



## RENT CONTROL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO RETIRE AFTER 37 YEARS

After nearly four decades serving the community, Tracy Condon has announced that she will step down from her current role as executive director of the Rent Control Agency. Over her long tenure, Ms. Condon has gained a reputation not only for her extensive knowledge but her calm demeanor and steadfast commitment to fairness in administering the law, which have earned her the respect of tenants, landlords, Board members, and colleagues alike. She first joined the agency in 1987 and served in various capacities including information coordinator, database coordinator, mediator, and public information manager, a role she held for 13 years until being named executive director in 2007.

As executive director, Ms. Condon has been responsible for overseeing all day-to-day operations of the agency. Her extensive background and effective leadership style uniquely qualified her to direct the agency and respond to the significant changes in state law that have impacted Santa Monica's rental housing market over the years.

Her accomplishments are innumerable. Under her leadership, the agency developed a custom web-based database for tracking rents and property information, began accepting documents submitted electronically, expanded mediation services to resolve tenant-landlord disputes, implemented new technologies to improve transparency and online access to Board records, and expanded public

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## Tenants Deserve Units That Are More Than Just Habitable

*How Rent Control can help tenants pay only for what they get*

State and local laws require that residential rental units be maintained properly and be fit to occupy. Building and housing codes also must be followed to ensure the health and safety of tenants. But what about deteriorated conditions or removed amenities like dishwashers or air conditioners that don't make a unit uninhabitable yet do significantly reduce living conditions?

No matter how long a tenant has lived in a unit or how much rent they pay, each tenant is entitled to a unit that is well maintained. While renters are expected to take reasonable care of their individual units, the onus is ultimately on property owners to handle maintenance issues. Annual general adjustments are intended to provide a fair return to the owner so they can maintain their properties and tenants can continue to enjoy the amenities they originally bargained for.

Part of controlling rents is allowing fair reductions when maintenance is not performed or when amenities are removed or significantly reduced. Owners can't be compelled to paint a wall or fix a window, unless the issue rises to the level of a code violation, but the rent control law provides the authority to reduce the rent until the repairs are completed or the amenities are restored. Some practical steps tenants can take when problems arise and how they can avail themselves of a remedy under the rent control law are on Page 2.

**Santa Monica Rent Control Board** - 1685 Main Street, Room 202, Santa Monica, CA 90401

**Commissioners:** Anastasia Foster, Erika Leslie, Kurt Gonska, Lonnie Guinn, Danny Ivanov

**Executive Director:** Tracy Condon

**HOW SHOULD A TENANT APPROACH THE LANDLORD ABOUT GETTING REPAIRS?**

*Communicate with the landlord:* Reach out to your landlord or property manager and clearly communicate the maintenance and repair issues you are experiencing. Give them a written request detailing the problems and request a timeline for resolution. Most landlords want to maintain their properties in good condition. After all, their properties are a financial investment.

*Keep good records:* Be sure to keep a copy of your signed and dated request. (Email is fine if that’s how you normally communicate with the owner or manager.) Your written request is essential proof that your landlord was made aware of the issues.

**WHAT IF YOUR LANDLORD NEVER GETS BACK TO YOU OR REFUSES TO HELP?**

*File a petition with Rent Control:* Tenants whose rental units need repair or maintenance, or whose housing services or amenities have been reduced, may petition to have their monthly rent decreased. A Petition for Rent Decrease may be filed with the Rent Control Agency if at least 30 days have passed since the written request was given to the owner and the problem has not been corrected. Tenants must include a copy of their request when filing a petition.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

Some decrease petitions are sent to a mediation facilitator to attempt resolution. Issues that are not resolved

are scheduled for a hearing. After hearing from the parties and reviewing the evidence, a Rent Control hearing officer will decide whether a rent reduction should be implemented. The range of decrease amounts for certain conditions are defined in rent control regulations and may relate to the amount of rent you pay. If a rent decrease is granted, it will remain in effect until the problem has been corrected.

