



HAPCO NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

Serving Philadelphia's Investment & Rental Property Community

DATE CHANGE! Due to our office move, we have postponed HP's General Membership meeting. We will email you once a new date is set!

Message from the President:

Philadelphia Evictions Take Longest in Pennsylvania

And It Doesn't Have to Be That Way

The snowball starts rolling when your tenant misses that rent payment. First come the excuses and you give them the usual grace period of 3 to 5 days. Still nothing.



Greg Wertman

see "President's Message" on page 4

HP's Private Exclusive Members-Only Facebook Page: Get In-the-Know

We know that some of our members regularly rely on the Hapco Philadelphia Online Forum to share ideas, problems, and solutions. In fact...

read more on page 9

How to Reach Hapco Philadelphia During the Move

As every rental property owner knows, it's always sunny in Philadelphia, but nothing happens fast here...

read more on page 3

A Broken Eviction Process

By HP Board of Directors Editorial Staff

It just shouldn't be this way.

Utility companies will shut off your services. Store owners will call the police. The government will garnish your wages. But when tenants don't pay your rent in the City of Philadelphia, nothing happens for a *very long time*. You can live for free. For days, weeks,

months, and, yes, even years. And who pays the price?

76-year-old Bee, for one. (*Bee, a longtime Hapco Philadelphia member, asked us not to reveal her real name.*) Bee has owned five rental properties around Philadelphia and Chester for nearly twenty years — income that helps to fund her in retirement — calling it "a beautiful experience".

see "Evictions" on page 10



Longtime HP Member Knows Lead Testing

Adam Kesselman Is A Landlord AND Lead Tester!

The City's recent lead testing ordinance scared the hell out of rental property owners.

"I've been a Hapco Philadelphia member for more than 20 years with several dozen single family, duplexes, and triplexes in Philly, the 'burbs, and New Jersey," says Adam Kesselman, president of Lead Testing Services. "When I tried to get my properties tested, hardly any lead testing companies called me back. And those that did were inexperienced and unprofessional."

That's when Kesselman says he got an idea.



Adam Kesselman

see "Lead Testing" on page 7

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How to Reach Hapco Philadelphia During the Move

Of Course, Nothing Is Easy In Philly



As every rental property owner knows, it's always sunny in Philadelphia, but nothing happens fast here.

And that goes for what should be a simple move to our new home.

What would be a relatively quick changeover in other cities from Verizon to Comcast after we move October 30th to the 31st will, of course, take up to a couple of weeks!

In that transition period, the best way to reach Hapco Philadelphia is via email at hapcooffice@hapcophiladelphia.com

If you need lockout and eviction information, the email address is Evictions@hapcophiladelphia.com

If you must call the office, you can do so until the switchover November 15th at 215-684-1684.

If you need to reach us during the transition and your email and call don't go through, reach out on the Hapco Philadelphia Facebook Members Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/7059280527449297>

Or, search "Hapco Philadelphia Members Group" on Facebook.

Once the moving dust settles, Hapco Philadelphia's new address will be:

**1628 JFK Blvd.
8 Penn Center, Lower Level C12
Philadelphia, 19103**

Advertising Rates and Information about the Hapco Monthly Newsletter



Claudia Christian | 215.287.5345 | cchristian@pressreview.net
The deadline for each issue is the last day of each month.



Serving Philadelphia's
Investment & Rental Property
Community

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President's Message continued from page 1

And that's when you get that feeling in the pit of your stomach. Is this an eviction getting ready to happen?

"Depending on a rental owner's relationship with the tenant, the reasons or excuses start coming," according to Hapco Philadelphia's general counsel, Paul Cohen.

"If a payment arrangement isn't made by mid-month, you're entering the warning track."

Cohen says smaller rental owners usually wait even longer to try to help the tenant get back on [the correct track]. Since many small rental owners are usually the ones least able to afford a missed rent payment or two, their seeming compassion many times that waiting becomes a death knell for their business model.

"And that's when the problem starts. [L]andlords don't want to, [and in many cases don't] know how to, start the eviction process," notes Cohen. "It's expensive, and they just want the tenant to pay up." Owner's bills don't stop, of course.

