



**Be Informed. Be Protected. Be at Home.**  
HomeForLARenters.org

# *Guide for Los Angeles Tenants*

**HOME  
FOR  
Renters**

***Greetings  
from  
HCIDLA!***

**Living in Los Angeles is easier when you know your rights and all that's available to you as a tenant. Los Angeles Housing + Community Investment Department (HCIDLA) believes in the importance of informing tenants about their rights and protecting them against excessive rent increases and unlawful evictions.**

**This booklet is specifically for LA tenants who are covered by the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO).**

**With this information, we hope to make your rental unit a welcoming home for you and your family.**

***Know  
The  
Basics***

## ***What is Rent Stabilization or Rent Control?***

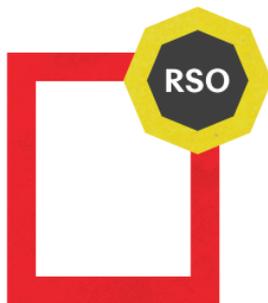
**The Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) is a law in the City of Los Angeles that covers about 624,000 units of rental housing and protects tenants from excessive rent increases while allowing landlords to receive reasonable returns on their investments.**

**The RSO generally covers rental units built before October 1978 with the exception of one single-family dwelling on a single parcel. Landlords are required to register all RSO units annually and pay a fee to cover program costs.**

DID YOU  
KNOW



**1 in 2** LA households lives  
in a rent-controlled unit.



## *Why does Los Angeles have Rent Stabilization?*

In 1978, there was a shortage of decent, safe and sanitary housing resulting from a critically low vacancy factor. Landlord and tenant organizations worked with the City of Los Angeles to develop a method for stabilizing and slowing down rent increases, which resulted in the adoption of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO).



**KNOW HOW THE RSO AFFECTS YOU**

## ***Is Your Rent Stabilized?***

**The RSO covers most rental units built prior to 1979, including duplexes and condos. In some cases, units built after 2006 may also be covered by the RSO.**

**Call HCIDLA to see if your building is covered under the RSO at:**

**866-557-RENT (7368).**

**Or look up the property address in the online system at:**

**[zimas.lacity.org](http://zimas.lacity.org)**

**\* After entering your home address, click the 'Planning and Zoning' tab and see if your unit is covered under the RSO.**



## KNOW HOW THE RSO AFFECTS YOU

# *What Fees Can Your Landlord Pass on to You?*

The RSO allows your landlord to collect two City fees in the form of rental surcharges. Note that your rental agreement may also include other fees for which you are responsible. These may be unique to your apartment property.

### **1. Annual Rental Unit Registration Fee**



\$38.75

Landlords must register all RSO units with the City. Fifty percent of this fee can be passed on to the tenant, as long as the tenant is provided with an advance written notice to pay. The fee may be collected only in a monthly rental surcharge of \$1.61.

### **2. SCEP Fee**



\$43.32

The Systematic Code Enforcement Program (SCEP) fee covers the costs of inspections to the interior and exterior of multi-family residential rental units in properties with two or more units once every four years to ensure compliance with State and local Health and Safety codes.

***Know  
Your  
Rights***

## **Here are your rights as a tenant in a rent-stabilized unit in the City of Los Angeles:**

- I RIGHT TO ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION Pg.12 - 13**
- II RIGHT TO LEGAL AND STABILIZED RENT Pg.14 - 21**
- III RIGHT TO LEGAL EVICTION & RELOCATION ASSISTANCE Pg.22 - 31**
- IV RIGHT NOT TO ACCEPT A “CASH FOR KEYS” OFFER Pg.32 - 33**
- V KNOW YOUR HOUSING RIGHTS Pg.34 - 39**

**If you believe your rights are being violated, it is best to talk to your landlord first to try to find a resolution as they may not be familiar with all of the laws.**

**If you cannot resolve the issue directly with your landlord, call HCIDLA at:**

**866-557-RENT (7368).**



## I. RIGHT TO ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

***A RSO Notification  
MUST be posted in your  
rental building.***

**All RSO properties must have a posted HCIDLA-approved RSO Notification with information regarding the RSO and HCIDLA contact information. This notice must be posted in a common area, such as in the lobby, near the mailbox, or in or near a public entrance to the property.**