**KEEP IN MIND...**

Rent decreases are not awarded for past months during which problems existed. Therefore, it makes sense to contact the owner in writing as soon as problems arise. Also, decreases for maintenance-related conditions are only granted for conditions that exist at the time the petition is filed. If a tenant makes repairs at their own expense, a decrease will not be granted - and the Rent Control Board does not have the authority to require the property owner to reimburse tenants who have made their own repairs. It may be necessary to file a small claims case to recover costs. For additional information about the rent decrease process visit our website: [santamonica.gov/process-explainers/how-to-file-a-petition-for-a-rent-decrease](https://santamonica.gov/process-explainers/how-to-file-a-petition-for-a-rent-decrease) 📌

This information is available on our website in Spanish, Farsi, and Amharic – or call (310) 458-8751 for a copy.

- Esta información está disponible en nuestro sitio web en español.
- این اطلاعات در وبسایت ما به زبان فارسی موجود است.
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[santamonica.gov/rent-control-seminars-and-newsletters](https://santamonica.gov/rent-control-seminars-and-newsletters)



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outreach and education programs through multilingual seminars, newsletters, and reports. She has also served as a trusted advisor to the many commissioners who have served on the Rent Control Board and helped them shepherd changes to the law to further the mission of the Rent Control Charter. She is recognized as a leader statewide, as colleagues from numerous rent stabilization jurisdictions regularly solicit her advice and counsel.

*"Tracy Condon has probably affected more lives in Santa Monica and throughout the State of California than most ever will. She has helped measure policy that has enabled thousands to stay in their communities. She is a wonderfully effective mentor to us and a skillful and nurturing manager who has been a stalwart caretaker of her staff, of our Charter and of our city. She cannot be replaced. Only emulated. And we thank her for her service."* – Anastasia Foster, Chair, Santa Monica Rent Control Board

By modeling integrity, accountability, and a strong work ethic, Ms. Condon set high standards for staff. Yet, just as she was passionate about the work, she was compassionate, sincere, and empathetic toward everyone with whom she worked – including the thousands of members of the public she helped over the years. Her absence will be profoundly felt well beyond the walls of City Hall. Yet, just as the gratitude for her steady leadership and the solid footing upon which she leaves the agency will continue, so too will her legacy through the many people she mentored and inspired.

Following a nationwide recruitment to find her successor, the Board identified a short list of highly qualified candidates and is expected to name a new executive director soon. Ms. Condon will retire early in the new year after facilitating the transition to the new administrator. ❤️

## COUNCIL MODIFIES LEAF BLOWER ORDINANCE TO ALLOW ZERO-EMISSION BLOWERS

While it's easy to point to the cars and trucks in our neighborhoods as sources of pollution, we often overlook smaller, yet potentially more significant sources. Since 1991, gas-powered leaf blowers have been banned in Santa Monica, but many have remained in use. These gas-powered leaf blowers are often noisy and emit harmful pollutants. City Council recently adopted policy changes to address this issue by allowing only zero-emission electric leaf blowers that have a sound rating at or below 70 decibels. Importantly, this update shifts the burden of compliance from landscaping workers to the person or institution who employs them. These new policy changes also enhance enforcement by allowing community members to submit photo or video evidence of violations through the City's 311 system by navigating to the "Noise Concern" category. To learn more about Santa Monica's updated leaf blower policy and funding resources to support the transition to electric, visit [santamonica.gov/leaf-blower-policy](https://santamonica.gov/leaf-blower-policy). ▲

## CIVICS ENHANCEMENTS

*Introduced in 2022 and now with more than 1,200 users, Civics is our online system for submitting tenancy registration forms, fee waivers, and other applications.*

Over the past few months, we've made major improvements and added new features to Civics to enhance the user experience. Now, when forms are filed, not only are versions available on users' dashboards for downloading or printing, but the form is sent back by email as well. We also streamlined the interface to make it easier to find records. Each application now includes tags for identifying the property and unit it's related to. We've also added the ability for property owners and their authorized agents to generate and download full property summaries including complete Maximum Allowable Rent (MAR) histories for every unit on the property. Information is current as of the time the report is generated, and it's a powerful tool for checking that all tenancies have been registered and the current rent for each unit. More enhancements are on the way!