This is the time when the loooong eviction timeline starts.

Exclusive to Philly, it all must begin with the rental owner filing for the City's Eviction Diversion Program.

"That process automatically adds at least a month or more to the average eviction timeline," laments Cohen. "It's the wild card in the process." Because of the byzantine nature of doing business in the city, one never knows how long it will take that office to accept an Eviction Diversion case, nor is there a standard timeline on getting it processed through the system.

Once it's been accepted, the actual hearing, mediation, and negotiation process begins.

If the parties are unsuccessful in reaching an agreement for repayment of back rent and fees, only then can a rental owner file a formal Complaint for a Municipal Court

hearing in front of a judge.

"In other municipalities, that might take 30 days," says Cohen. "But good luck with that [here in Philadelphia]. In Philadelphia Municipal Court, it often stretches from 40 to 45 days."

As the painful process toward justice and repossession of an owner's property plods forward and after the court renders a judgement in favor of the landlord for eviction, it's going to be at least another 11 days of waiting in order to file for the Writ of Possession.

More legal terminology that you need to become familiar with and that your handy membership to Hapco Philadelphia will provide you. See our fantastic Hapco Philadelphia Handbook!

Once the "Writ" is filed, an Alias Writ can be gotten, which provides owners/managers with a final lockout/lock change (actual physical eviction).

"It basically means that the first Writ was ineffective, and the tenant didn't leave so the second Writ is filed," says Cohen. "And that's not the way the law is applied everywhere else."

The recent controversial Landlord Tenant Of-

fice (LTO) matter that received broad local and national attention as it related to gunshots being fired during the Alias process only adds a lengthier amount of time. The tenant assaults on the Landlord Tenant Officers LTOs) have spawned new safeguards that require LTOs be accompanied by a sworn constable to perform the eviction and lockout. And that new process is now taking up to 140 additional days at a significantly higher cost basis.

"[T]hat's assuming there's [no other] tenant barricade...where[by] they refuse to leave a property," according to Cohen. "LTOs are being told to be overly cautious, call police, and leave the premises if there's 'trouble'".

When it's all said and done, Philly's eviction timeline is now averaging an historic amount of time, upwards of 9 months, compared to 2½-months in most of the rest of Pennsylvania. Other states are even less. Bear in mind that that timetable can be significantly longer if the rental owner chooses not to file quickly for that new first required step: Eviction Diversion.

Finally, Cohen says the eviction timeline begins and ends with a rental owner's willingness to either negotiate a payment plan, or quickly move forward with eviction.



Growing exodus means higher tax burden for those who remain



Population growth in Pennsylvania by county, 2020-2022. By Independent Fiscal Office, The Center Square

By Anthony Hennen, The Center Square

Pennsylvania's "silver tsunami" of retirees outpacing workers isn't only a population shift: it'll also drive up the tax burden.

With fewer youth and working-aged adults spread among the population, and a larger proportion of elderly Pennsylvanians, the demand on government services is expected to increase in the long run.

"The burden of support will fall on a smaller group of taxpayers," the Independent Fiscal Office noted in a **recent report** on the commonwealth's demography. "The actual contraction of the working-age cohort suggests that real per capita tax levels for that age group must increase to keep pace with the anticipated increase in demand for healthcare and other services."

The problem isn't new — the IFO has warned of **workforce problems** in the state before, and Treasurer Stacy Garrity warned of **long-term budget shortfalls** in March. But it's a wake-up call for legislators as they consider the state's budget and the governor works on a **master plan for aging** in the commonwealth.

The IFO expects population growth to be flat in the near term and fall slightly in the long term. But the numbers of school-aged children are expected to fall 3.2% in the near term and 3.5% in the long-term, as are the numbers of working-age adults (2.6% near-term, 1.7% long-term).

Yet the IFO expects retirees to go up 13.4% in the near term and 3.4% in the long term, and advanced-aged Pennsylvanians (age 80 and up) to increase 8.2% in the near term and 20.8% in the long term.