## II. RIGHT TO LEGAL & STABILIZED RENT

***You are protected  
against excessive  
annual rent increases.***

**The annual allowable rent increase under the RSO is 4% plus 1% per gas and/or electricity if your landlord pays for those costs. Generally, the landlord can only increase your rent once every 12 months. Your landlord must give you a written 30-day notice before the increase may be collected.**

**There are two types of rent increases allowed under the RSO: those that require HCIDLA approval and those that do NOT require HCIDLA approval.**

## ***1. DO NOT Require HCIDLA Approval:***

- Rent may be increased once every 12 months by the annual allowable rent increase percentage. Your security deposit can simultaneously be increased by the same percentage.
- A 10% increase for each additional tenant approved by the landlord. However, the rent may not be increased for the first minor dependent child added to the tenancy.

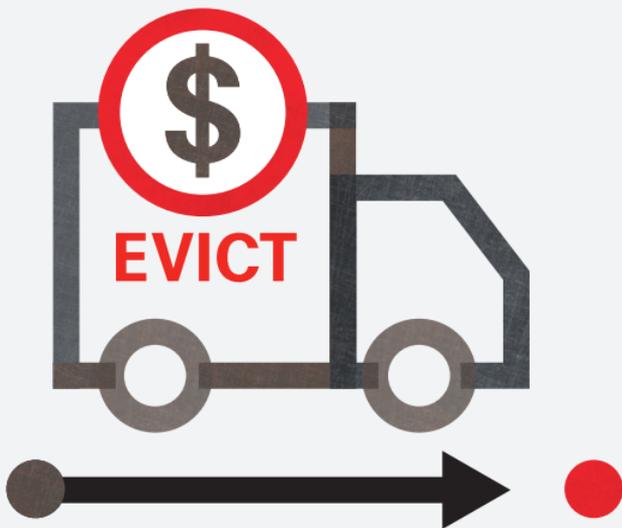
## ***2. Require HCIDLA Approval:***

- **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:** Improvement to the rental units or common areas that have a useful life of at least 5 years, such as installation or replacement of washers and dryers, security gates, carpet, roofing, etc.
- **PRIMARY RENOVATION:** Renovation of major building systems within the rental building or to reduce exposure to hazardous materials. This work requires a permit under the LAMC and a Tenant Habitability Plan (THP).
- **REHABILITATION WORK:** Any work done on or in a rental unit or common area to comply with an order from HCIDLA, LADBS, LAFD or the Health Department, due to a change in the Housing Code.
- **SEISMIC RETROFIT WORK:** Work done on soft-story rental buildings in compliance with a City-mandated seismic retrofit order.
- **JUST AND REASONABLE RENT INCREASE:** A special permanent rent adjustment may be approved by the City when the landlord offers proof that their operating expenses exceed income as is adjusted for by inflation.



**You could be entitled to  
paid relocation assistance  
for a no-fault eviction.**

*Go to page 27 to learn more.*





## II. RIGHT TO LEGAL & STABILIZED RENT

***Your rent should be reduced when housing services are removed.***

**If a housing service (e.g. parking, laundry, pool) provided to you at the beginning of your tenancy is removed or is no longer accessible, your rent may be reduced as compensation.**



## II. RIGHT TO LEGAL & STABILIZED RENT

***You are not required to pay rent or fees solely through online / electronic transfers.***

**State law and the RSO prohibit landlords from demanding or requiring payments via Internet or electronic funds transfer as the ONLY method accepted for payment of rent, security deposits, surcharges or other housing service fees.**



### III. RIGHT TO LEGAL EVICTION & RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

***You can ONLY be evicted for the following legal reasons.***

There are only 14 legal reasons to be evicted from your rental unit: 8 at-fault reasons; and 6 no-fault reasons. These reasons are listed in the following pages.

If you receive an eviction notice from your landlord, it is important that you act IMMEDIATELY.

It is best to talk to your landlord first and attempt to resolve the issue. If it cannot be resolved, call HCIDLA promptly to file a complaint. If you must relocate because of a no-fault eviction, HCIDLA may be able to help you obtain relocation assistance.

