

Frequently Asked Questions

Note: This document will be updated as new information becomes available.

Rent Stabilization

Q: What is the Rent Stabilization Ordinance?

A: The Rent Stabilization Ordinance is a City of Salinas regulation aimed at controlling the increase in rental prices to protect tenants from excessive rent hikes.

Q: Who does the Rent Stabilization Ordinance apply to? Does my unit qualify?

A: Rent Stabilization generally applies to multi-family dwellings* built prior to February 1, 1995. **Note:** *Not all rental properties in the City of Salinas are subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (Ord. No. 2681). Properties exempt under the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act or other applicable laws are not governed by the Rent Stabilization provisions. *A multi-family dwelling is a dwelling with 2 or more separate units. IE: a duplex, triplex, multiplex, an apartment building, and/or multiple detached dwellings on the same parcel.*

Q: How does Rent Stabilization differ from rent control? How is this not rent control?

A: Rent Stabilization and Rent Control are often used interchangeably, but they have some key differences. Rent control typically imposes stricter limits on rent increases and may apply to a broader range of properties, including single-family homes. Rent Stabilization tends to be more flexible and may allow for higher rent increases.

Q: How will the Rent Stabilization Ordinance benefit tenants?

A: The Rent Stabilization Ordinance will provide tenants with predictability and stability in their housing costs. It will help prevent sudden and drastic rent increases. It will also provide tenant protection from unjust eviction and harassment.

Q: What is the Costa Hawkins Act?

A: The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, was enacted in 1995. Costa Hawkins sets limits on the kind of rent control policies cities can impose and exempts certain types of residential rental units from rent control ordinances. It also allows landlords to reset the rental rate on rent-controlled rental units when they become vacant or when the last rent-controlled tenant no longer permanently resides at the unit.

Q: How much will landlords be allowed to increase rents under the Rent Stabilization Ordinance?

A: The ordinance specifies a maximum annual percentage increase for rents on Controlled Rental Units. Rent increases on Controlled Rental Units cannot exceed 2.75% or 75% of the last 12-month increase; whichever is less. This limitation applies to all rent increases occurring on or after December 31, 2023.

Q: Are there exemptions proposed to the Rent Stabilization rules?

A: The Rent Stabilization Ordinance includes exemptions to Rent Stabilization regulations. To see a complete list of exemptions see the Rent Stabilization Ordinance Sec. 17-02.08. Exemptions.

Q: How much can my rent increase if my rental unit is not covered under the Rent Stabilization Ordinance?

A: Rental units not subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance may be subject to protection under the California Tenant Protection Act of 2019. This state law caps rent increases to 5% plus the local inflation rate, with a maximum of 10% annually. The Tenant Protection Act covers most residential rental units in California, with some exceptions. For more

information, please visit [Landlord-Tenant Issues | State of California - Department of Justice - Office of the Attorney General](#)

Q: What options do tenants have if they believe their rent has been increased unfairly under the Ordinance?

A: A tenant that resides in a Controlled Rental Unit subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance may petition for a reduction of rent (“Rent Reduction Petition”) if the tenant believes that the landlord has demanded, accepted, or retained rent more than the rent permitted by the Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Reductions in housing services or a failure to maintain the Controlled Rental Unit in a habitable condition may also constitute an unlawful increase in rent.

Q: How will the Rent Stabilization Ordinance be monitored?

A: The Rental Registration and Rent Stabilization Division of the Community Development Department will provide the public with ongoing information and updates about the Ordinances and receive landlord/tenant complaints pertaining to violations of the Ordinance.

Q: How will a landlord pay the Rent Stabilization fee?

A: Landlords will use the City of Salinas Rental Registry and Rent Stabilization portal to process payments.

Q: What does the City of Salinas do with the Rental Registration & Rent Stabilization fees?

A: The fees collected from the Rental Registration and Rent Stabilization programs help fund the operation and implementation of these programs. They are used to:

- Maintain the rental property database
- Ensure landlords comply with registration requirements
- Provide education and resources for both landlords and tenants
- Support program administration and implementation

These fees help the city manage and oversee rental housing to promote a fair and stable rental market for everyone.

Q: What are the consequences if a person violates or fails to comply with any provision of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance?

A: Violators of the Ordinance can be sued for actual or statutory damages (up to \$1,000 or three times the overcharged rent) and may face additional penalties for willful violations. Violating the Ordinance is a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$1,000, up to six months in jail, or both. The Ordinance can be enforced through civil action, with the prevailing party entitled to attorney’s fees and costs. Violations can be used as a defense in eviction cases.

