enclosed bill, please call our office at (510) 981-7368 (RENT) and leave a message; you may also email [RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info). Registration staff will return your call/email promptly. Please be sure to state that you are calling in regard to the billing statement and to provide the property address that you are inquiring about.

Sincerely,



Matt Brown  
Acting Executive Director

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#### **HOW TO REGISTER ONLINE**

- ✓ Go to [www.cityofberkeley.info/rent/](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/rent/) and click on the purple "**Register Online**" button on the right-hand side of the page.
- ✓ **Log in or create a user account using the billing code(s) from the enclosed billing statement(s).** You will not be able to create an account if you have not first provided an email address to the Rent Board. If you are not sure whether the Rent Board has your email address on file, you can call our office at (510) 981-7368 (RENT) and leave a message for the Registration Unit. You may also email the Registration Unit at [RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info).
- ✓ Use "**Manage Profile**" to update your mailing and contact information.
- ✓ Use "**Register New Tenancy**" to register a new tenancy (i.e., file a Vacancy Registration Form).
- ✓ Use "**Update Unit Status**" to register a formerly exempt unit or claim an exemption. Similar to claims made through our standard forms, all exemptions claims made online will be verified by Rent Board staff.
- ✓ **Add property (or properties) to your cart for registration payment.**
- ✓ **Pay either your bill in full (fees and any penalties that are due), or just the registration fees that are due.** You will receive confirmation of payment and your receipt number(s) by email.



Rent Stabilization Board

## REGISTRATION FACT SHEET

### *Fee payment during Shelter in Place*

Due to the Shelter in Place order issued by the Berkeley Health Officer as a result of the novel coronavirus COVID-19, the office of the Rent Board will be closed until at least May 31, 2020. The office will reopen when the Berkeley Health Officer deems it safe to do so. Property owners should continue to check the City of Berkeley website at [www.cityofberkeley.info](http://www.cityofberkeley.info) for updates on the Shelter in Place order. Owners may pay via U.S. mail, or they may pay online at [www.cityofberkeley.info/rent](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/rent) (click on the purple “Register Online” button). Envelopes postmarked by July 1<sup>st</sup> that contain the correct registration fee will be considered timely.

### *I have a question about my bill. How do I contact the Rent Board during Shelter in Place?*

Owners who have questions about their billing statement, Unit Status Form, etc., may call the Rent Board at 510-981-7368 (RENT) and leave a message. You may also send an email inquiry to [RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info). Be sure to provide your name, phone number, and the address of the property about which you are inquiring. Registration staff will return all calls and emails promptly.

### *Who needs to pay the registration fee?*

The vast majority of residential rental units in Berkeley are subject to the Board’s annual registration fee. The Shelter in Place order has no effect on this long-standing registration requirement for virtually all residential rental properties. **Even if not yet rented, all eligible units must be registered by July 1<sup>st</sup>.**

### *When to file Vacancy Registration form?*

For each new tenancy, landlords must file a Vacancy Registration form. The new rent level and the housing services reported by the landlord are entered into the Rent Board database. A property is not properly registered if required Vacancy Registration forms are not filed. **If you have a current tenancy that has not yet been reported, you must file a Vacancy Registration form within 15 days of the date it is rented even if there is no change in the rent charged.** You can download a blank Vacancy Registration form at [www.cityofberkeley.info/rent](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/rent).

### *Non-compliance = No rent increases and defense to an eviction*

Properties not in full compliance with registration requirements for all units are not eligible to implement any rent ceiling increases for **any** unit on the property. Non-compliance may also be used as a defense in an eviction action.

### *Paying by credit card?*

The City of Berkeley does not accept credit card information via U.S. mail. If you wish to pay via credit card, please use the online registration option. Go to our website at [www.cityofberkeley.info/rent](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/rent) and select “Register Online.” If you have any questions about online registration, please call our office at (510) 981-7368 (RENT) or email at [RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:RSBRequest@cityofberkeley.info).

**Instructions to Pass Through Increased Registration Fees to Tenancies Commenced Prior to 1/1/99**

Pursuant to Rent Stabilization Board Resolution 20-04, after landlords have paid the 2020/2021 registration fee, they may pass through a portion of this year’s fee to their tenants in the form of an **\$10.00** per month rent increase for 12 consecutive months **only for tenancies that commenced prior to January 1, 1999**. The \$10.00 increase does not become part of the permanent rent ceiling for purposes of calculating next year’s Annual General Adjustment. The \$10.00 rent increase allowed by Resolution 20-04 is not automatic, and landlords will only be eligible to pass it through to their tenants after they have paid the 2020/2021 registration fee as well as all outstanding fees and penalties and have given their tenants at least thirty (30) days’ prior written notice of the increase. (A sample notice containing all necessary information is included below.) **If landlords have already been taking a pass-through increase pursuant to prior Board resolutions, they may not take the current \$10.00 pass-through increase until the previous increase has expired. Pass-through increases from the previous year may be taken for no more than 12 months. Owners should contact our office for further advice.** Additionally, landlords must serve notice to initiate the increase allowed by Resolution 20-04 on or before December 1, 2020, in order to receive their full pass-through. For simplicity and ease of tracking, we recommend that landlords begin taking this pass-through when the previous year’s pass-through has expired. Unless subsequently extended by the Rent Board, the rent increase authorized by Resolution 20-04 must be terminated and the rent reduced by \$10.00 twelve months after it is imposed or December 31, 2021, whichever is earlier. Finally, **landlords must send a copy of the notice to pass through charges permitted by Resolution 20-04 to the Rent Board.**

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**Sample Thirty-Day Notice of Rent Increase**  
(For tenancies that started prior to January 1, 1999)

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
(tenant(s) in possession)

\_\_\_\_\_, Berkeley \_\_\_\_\_  
(address, unit number) (ZIP code)

Pursuant to Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board Resolution 20-04, adopted on April 30, 2020, you are hereby notified that thirty days after serving you with this notice the monthly rent for the premises you now occupy will be increased for the next twelve months.

The present rent on your unit is \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month.

Your rent will increase by **\$10.00** pursuant to Rent Board Resolution 20-04.

Your new rent will be \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month beginning \_\_\_\_\_. (This date must be at least 30 days after service of the Notice of Rent Increase.) This increase is temporary – it will only be collected for the next 12 months – and is not included in the unit’s permanent rent ceiling.

The undersigned hereby verifies that the 2020/2021 City of Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board registration fees, as well as all past fees and penalties, for this property were paid in full prior to service of this notice and a copy of this notice has been sent to the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Landlord/Manager Date

Advice concerning this Notice and the rental history of the unit is available from the Rent Stabilization Board Public Information Unit, 2125 Milvia Street, Berkeley, CA 94704, 9:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 12:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, (510) 981-7368.