To sign up for Civics, visit [rentcontrol.santamonica.gov](https://rentcontrol.santamonica.gov) and click Create a Profile. Once your account has been configured by staff, you'll receive an email with login instructions. ▲

## Coming Up in December

### ◆ Seminario Para Inquilinos (Tenant Seminar in Spanish)\*



**Miércoles 6 de diciembre**

**6:30 - 8:00 pm**

Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave.

Thelma Terry Bldg.

*Este seminario se dirige a los inquilinos para que conozcan los servicios disponibles a través de la oficina de Control de Rentas, tales como las protecciones contra el desalojo, cómo se determinan el alquiler y los servicios, y qué recursos tienen a su disposición para cuestiones relacionadas con los alquileres, los servicios y el mantenimiento. No es necesario inscribirse.*

*\*Our annual Tenant Seminar in English will be held as usual in the spring.*

*This seminar is designed for tenants to learn what services are available through the Rent Control office such as how rent and amenities are determined, eviction protections, and what remedies are available for issues related to rents, amenities, and maintenance.*

### ◆ Landlord-Tenant Forum 2023

**Tuesday, December 12**

**9:30 to 11:00 am**

Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave.

Thelma Terry Bldg.

A joint presentation of the Consumer Protection Division of the City Attorney's Office and Rent Control, this popular event brings together property owners and managers, tenants, and city staff to discuss hot topics. This year's subjects include:

- ▶ Source of income discrimination
  - Changes in payment standard
  - Credit screening for voucher holders and new state law
- ▶ Rules for repayment of outstanding COVID-19 rental debt
- ▶ ADU regulations and tenant rights
- ▶ CIVICs portal enhancements
- ▶ Q&A




Attendance is limited and registration in advance is required. To register, please scan the QR code above or visit:

<https://forms.gle/cbSvaNghypyus4vz5>. ▲





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**TENANTS**

The amount in the circle at left is the MAR for your unit, per Rent Control records. **If you moved in recently, our records may still list the MAR for the previous tenancy. In most cases, owners may reset the rent with each new tenancy.** In addition to the MAR, an owner may pass-through to tenants half (\$9.50 per month) of the registration fee Rent Control charges for each unit. \*For tenancies that began before March 1, 2018 and on properties not sold or reassessed since then, owners may also add surcharges based on the property tax bill. With the fee and surcharges, the legal rent for your unit may be \$9.50 to \$44.50 higher than the MAR shown. If the message is "Tenant Call," or if you have questions about your rent, please call us.

**OWNERS**

Each July, owners receive a report listing the MAR that is listed in Rent Control's records for every rental unit on their property or properties. If you are an owner, the circle at left should not include a MAR. If a MAR is listed, please call us.



**City of Santa Monica**  
**Rent Control Board**  
1685 Main Street, Room 202  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

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**INFO**



**Public Counter:** M-F\* 8:00-12:30; 1:30-4:30



**Telephone:** (310) 458-8751



**Website:** [www.santamonica.gov/rentcontrol](http://www.santamonica.gov/rentcontrol)



**Email:** [rentcontrol@santamonica.gov](mailto:rentcontrol@santamonica.gov)



**[www.facebook.com/santamonica Rent Control](https://www.facebook.com/santamonica Rent Control)**

\*City of Santa Monica is closed every other Friday.

**Inside the Fall 2023 issue:**

- ✓ Farewell to Rent Control Executive Director
- ✓ Habitability and Repairs
- ✓ Civics Enhancements
- ✓ Changes to Leaf Blower Ordinance
- ✓ Upcoming Seminars

**Para obtener una traducción de este boletín en español, vea el aviso con las instrucciones correspondientes en el interior de este boletín.**