Q: What will the tenant “Rent Reduction” petition look like?

A: A tenant will submit a petition to the City Attorney using the city's Rent Registration/Rent Stabilization portal. However, if you completed the petition form on paper, please submit it to the City of Salinas Housing Division for review. The tenant shall provide a copy of the petition to the other party and provide the city with proof of completion of notification. The landlord will have 30 days from the date of receiving the petition to reply and provide additional materials in response to the petition. The Hearing Officer shall make their determination within 60 days of the date the petition has been deemed completed.

Q: What will the Landlords “Fair Return” petition look like?

A: A landlord will submit a petition to the City Attorney using the city's Rental Registration/Rent Stabilization portal. However, if you completed the petition form on paper, please submit it to the City of Salinas Housing Division for review. The landlord shall provide a copy of the petition to the other party and provide the city with proof of completion of

notification. The tenants will now have 30 days from the date of receiving the petition to reply and provide additional materials in response to the petition. Upon receipt of the petition the hearing officer shall determine the cost of review and provide the landlord with an invoice of all cost. The Hearing Officer shall make their determination within 90 days of the date the petition has been deemed completed. The decision will then be sent by mail and shall be emailed with proof of mailing to the landlord or the designated representative.

Q: What if we do not agree with the decisions made by the Hearing Officer?

A: If you do not agree with the decision of the hearing officer, you may appeal to the City Council. The decision made by City Council will be the final decision. If the Hearing Officer's decision is not appealed to the City Council the final decision will be that of the Hearing Officer.

Rental Registration

Q: What is the purpose of the Residential Rental Registration Ordinance?

A: The Residential Rental Registration Ordinance aims to promote community health and safety by identifying residential rental units and maintaining up-to-date emergency contact information. It also assists the city in assessing current rental housing stock, planning for future needs, and providing fair housing services and resources.

Q: What information is required for registration?

A: Landlords must provide:

- Property owner's name, address, phone number, and email
- Rental unit details: Assessor's Parcel Number (APN), address, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, and square footage.
- If applicable: Business License Number and property manager's contact information

Q: What are the required registration fees?

A: A landlord will pay \$45 per unit per year for any residential rental units that ARE NOT subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance and \$170 per unit per year for any residential rental units that ARE subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

Q: How will a landlord pay the Rental Registration Fee(s)?

A: Landlords will use the City of Salinas Rental Registry and Rent Stabilization portal to process payments.

Q: What penalties are there if a rental unit is not registered?

A: If a rental is not registered within the first 30 days of the calendar year, beginning January 1, 2025, the landlord will receive a delinquency notice to pay the Rental Registration fee. The landlord will then have 45 days from the issuance of the notice to pay the Rental Registration fee. If not paid within 45 days following the issuance of the delinquency notice, the City will assess a penalty of 10% of the Rental Registration fee, due and payable with the compliance fee on the first day of the month following the due date provided in the delinquency notice. For every 45 days after the initial delinquency notice remain, the City shall assess a penalty 10% of the fee. If the Rental Registry Fees remain unpaid within 180 days following the issuance of the delinquency notice, the Landlord will be subject to a citation described in [*Division 1 \(Administrative Citations\) of Article 5 of Chapter 1 of the Salinas Municipal Code.*](#)

Q: Can a landlord pass the registration fee or petitions fees to the tenant?

A: A landlord may not recover any fees through pass-through or by any other means.

Tenant Anti-Harassment

Q: What is the Tenant Anti-Harassment Protection Ordinance?

A: The Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance adds to existing protections under federal, state, and local laws to prevent and deter landlord harassment of tenants in all residential rental units, including single-family homes and condominiums. The Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance applies to all landlords and tenants of residential rental units within the city, including mobile homes, trailers, and their spaces, unless exempted. This includes landlords and tenants not covered by other tenant protection policies.

Tenant Protection and Just Cause Eviction

Q: What is the Tenant Protection and Just Cause Eviction Ordinance?

A: The Tenant Protection and Just Cause Eviction Ordinance is designed to ensure housing stability in Salinas and reduce the negative impact on tenants who are forced to move due to the high cost and limited availability of housing. The City Council finds that requiring a valid reason for ending a tenancy, as stated in this Article, offers more protection than state law. It limits the reasons landlords can end a tenancy, provides higher relocation assistance, and adds extra tenant protections. These rights are in addition to any other rights tenants already have under state or federal law.