

**Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department  
Rent Stabilization Ordinance & Systematic Code Enforcement Program  
Frequently Asked Questions**

The Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) and the Systematic Code Enforcement Program (SCEP) apply to residential rental units throughout the City of Los Angeles. Per LAMC 151.02, residential rental units include: apartments, condominiums, townhomes, duplexes, two or more dwelling units on the same lot, mobile homes, mobile home pads, and rooms in a hotel, motel, rooming house or boarding house occupied by the same tenant for thirty (30) or more consecutive days. The RSO applies to rental properties with an original Certificate of Occupancy dated on or before October 1, 1978. The SCEP through cyclical inspections ensures that all residential living space with two (2) or more units on parcels within the City are safe and habitable (Ordinance No. 172,109, effective 7/15/98).

Unless specifically exempted from the RSO, a property owner cannot legally collect rent from a tenant unless the owner has paid the annual rent registration fee and provided a copy of the Rent Registration Certificate to the tenant(s). A tenant can raise the non-payment of RSO and/or SCEP fees by the owner as an affirmative defense against eviction of the tenant.

**The Annual Bill**

**Q. Why did I get a bill?**

- A. You received a bill because your property is subject to the RSO and/or the SCEP. However, if this is your residence, or if you qualify under one or more temporary exemption categories, you may file for an annual exemption. You can exempt online at the web portal or complete the enclosed Temporary Exemption Application/Contact Information Update form (EC Form) and return to our office in the envelope provided with the bill, or deliver it to one of the seven Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department (HCIDLA) customer walk-in centers (see reverse side of bill for locations). Please keep a copy of all forms for your file.

**Q. What am I paying for?**

- A. The \$24.51 per unit for RSO allows a landlord to legally collect rent from a tenant and provides them with a copy of a valid rent registration certificate. The \$43.32 per unit for SCEP provides: an inspection, a re-inspection if a property has received a Notice to Comply and the hearing costs, if the property is referred to the General Manager for Non-Compliance.

**Q. What will happen if I do not pay the amount due? My tenants have not paid any rent, do I need to pay?**

- A. Failure to pay the amount due by the **LAST DAY of February** will result in a delinquent penalty fee being added to the amount due. Should the fees remain unpaid, additional collection efforts, including referral to a private collection agency that reports to credit bureaus and/or the filing of a legal action against you by the City Attorney's Office, will be pursued. Please note payment of the fees will entitle you to a 'Rent Registration Certificate' for your unit(s) which you may use to proceed with a lawful eviction.

**Q. What year am I getting billed for?**

- A. The Annual Bill is for the current calendar year (January - December). RSO/SCEP annual fees are not prorated.

**Q. How do I pay my bill?**

- A. The easiest way to pay is through our online portal. You may also mail payment or stop by one of the seven walk-in centers with the payment. Check (ACH), debit card, credit card or money order is accepted. HCIDLA does not charge a fee for credit card usage. Cash (exact amount only) is accepted at walk-in centers.

**Online:** A simple and fast way to manage your account. View your payment information, request for an exemption, pay single or multiple bills by check (ACH), debit card or credit card, receive automatic confirmation receipt, and immediately print Registration Certificates (with full payment). Users may view the step-by-step assistance guide on how to use the online system - just log on to: [HCIDLAbill.org](http://HCIDLAbill.org). For video instructions on how to register online, click on the "Exemption/Payment Tutorial."

**Mail:** Write in the **Amount Paid** on the front of the **PAYMENT COUPON**, provide debit/credit card information or enclose a check in the "**PAYMENT ENVELOPE**", remember to add a stamp, and mail.

**Walk-in:** Provide payment coupon and payment. Cash - exact amount only, check, or debit/credit card (Constituent Service Center only accepts credit card and check payments).

**Q. Who should I make the check or money order payable to?**

- A. Payments are payable to “**City of Los Angeles - HCIDLA**”. Do NOT send cash and be sure to write your APN on your check.

**Q. What should I do if I have sold and do not own the property?**

- A. On the EC Form, Step 1 (Name and Address) write ‘Sold’, ‘Do not own’, or ‘No longer own the property’. Include the sale date of the property and the name, address and telephone number of the current owner, if known. Sign your name, date and return the EC Form in the “EXEMPTION” envelope to ensure that your records are updated properly and to avoid further billing. Keep a copy for your records.

## **Temporary and RSO/SCEP Exemptions**

Temporary exemption requests. New property owners should use the Registration/Exemption Application Form to register with HCIDLA and file any exemption request within 45 days of purchase to be considered. If you are renewing temporary exemptions, please be sure to review last year’s exemption(s) on the EC Form, make changes if necessary, sign the form, and return in the “EXEMPTION” envelope.

**Q. Why must I request a temporary exemption every year, if I never intend to rent my home or my other unit(s)?**

- A. The HCIDLA relies on an annual self-reporting system to request and/or renew temporary exemptions. Property use may change over time and from one year to the next. When there is a change to the status of the property, our records can be adjusted in a timely manner.

**Q. Do I have to pay even if I am not renting any unit(s)? My relatives live in the back house and I do not charge them rent to live there. Should I pay fees on this unit(s)?**

- A. No, but exemption(s) must be requested annually for any units occupied by the family members, where no rents are collected – this is the “T3” exemption (please refer to EC Form for instructions).

**Q. How do I claim an exemption?**

- A. There are two exemption categories a property owner may be entitled to:

**(1) Temporary Exemptions** are for owner-occupied unit(s) (Exemption code T1) or unit(s) occupied but no rent is collected (Exemption code T3). Both exemption codes require the use of a self-reporting application process and may be requested or renewed on an annual basis. Please submit in the enclosed exemption envelope.

**(2) RSO/SCEP Exemptions** address a wider range of exemption codes, based on the property use and status. A comprehensive list is provided on the back of the **RSO/SCEP Form**, which is included with the Annual Bill.

**Q. How do I claim a “Vacant” Unit exemption?**

- A. A vacant unit exemption requires “Vacant Unit Notice” form, **notarized and recorded** with the Los Angeles County Recorder’s Office and a copy submitted to HCIDLA to request an **S5** exemption.

**Q. If I claim an exemption for a unit(s) at the beginning of the year and then rent it out during the year, what do I need to do?**

- A. You must pay the annual registration fee in full within 10 days of the lease or rental agreement being signed. Failure to do so will result in the assessment of delinquent fees for the rented unit(s).

**Q. How would I know that my exemption was accepted after I filed it? Will I get an adjusted bill?**

- A. No. The Department does not issue an adjusted bill. If you file online at <http://HCIDLAbill.org> you can print your confirmation. If you have an exemption(s) and file by mail or in person, fill out the EC Form and deduct the fee of the unit(s) from the total amount of the bill, depending on whether the property is subject to the RSO and/or SCEP fees. To find out if an exemption has been accepted, go online at <http://HCIDLAbill.org> to check the status of the exemption on your account or email [HCIDLA.billing@lacity.org](mailto:HCIDLA.billing@lacity.org) or call the Billing and Collections Unit Hotline at 213-808-8900.

Additional assistance is available at YOUTUBE link -

- 1) Access YouTube
- 2) Enter "HCIDLA" in the search engine
- 3) Select HCIDLA Billing Information Videos
- 4) Select any or all of the four available videos for assistance