



COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

"Policing Excellence through Community Partnerships"

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Rental Housing Regulations:

Who needs to get a Residential Rental Permit?

A residential rental permit is required for all residential rental units in the City of Columbia. If an owner resides in the unit or if the unit is under a written contract to be bought by the occupant, a permit is not required. The Code Enforcement Division reserves the right to request documentation to support any exemptions.

I have a Business License; Do I still need a rental permit?

Yes. A rental permit is required for all residential rental units in the City of Columbia even if you have a business license and/or are a Professional Management Company. However if you have a business license as a Professional Management Company the fee for the permit is waived. Please provide a copy of your business license with the application. *Please note that a business license is required for anyone who owns or manages 5 or more rental units.*

How much does the permit cost?

The cost of the permit is \$25 a year per unit. However if you have a business license as a Professional Management Company the annual fee for the permit is waived. Please provide a copy of your business license with the application. Please note that renewals can have additional fees based on any points assessed to the permit or other City fees that have been assessed to the property.

Where do I get the permit?

The application is available online at <http://www.columbiapd.net/rental-housing.html> or available for pick up in the Code Enforcement Division at 1136 Washington Street, on the second floor.

How long is the permit good for?

The permit is good for one year from the date of issuance. If you have a specific date that you would like the permit to renew each year, we can set it to expire on that date and prorate any permit fee associated with it. Renewal applications are available online and in person.

There are multiple applications, which one do I use?

There are three different applications available depending on your situation. The first application is a nonbusiness application for up to 4 residential rental units. A business license is not required if you own or manage 4 or less rental units. Please submit the Residential Rental Unit checklist for each unit. The cost for the permit is \$25 per unit.

The second application is a business application. If you own or manage 5 or more rental units in the City of Columbia you are required to have a business license. The application includes an affidavit section that allows you to waive the checklist requirement while certifying that all the properties you own or manage meet the minimum safety codes as established on the checklist. The permit fee is waived with this application as long as a copy of a current City of Columbia Business License is included with the application.

The third application is a renewal application. Use this application if you are just trying to renew your permit from the previous year and nothing has changed. If there have been changes to the application from the prior year, you will need to submit a new nonbusiness or business application depending on your situation.

Can anyone get the rental permit?

Either the owner of the property or a local agent can apply for the permit. The local agent can be a Professional Management Company. Any outstanding fees owed to the City must be paid prior to issuance of the permit. Both the owner and the designated local agent must sign the application.

What if I have more than one rental unit?

A residential rental permit is required for each rental unit. The applications are designed to allow you to apply for as many permits as needed on one application.

I have a family member who lives there; do I still need a permit?

If any person is paying rent, paying utilities or other fees, or providing similar in-kind services to the owner of the property, a permit is required.

Am I required to hire a Professional Management Company?

No. A local agent is required within 45 miles of the City of Columbia. The local agent can be a relative or a friend that you designate to take responsibility of the property and serve as our primary contact.