

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION ABOUT THE
CITY OF LANCASTER'S RENTAL PROPERTY ORDINANCE**

What's the difference between a Rental Registration and a Rental License?

Rental Registration is needed in order to maintain an accurate inventory of housing stock in the City. This inventory is needed for important planning, zoning, sanitation, and public safety purposes. Rental properties must be registered with the City regardless of the number of units or whether the units are vacant or occupied. The initial registration does not have to be renewed, and is valid unless/until ownership of the property changes hands.

A **Rental Occupancy License** is needed for each unit to certify that the unit meets basic safety and habitability standards before it is rented. The property owner must pay a license fee and the unit must pass an inspection conducted by the Bureau of Code Compliance and Inspections before a license is issued. Licenses must be posted in the rental unit. A rental occupancy license must be renewed each year.

Is there any penalty for not registering a rental unit?

Whoever violates any provision of the ordinance shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 90 days or both. Each month that a violation exists constitutes a separate violation.

Is there any penalty for renting a unit or allowing it to be occupied without a license?

Yes. If the occupancy license for a rental unit is revoked for a violation of the ordinance, the owner is fined \$500 for each month the violation exists and the unit remains occupied. If the City discovers an unlicensed occupied unit, the owner is given 30 days to get a license, vacate the unit, or face a fine of \$500 for every month that the unit is occupied without a license.

How much does it cost for Registration and Licensing?

Initial Registration Fees

Rooming/Boarding House, Dormitory, Hotel	\$200
Multi-Family (3 or more units)	\$200
Transient Dwelling	\$200
Single & Double Units	\$50 per unit

Annual Occupancy License Fees

Rooming/Boarding House, Dorm, Hotel	\$25 per unit
Multi-, Transient, Single & Double Units	\$50 per unit

Transfer of Registration or License

If paid at the time of sale or title transfer.	\$25 per unit
If paid after sale or title transfer	\$75 per unit

Can my license be revoked for any reason?

There are specific reasons why an occupancy license can be revoked. If the condition of the rental unit does not meet property maintenance standards, a Housing Inspector may issue a violation notice. If the violation is not corrected, the license may be revoked. A license may also be revoked for failure to name a Responsible Agent; failure to pay the annual license renewal fee; failure to pay property violation tickets, water, sewer, solid waste, recycling fees or City taxes with respect to the Residential Rental Unit; failure to evict a tenant after three Disruptive Conduct incidents in a twelve month period; or failure to comply with any other provision of this Ordinance.

What happens to my rental property if my license is revoked?

If a residential rental occupancy license is revoked and the unit is vacant, it shall remain vacant until the license is reinstated. A license can be reinstated if the reason for its revocation is cured and a reinstatement fee of \$200 is paid. An owner or responsible agent who allows a residential rental unit to be occupied after the occupancy license has been revoked, will be charged a fine of 500.00 per unit for each month the violation exists.

If I lose my license, how can I get it back?

A license will be reinstated if the reason for its revocation is cured, no other violations exist, and a reinstatement fee of \$200 is paid.

Why am I required to identify a "Responsible Agent"?

If any problems occur at the rental property, the City, the tenant, and sometimes neighbors must be able to easily communicate with a local person to make them aware of the problem and to discuss a solution. A property owner who is not a full time resident of Lancaster County must designate a Responsible Agent who is authorized and willing to act on behalf of the owner to make sure that problems are addressed.

The ordinance targets disruptive tenant conduct. How does this work?

Police are already responding to complaints about noise and other neighborhood disturbances. In some cases, the police issue a citation. In most cases, the incident is simply logged in a police Incident Report, no citation is issued, and no one is notified of the problem behavior.

Police will continue to respond to complaints about disturbances and nuisance offenses such as noise. If the police officer finds that the complaint is valid, he/she will note the incident in a report as a "Disruptive Conduct Incident." Within 10 working days after the incident occurs at a rental property, the offending tenant and his/her landlord will be notified that a "Disruptive Conduct Incident" has been logged. Tenants and landlords will also be advised that the tenant must be evicted if police log three such valid "Disruptive Conduct Incidents" in a twelve-month period.