

*City of Cambridge*  
*307 Gay Street*  
*Cambridge, Maryland 21613*

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

TELEPHONE (410) 228-4020  
MD RELAY (V/TTY) 711 OR 1-800-735-2258

**ORDINANCE NO. 995**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND ("THE COMMISSIONERS"), TO REPEALS IN ITS ENTIRETY SECTION 4-42 OF CHAPTER 4 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, AND TO ADOPT AND ENACT A RENTAL REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION PERMIT REQUIREMENT TO BE CODIFIED AS A NEW SECTION 10-11 IN CHAPTER 10 "LICENSES" OF THE CITY CODE.**

WHEREAS, The Commissioners of Cambridge do hereby establish a program for the enactment, enforcement and administration of a rental permit requirement for all rental units within the corporate boundaries of the City of Cambridge, and for the annual registration of all landlords and rental property owners and for the periodic inspection of rental units, for the purpose of regulating rental property conditions and for maintaining an inventory of available rental housing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED by the Commissioners of Cambridge, that Section 4-42 entitled "Registration of Rental Units" of Chapter 4 of the City Code is hereby deleted its entirety, and said section shall be designated as "Reserved;" and

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED, that the following is hereby adopted and approved as new section 10-11 of Chapter 10 "Licenses" of the City Code:

**Sec. 10-11. Permits for Residential Rental Units.**

(a) **Definitions.** As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

**ABSENTEE LANDLORD:** Any landlord who resides outside the designated boundaries of Dorchester County as those boundaries may be defined at the time of regular, periodic property registration.

**HOUSING OFFICIAL:** The town staff member designated by the Commissioners of Cambridge and/or its Director of Public Works as having responsibility for enforcement of the City's Property Maintenance Code, and this chapter.

**HOUSING OR DWELLING UNIT:** Any single unit which is capable of housing one separate household, whether a detached single-family structure or building or part of a multi-household structure or building.



**LANDLORD:** Any property owner or designated agent who offers a housing unit for occupancy to persons other than an owner of the property

**PROPERTY OWNER.** An individual or entity which has an ownership interest in the residential unit, as evidenced by a deed recorded among the Land Records for Dorchester County, Maryland.

**RENTAL PERMIT:** A permit issued by the City of Cambridge stating that the referenced structure or unit conforms to the standards of City's Property Maintenance Code and the City's Residential Code, and/or the City's Building Code, as applicable to each particular property, and that occupancy of that structure or unit is permitted for residential use. Any special circumstances or conditions under which occupancy is permitted may be specified on that certificate.

**RENTAL PROPERTY:** Any housing unit or units which are occupied by persons other than the owner.

**RESIDENT AGENT:** A representative of a property owner or landlord who resides within the designated boundaries of Dorchester County, Maryland, or within FORTY (40) miles of the City of Cambridge.

**SUBSTANDARD:** Any deficiency in a structure or housing unit as defined by the City's Property Maintenance Code, the City's Residential Code, and/or the City's Building Code.

**(b) Registration Required.** All landlords must register with the City of Cambridge on or before **September 30** of each and every calendar year, beginning **September 30, 2010**. It is the responsibility of the property owner to register any rental property or properties, and failure to do so constitutes a violation of these regulations and is subject to the penalties set forth herein.

**(c) Resident Agent Required.** All absentee landlords must have a resident agent for each rental unit.

**(d) Triennial Inspections Required.** All rental properties will be inspected every third year to determine compliance with the City's Property Maintenance Code, Residential Code and/or Building Code.

**(e)** Any substandard condition identified during an inspection must be corrected by the property owner before a rental permit shall be issued.

**(f) Permit required for renting of unit.** No housing unit shall be let, rented or occupied by someone other than the owner until a rental permit has been obtained for that unit. However, units which are let or rented as of the effective date of this chapter may

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continue to be occupied, provided the owner or landlord registers the unit within the time required.

**(g) Notice.** On or after July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, all property owners will receive notice of the annual registration deadline from the City advising them that all rental properties must be registered on or before September 30. Water and sewer bills will be used to cross-check which properties are rentals and which are owner-occupied.

**(h) Contents of Registration Form.** The owner of a property constituting a rental unit shall register the same with the City on or before September 30 of each year, beginning with September 30, 2010, on a form approved by the Housing Official, showing the address of the rental unit, the name and address of the owner and his resident agent and the full name of the tenant in possession of the unit as of the effective date of this chapter.

**(i) Registration Fee.** The fee for registration will be included in the inspection fee as set forth below.

**(j) Resident Agent Required.** Absentee landlords must designate a resident agent for service of process who resides within the corporate boundaries of Dorchester County. If that agent's residence should be removed from Dorchester County during the yearly registration period, another agent must be designated for the duration of that period.

**(k) Offense.** It shall be unlawful for any property owner to offer any unit for rent or to allow any rental unit to be occupied without having first registered as a landlord as required herein within the time prescribed for such registration. Failure to receive notice of the registration deadline will not excuse failure to register rental units. It is the landlord's responsibility to fulfill registration requirements.