## *At-Fault Evictions*



*\* This is an agreement between landlord, tenant and HCIDLA to ensure that the unit stays 'habitable' when the landlord is doing major repairs to major building systems (e.g., plumbing, electrical systems, foundation work, etc.).*

- 1 NON-PAYMENT OF RENT**  
You did not pay your rent by the due date specified in your rental agreement.
- 2 LEASE VIOLATION**  
You violated the lease terms and have received written notice from the landlord to fix the violation.
- 3 NUISANCE**  
You are causing damage to the rental unit or are creating an unreasonable interference and harm to the other residents of the same or adjacent buildings.
- 4 ILLEGAL PURPOSE**  
You are using the rental unit for a purpose other than residential use. This includes gang and drug activity.
- 5 FAILURE TO RENEW THE LEASE**  
You have an expired written lease or rental agreement and have refused to sign a new lease or rental agreement with a similar duration and provisions.
- 6 DENIAL OF ACCESS**  
You refused the landlord reasonable access to the unit for repairs, improvements, inspections, or for the purpose of showing the rental unit to any prospective purchaser.
- 7 UNAPPROVED SUBTENANT**  
The person in possession of the rental unit at the end of a lease term is a subtenant not approved by the landlord.
- 8 VIOLATION OF TENANT HABITABILITY PLAN\***  
Your landlord filed a Tenant Habitability Plan with HCIDLA and you are unreasonably interfering with your landlord's ability to perform Primary Renovation to your rental unit or the building.

## *No-Fault Evictions*



*\* The Ellis Act is the State law that allows landlords to legally evict tenants when removing units from the rental market.*

**You may be entitled to receive relocation assistance from the landlord for an eviction for the following reasons:**

- 1 OWNER/RESIDENT MANAGER OCCUPANCY**  
Your rental unit will be occupied by the property owner, family member, or a resident manager.
- 2 PERMANENT REMOVAL FROM THE RENTAL HOUSING MARKET OR DEMOLITION OF THE BUILDING (ELLIS ACT\* WITHDRAWALS)**  
The rental units will no longer be rented and may be converted or demolished to create a new residential or commercial building.
- 3 COMPLIANCE WITH A GOVERNMENT ORDER**  
Your landlord was cited by a government agency requiring your unit to be vacated.
- 4 HUD FORECLOSURE**  
The property is owned by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is required to be vacant.
- 5 RESIDENTIAL HOTEL UNIT CONVERSION AND DEMOLITION**  
The property is a residential hotel that has been approved to be converted or demolished.
- 6 CONVERSION TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**  
The property will be converted to affordable housing accommodations with a recorded government imposed regulatory agreement.



### III. RIGHT TO LEGAL EVICTION & RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

***You may be eligible for paid relocation assistance.***

**In most cases, relocation assistance must be paid to tenants that are evicted through no fault of their own. The relocation assistance is paid per unit and not per tenant.**

**The amount of relocation assistance depends on whether the tenant is a Qualified Tenant or Eligible Tenant, the length of the tenancy, and the household income.**

- **QUALIFIED TENANT:** A tenant who is 62 years of age or older, disabled, or who has one or more minor dependent children residing in the rental unit.
- **ELIGIBLE TENANT:** All other tenants are Eligible Tenants and are entitled to receive relocation assistance. The amount depends on their length of time in the unit and household income.

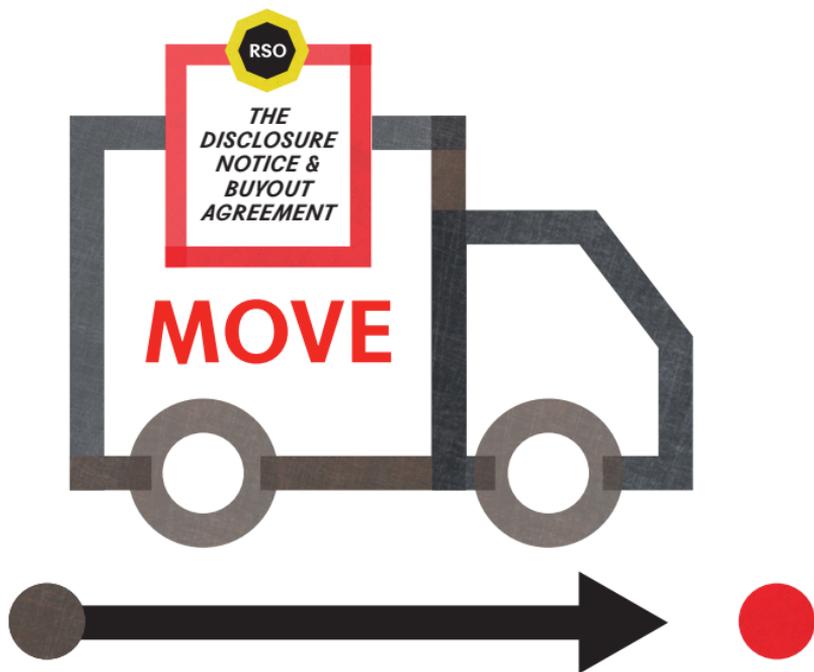
See this year's relocation rate at: **[HomeForLARenters.org](http://HomeForLARenters.org)**

