



Tips for Philadelphia Rental Owners

The following is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended, nor should it be construed as legal advice. You should consult your own legal counsel regarding your particular situation.

- I. **Licenses and Certificates:** Philadelphia rental owners must obtain a variety of licenses and certificates. Some apply to every rental owner; others apply to rental owners under certain circumstances.
 - a) **Commercial Activity License - The Business Privilege License (BPL) is now called the Commercial Activity License – Nearly all rental owners must obtain a CAL.** Exceptions: where there are four or fewer units, where the owner lives on the premises. Applications and instructions are available on the city's website, www.phila.gov.
 - b) **Housing Inspection License – All rental owners but see one exception below:** Rental owners must first obtain a Commercial Activity License (formally known as a BPL) Number and Business Privilege Tax Identification number. An exception to the Housing Inspection License requirement- a recent court action and subsequent City Council ordinance determined individually owned condo units that are rented are not required to have a separate residential rental license, but they must have a Commercial Activity License (formally BPL). Condominium Associations or Management must obtain a rental license for all of the units in the building. Housing Inspection License Numbers are obtained through the Department of Licenses and Inspections, accessible at www.phila.gov .NOTE: As of May, 2013, legislation is being considered in City Council to overhaul the city's property maintenance code and change license requirements. Watch for notices and details.
 - c) **Certificate of Rental Suitability – All rental owners.** Must obtain a Certificate no more than 60 days prior to the beginning of a tenancy. Owners must have their Inspection License to get a Certificate. The Certificate is available on the L & I website, through www.phila.gov.
 - d) **High Rise License -**The Philadelphia Fire Code requires an annual High Rise License for structures in excess of six (6) stories. The fee is based on gross area of the building. If the building is used exclusively for residential purposes, and has a license under the Property

Maintenance Code, no Fire Code High Rise license is needed. If however, the building is partly used for residential purpose and has a Housing inspection license, that portion of the gross area used for residential purposes can be deducted from the gross area for Fire Inspection High Rise fee calculations.

A Summary of Certificates and Licenses – Can be found at the City’s **Licenses and Inspections website, Tenants and Landlords page**. L & I can be reached through www.phila.gov

- II. **Managing Agent** – Owners must name a managing agent to receive service of notices, orders or summonses issued by L & I. The agent must have a residence or a regularly attended business office in the City. An owner may designate him or herself as the managing agent.
- III. **“Partners for Good Housing Guidebook”** – A booklet published by Philadelphia’s Department of Licenses and Inspections. It must be given to new tenants. It is available on the L & I website. Printed copies are also available through AAGP.
- IV. **PGW’s Landlord Cooperation Program** – Pennsylvania law allows PGW to place liens on properties for tenants’ unpaid gas bills. The Landlord Cooperation Program allows landlords who register their properties and comply with the Program’s requirements to avoid liens. Rental owners can register at PGW’s website, www.pgworks.com.
- V. **Lead Paint Disclosure** - Owners of pre-1978 rental housing in which children aged six and under will reside must provide a new lessee with a valid certification prepared by a certified lead inspector that states whether the property is either lead free or lead safe. Lessors must provide a new lessee with the certification prior to entering into a lease agreement. Information is available at the City’s Health Department website, accessible at www.phila.gov
- VI. **Lead Paint Booklet – The booklet, “Protect your Family from Lead in Your Home”** must be given to new tenants in pre-1978 housing. Copies are available through the EPA, as well as AAGP.
- VII. **Dumpster License – Private** - Required for all dumpsters over one cubic meter in size that are stored on private property. The license is obtained through the Department of Licenses and Inspections, accessible at www.phila.gov The city has established a program known as SWEEPS (Streets & Walkways Education and Enforcement Program) to enforce the law against violators through intensified street patrols by uniformed litter enforcement officers, computerized tracking of code violation notices, and speedy adjudication of violations. Through education and enforcement, SWEEP supports and enhances individual and community efforts to maintain a clean City. SWEEPS officers have recently increased their enforcement activities.
- VIII. **Dumpster License – Public right of Way** - This license is required for all dumpsters larger than one cubic yard that are stored in a public right-of-way.

- IX. **Dumpster Medallions** – Every dumpster must have a Radio Frequency Identification (RFI) Medallion attached to it. They are issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections, accessible at www.phila.gov.
- X. **Recycling Plans** - Businesses, institutions and apartment communities using private waste haulers must file a Recycling Plan online with the Philadelphia Streets Department, publicly post the plan and distribute copies to residents. More information can be found on the city's Streets Department website: www.philadelphiastreet.com .
- XI. **Fire code requirements including Smoke Detectors and C O alarms** – More information is available at the Fire Code Unit of the Philadelphia Fire Department <http://philadelphiafirearmsystems.com/occupancy-fire-code/>. There are specific requirements for one & two-family dwellings, multiple-family dwellings and rooming houses, buildings that require more than one exit stair, and high rises.

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Additional information for rental owners: <https://business.phila.gov/>