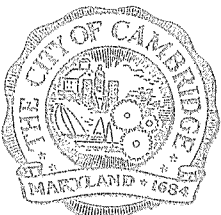
**(l) Permit Required to Rent.** No rental unit may be occupied without a valid rental permit. No rental permit shall be issued without a current inspection by the Housing Official being on file to determine that the requirements of this chapter have been met, and that the property complies with the City's Property Maintenance Code, Residential Code and/or Building Code. Any rental unit that is occupied at the time of the adoption of this chapter may continue to be occupied, even if substandard, so long as that unit does not constitute an unsafe structure as defined in the City's Property Maintenance Code, Residential Code and/or Building Code. Such units will be issued a provisional rental permit valid until such time as the inspection can be completed by the City.

**(m) Duration of Permit.** A rental permit shall be valid for a period of ONE (1) year from the date it is issued.

**(n) Permits for Exempted Units.** The owner of a rental unit may request a rental permit even though the unit is exempted under the provisions of this chapter.

**(o) Unsafe Units.** Rental units determined to be unsafe according to the provisions of applicable provisions of the City's Property Maintenance Code, Residential Code and/or Building Code will be subject to condemnation as provided by those chapters and must be

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vacated. The notice to vacate the unit and any expenses resulting from that eviction are the sole responsibility of the owner. The town will not issue eviction notices, nor assume any responsibility for relocation or displacement expenses when that eviction is a result of the owner's noncompliance with these regulations.

**(p) Demolition.** Property owners subject to a demolition order will have the option of granting the property to the town in fee simple, with the City then assuming the responsibility for demolition and clearance, and assuming sole ownership of the property with all the rights thereof, subject to the CITY consenting, in writing, to the receipt of said property.

**(q) Inspection Results.** If the unit passes inspection, the rental permit shall be issued within five (5) business days of the date of inspection. If the unit does not pass inspection, a notice of violations and work description shall be issued within TEN (10) business days of the date of the inspection. In the event that the town does not perform the specified action within the time period stated, the previous rental permit will be considered valid for the time that the tenant in possession or residence at the time of application for permit remains in possession or residence of the unit in question.

**(r) Presentation of old permit.** Landlords or their agents must present the previous rental permit when applying for a new permit. Date of the last inspection will be verified from the previous permit.

**(s) Permit Fee.** The fee for a rental permit shall be as established by the Commissioners of Cambridge by resolution from time to time. The rental permit fee shall include the annual registration and the triennial inspection of the unit. The fee shall be stated in the fee schedule and made public by posting same at the Department of Public Works.

**(t) Conduct of Inspections.** Inspections shall be conducted and work descriptions shall be compiled and issued by the Code Enforcement Officer, pursuant to the applicable provisions of the City's Property Maintenance Code, Residential Code and/or Building Code. The Code Enforcement Officer will be responsible for arranging for the inspection of rental units and for initiating any other appropriate action under these regulations. The Code Enforcement Officer will give special consideration to any request that inspections be conducted during non-business hours for the convenience of the tenant(s). In the absence of such a request, the inspections will be conducted during normal business hours as defined by the city's business hours in force at the time.

**(u) Violations of this Chapter.**

**(1)** Violations of this chapter will constitute a municipal infraction and will be subject to applicable penalties under this chapter in addition to those imposed by any other applicable code or ordinance, including, without limitation, the City's Property Maintenance Code, Residential Code, and/or Building Code.

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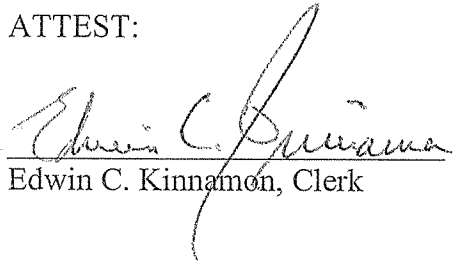


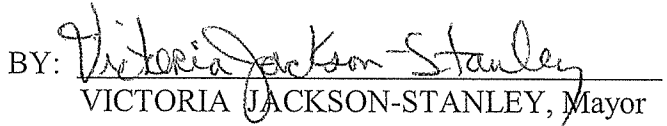
Penalties for violations of these regulations will be imposed as follows:

- (1) Failure to register as a landlord or agent:
  - (a) First offense: \$50.00
  - (b) Subsequent offenses: \$75.00 each.
  
- (2) Allowing occupancy without valid permit:
  - (a) First offense: \$100.00
  - (b) Subsequent offenses: \$150.00 each

ATTEST:

THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE

  
Edwin C. Kinnamon, Clerk

BY:   
VICTORIA JACKSON-STANLEY, Mayor

Introduced on the 14<sup>TH</sup> day of **JUNE, 2010.**

Adopted and effective this 21<sup>ST</sup> day of **JUNE, 2010.**

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