DID YOU  
KNOW



**Over 2,000 families in  
LA are protected from  
illegal evictions every  
year.**



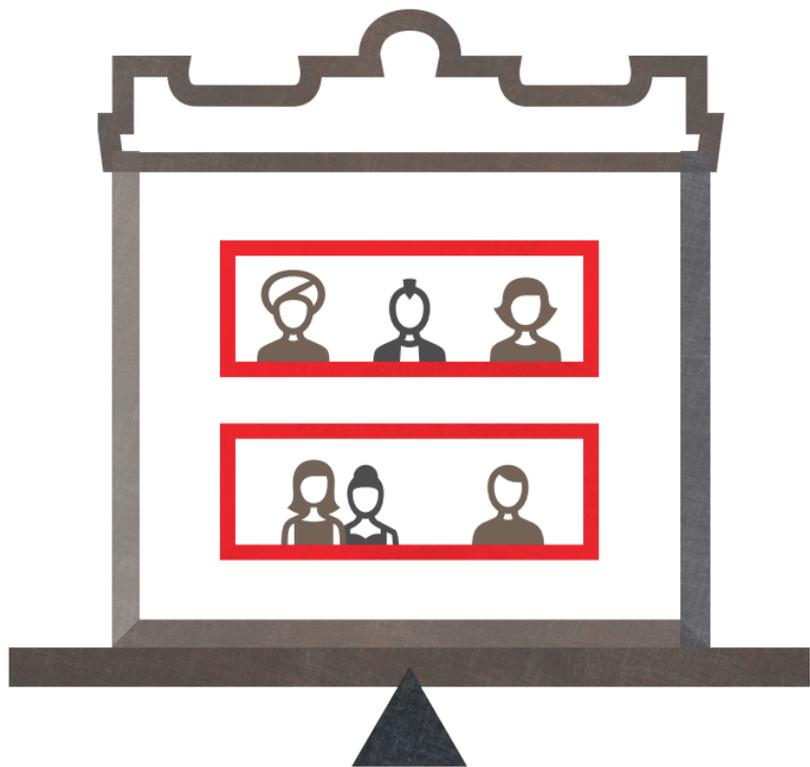


#### IV. RIGHT NOT TO ACCEPT A “CASH FOR KEYS” OFFER

***You are not required to accept a “Cash for Keys” or Buyout Agreement in exchange to move out of your rental unit.***

**Landlords must provide tenants with a Disclosure Notice provided by HCIDLA which informs tenants of their RSO rights.**

**The Disclosure Notice & Buyout Agreement must both be signed by the landlord and tenant and filed with HCIDLA.**



## V. KNOW YOUR HOUSING RIGHTS

# *Housing Discrimination Based on Your Immigration Status or Citizenship is Illegal!*

**It is also illegal to discriminate in housing because of national origin, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical/mental disability, whether or not you have children or are married, age, source of income, whether or not you're a student, or other characteristics protected by law.**

## **Here are a few examples of things landlords cannot do because of a person's immigration status:**

- You cannot be evicted.
- Rules cannot unfairly target immigrants or families with children.
- You cannot be denied housing for sale or rent.
- You cannot be required to show extra forms of identification to apply for housing such as a green card, passport or social security card.

