



2022 Rent Registry

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

(Ordinance No. 2019-03, El Cerrito Municipal Code Chapter 10.100)

(Also available at www.el-cerrito.org/rentregistry)

This page is for informational purposes only. Please read the ordinance for all legal requirements.

What is the Rent Registry?

Annually, all residential rental property owners are required to submit rents and other relevant information into a City database during the annual business license renewal process. Each residential rental unit subject to the ordinance is required to pay an annual registration fee of \$42.00 per unit to recover costs to administer the program. The purpose of the Rent Registry is to enable the City to understand rent trends overtime.

When does it take effect?

The ordinance creating the Rent Registry ([El Cerrito Municipal Code Chapter 10.100](#)) was adopted by the City Council on May 21, 2019 and took effect on June 20, 2019. 2022 is the fourth reporting cycle.

What is required for the 2022 reporting period?

Due to COVID-19, all residential rental properties will be required to register online. **Paper registration will not be accepted.** For step-by-step instructions, please visit www.el-cerrito.org/rentregistryguide. City staff will also be available to assist by phone beginning July 5, on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 1pm – 5PM, at 510-215-4361. You can also send an email to: housing@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

How do I complete the registration?

The City will provide notice to all rental properties subject to the ordinance in June of each year as part of the annual business license renewal. Property owners must register all rentals subject to the ordinance within thirty days of receipt of notice from the City no later than **July 31**. Registration must be completed online using the City's secure database by visiting www.el-cerrito.org/rentregistry. To begin this process, you will first be prompted to renew your business license and make payment followed by the rent registry. To access your account, you will need your account number and security access code which can be located on your *Business License Renewal Notice* (in the upper right corner). Registration is deemed to be complete when all required information has been provided and all outstanding fees have been paid. A *Notice of Completion* will be provided to property owners once all requirements are satisfied.

What resources/information are available during COVID-19?

The City of El Cerrito adopted a local [Urgency Ordinance](#) on March 25, 2020 for residential and



commercial tenants financially impacted by COVID-19. The Ordinance is set to expire upon the termination of the [City's Local Emergency Declaration](#) adopted on March 13, 2020 in response to the pandemic and remains in place (as of 6/21/2022). The Ordinance does not establish rent forgiveness but provides temporary rent forbearance to those who qualify. The Ordinance also suspends late fees from being charged for qualified residential and commercial tenants who can demonstrate loss of income or revenue due to COVID-19. For El Cerrito residents, under State Law AB 2179, the repayment period begins on August 1, 2022 and tenants will have 6-months to repay unpaid rent. For more information, please visit www.el-cerrito.org/COVID19 and click on *Resources for Homeowners and Renters* to learn more. The City cannot provide legal advice to property owners or tenants.

Which type of rental properties are not required to register?

All rental properties, including single-family residences and accessory dwelling units, are subject to the ordinance. However, there are some exemptions, such as affordable housing developments where the rents are controlled/regulated (“deed restricted”) by a government agency, on-site manager’s living unit, and rental of rooms if the owner resides in the unit. You must complete **one** *Rent Registry* submission per rental property.

What is the reporting period that is required to be registered?

All required information for the last 12-months, for the period July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, must be registered with the City. This includes rents, rent increases, tenant history, etc. Please compile all applicable property records prior to completing the registration.

What if I rent a room in my home?

Generally, renting a room is exempt from the ordinance. However, please review Chapter 10.100.020 (H) of the Municipal Code for a complete list of exceptions.

I own a triplex and live in one unit. What are the reporting requirements?

If a unit is owner-occupied, you must report this information to the City. When completing the registry, please select “*owner-occupied*” in the *Occupancy Status* field, when applicable. You are required and will be prompted to complete the rent registry for all units in a building whether they are owner- or tenant-occupied.

How do I pay the annual fee?

Property owners are required to pay the fee annually. The City will invoice all properties subject to the ordinance in June of each year as part of the annual business license renewal. Once invoiced, payments can be made online before the July 31, 2022 deadline.

Are there limits to rent increases under this ordinance?

This ordinance does not regulate rents or rent increases. However, the City Council will use the data collected from the rent registry to understand rental market trends, including rent increases, to guide future City housing policy. Please be advised that [Governor Gavin Newsom](#) signed *Assembly Bill 1482*:



Tenant Protection Act of 2019 – Rent Caps. The bill became effective on January 1, 2020 and sunsets on January 1, 2030. AB 1482 includes annual rent increase caps of 5% plus inflation or 10%, whichever is lower; protections for ‘just cause’ and ‘no-fault’ evictions; relocation assistance; and revised tenant noticing requirements. Most multifamily rental properties that are at least 15 years old are subject to this law, with some exceptions. For more information about AB 1482, please visit www.el-cerrito.org/tenantprotections.

What if I do not know the square footage of my property/units?

To access this information, you can view public property records by visiting the Contra Costa County Assessor’s Office website [here](#). There may be instances, such as multi-unit properties, where unit specific square footage is not available. In these circumstances, you can submit the total livable square footage for the property/building. As a reminder, the data collected through the rent registry is for informational purposes and will not be utilized to establish property value.

What is considered a capital improvement?

In general, capital improvements increase the value of your property by adding and/or improving existing items. Some examples include bathroom remodel, kitchen remodel, replacement of windows, replacing all plumbing, replacing all electric wiring, etc. Capital improvements often require a permit from the City’s Building Department. Maintenance and repairs are typically associated with general maintenance of the property. Some examples include repair of a leaking faucet, replacing a broken garbage disposal, replacing a broken cabinet, repairing a toilet, etc.

What other rental housing regulations apply in El Cerrito?

There are various regulations that are described in detail below and available at www.el-cerrito.org/rentalhousing.

All businesses, including rental properties, are subject to the City of El Cerrito’s [Business License Tax Ordinance](#), Chapter 4.32 of the Municipal Code.

All residential rental properties in El Cerrito are subject to the City’s [Residential Rental Inspection Program](#) (RRIP), El Cerrito Municipal Code Chapter 16.30. The purpose of the RRIP is to ensure that all residential properties/units comply with the El Cerrito Municipal Code. For issues related to health and safety, please contact the City’s [Code Enforcement Division](#) at 215-4363.

Adopted in 2008, the [Condominium Conversion Ordinance](#), El Cerrito Municipal Code Chapter 19.45, establishes regulations that apply to the conversion of existing multifamily rental housing to condominiums.

Failure to comply with any of the above will result in enforcement action. Please visit our website www.el-cerrito.org/CommDev for more information.



What if a property is sold or transferred?

As required by Section 10.100.030 (E) of the ordinance, property owners must notify the City within 30 days if there is a change in ownership or management.

Can I report rent increases to the City throughout the year?

No, the registration and information submittal is due annually on July 31. The City will provide registration notices to all business license holders at least thirty days prior to the due date.

What if the registry requirements are not satisfied?

Failure to comply will result in enforcement proceedings, including administrative penalties. Administrative penalties may include fines of \$100 for the first violation; \$200 for a second violation; and \$500 for each additional violation of the same provision within a twelve-month period. Property owners will be invoiced for penalty fees if the rent registry is not completed.

Where can I read more about the ordinance?

Please review [El Cerrito Municipal Code Chapter 10.100](#) at www.el-cerrito.org/rentregistry.

Questions or Comments?

Please contact us at:

City of El Cerrito, Community Development Department

Email: housing@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Website: www.el-cerrito.org/rentregistry

Phone: 510-215-4314