"By 2030, about 35% of all older adults in the Commonwealth will be part of the retiree cohort," the IFO report noted.

Though the state is on the positive side of net migration (with estimates of 91,000 people moving in from 2025 to 2030), it won't make up for Pennsylvanians who pass: The IFO expects 111,000 more deaths than births during that same time.

Some parts of the state may be better off than others: most population gains have gone to the southeast, while the northwestern parts of Pennsylvania have struggled to keep its population level.

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Tenant Screening

Applyconnect FAQ: I'm A Renter. Can My Lease Be Broken Because Of _____?

By Ian Riley, ©ApplyConnect.com

Navigating the world of lease agreements as a tenant can sometimes seem a bit daunting, especially when both parties aren't clear about their rights and responsibilities. Ever been in a rental housing situation in which you asked yourself, **"Can a lease be voluntarily broken, and if so, can it be because of _____?"**

Disclaimer: The information provided here is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be legal advice. Tenants should consult with a qualified attorney or legal professional regarding their specific situation and any decisions related to breaking their lease.

Burglary

Q: Can a lease be broken because my unit was burgled?

A: It's quite an unfortunate event, but burglary alone might not be grounds for breaking a lease. However, if the property owner or management team has not provided adequate security measures or there's a recurring issue, it might be possible for the tenant to make a case for breaking the lease. Some landlords might even choose to allow a tenant to break their lease after a burglary in order to avoid a potential lawsuit, as the loss of income due to a broken lease might be less than legal fees. Ultimately, after a burglary, it's a good idea for both parties to discuss security and any preventive measures that could be implemented as a first step.

Noise Violations from Police

Q: My neighbors threw another wild party

and this time the police showed up. Again. Can I break the lease?

A: Persistent noise violations that disrupt the peace might offer some leverage in ending a lease early, especially if the property owner has been notified but hasn't acted. For property owners, it's crucial to address disturbances to maintain harmony among tenants. If a landlord owns a property with multiple units, they could potentially offer to move you to a vacant unit to appease both tenants. However, this is ultimately a tenant issue, and it's unlikely the lease will be broken due to a noisy neighbor.

Damage Due to Existing Problems

Q: The pipes burst and ruined my record collection! Were those old pipes the reason?

A: If damages result from existing problems that violate the warranty of habitability (a legal doctrine that requires property owners to maintain the safety and livable conditions of their rental property, such as old pipes or structural issues, and they were previously



reported to the owner with no action taken, there could be grounds to break a lease. If the property is deemed uninhabitable by a city inspector, the property owner would be given a timeframe to fix the violations cited by the city to rent the property again. However, unless the state has provisions in their tenant-landlord laws that require the property owner to provide alternate accommodations for the duration of your lease, you might be without a roof over your head for an indefinite period, as well.

Illegal Activity

Q: My neighbor is running a suspicious-looking operation from his apartment. Can illegal activities lead to a lease being broken?

A: Absolutely. If a tenant is participating in illegal activity (such as drug dealing), it's a breach of most lease agreements. Property owners and management can evict in such cases, and tenants should feel empowered to report any concerns for their safety.

Not Paying Rent

Q: Can a lease be broken if someone's not paying rent? Asking for a... friend.

A: Let's keep it simple: yes. Failing to pay rent is one of the primary reasons that leases are broken. For tenants, it's crucial to communicate any financial difficulties to the property management before things get dicey. Property owners, on the other hand, should ensure that lease terms are clear about payment expectations.

Ian Riley is the Content Strategist at Apply-Connect. When he's not working, Ian can usually be found recording and producing music, playing video games with his wife, spending time with his daughter, and continuing his never-ending search for the strongest coffee in town.

Lead Testing continued from page 1

"Lead testing doesn't serve any mon-eymaking purpose for most landlords so they're not keen on paying to get it done," notes Kesselman. "I was determined to use my rental property experience to explain to landlords why lead testing is so important."

Kesselman says he saw an opportunity to de-stress both rental property owners and their tenants about making their properties safe.