If you believe you have experienced housing discrimination, you may file a complaint with the **Housing Rights Center** at **800-477-5977** or online at **[housingrightscenter.org](https://housingrightscenter.org)**

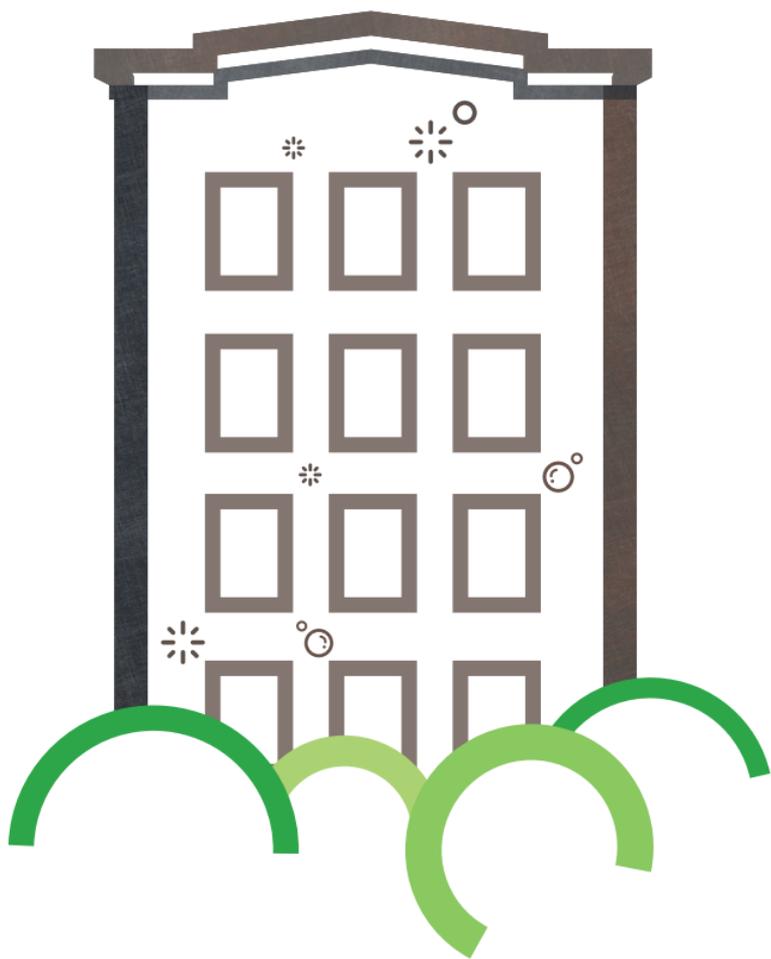
DID YOU  
KNOW



The rules and protections  
of the RSO apply to all  
tenants, **regardless of  
immigration status.**

IMMIGRANT  
FRIENDLY





## V. KNOW YOUR HOUSING RIGHTS

# *All rental units must be fit to live in, or habitable*

### **State and Federal law provide that renters must have the following:**

- A working toilet, sink and bathtub or shower, including hot and cold running water.
- Gas and heating facilities in good working order.
- Working smoke detectors, windows and doors.
- Floors, stairways and railings in good repair.

### **Other housing rights under State law include:**

- A right to a rent payment receipt.
- A 24-hour written notice if a landlord wants to enter your rental unit, unless it is an emergency.
- A right to receive an advance written notice for a rent increase.

**DID YOU  
KNOW**



**You can reach out for  
help in times of crisis.**

**For RSO Violations or to  
report unsafe or unhealthy  
living conditions, call...**

**866-557-7368**

**Los Angeles Housing +  
Community Investment  
Department (HCIDLA)**

To report a violation of the  
RSO or unsafe or unhealthy  
living conditions, file a  
complaint online at **hcidla.  
lacity.org/file-a-complaint**  
or by telephone.

**For general information  
about leases or security  
deposits, call...**

**800-593-8222**

**Department of  
Consumer and  
BusinessAffairs**

For questions about rights  
you may have under State  
law, such as security deposits  
or general information about  
leases, visit  
**dcba.lacounty.gov**

For filing a complaint regarding public health conditions, call...

**888-700-9995**

**Los Angeles County  
Department of Public  
Health**

To report a violation of public health conditions, such as rodent problems, accumulated trash or debris at a property, mold in rental housing units and unmaintained swimming pools, visit **publichealth.lacounty.gov** or report by telephone.

For reporting housing discrimination, call...

**800-477-5977**

**Housing  
Rights Center  
(HRC)**

To report housing discrimination in the rental and sales of housing or to obtain additional information about the Federal and State fair housing laws, visit **housingrightscenter.org** or inquire by telephone.



***Thank you for  
being an  
informed  
LA renter!***

Updated on August 2017



THIS CAMPAIGN IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CITY OF  
LA HOUSING + COMMUNITY INVESTMENT DEPARTMENT  
RENT STABILIZATION PROGRAM.