"It can be an intimidating process when landlords and tenants don't know what to expect," remembers Kesselman.

"So, I went back to school to learn how to be a lead tester and start my own company."

After completing rigorous government and EPA training, Kesselman created Lead Testing Services LLC www.leadtestingservicesphila.com.

Kesselman then set out to make the lead testing process seamless, from the initial contact with rental owners and tenants, to getting a Rental Suitability Certificate.

"I have to keep reminding landlords that they cannot collect rent from tenants if they don't have their Lead Safe Certificate for each property [and each unit within a multi-family property]," Kesselman points out. "Tenants have to read and sign it and landlords can't get that Rental Suitability Certificate without that."

All the lead testing firms Kesselman had talked to were not rental property owners and didn't know how to speak their language. He set out to change that.

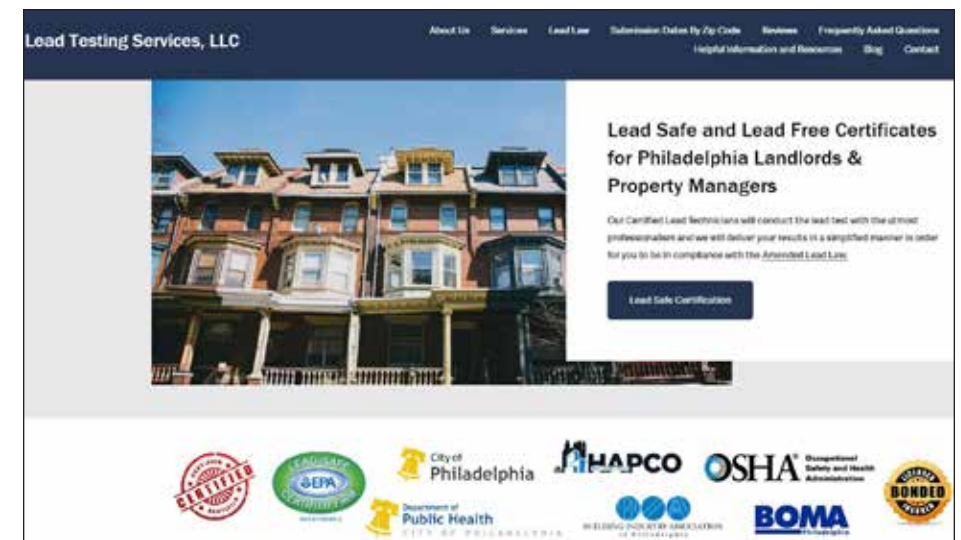
"When you hire a lead testing company, they become an extension of the rental property owner," says Kesselman. "If you don't map out every step of the process it can affect the relationship between landlord and tenant."

Kesselman says he explains that lead testers must go through every room, swabbing

windowsills and other surfaces for traces of lead paint.



And being a lead tester is more than just knowing what the law is, but which municipalities have laws, and why.



"Norristown in Montgomery County has its own lead testing law. And New Jersey recently passed a law in that state. And many rental owners, tenants, and lead testers don't know that," Kesselman says.

"If a child living in one of your properties has elevated lead levels in their blood, the landlord could be sued if they don't remedi-

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ate it in the apartment."

Kesselman's Lead Testing Services now has more than 3,500 clients, ranging from small mom-and-pop rental owners to [large property owners, partnerships, and] corporations with thousands of units.

He says he discovered Hapco Philadelphia in the early 2000s because he saw value in having a strong organization advocating for rental owners.

"Hapco Philadelphia is a valuable education resource for all landlords who may not have time to keep up with all the rental laws, including lead testing."

You can reach Adam Kesselman at Lead Testing Services at 610-357-7964. Or, you can visit his website at www.leadtestingservices.com

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The Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter is a medium for transmitting information to and exchanging ideas among rental housing providers who are members.

Advertising relevant to investment in and operation of properties is accepted. The advertisements help defray the cost of producing and distributing the publication. They are also a valuable resource for members, who own and manage more than 30,000 small and mid-size rental buildings in Philadelphia, by helping them identify vendors who offer goods and services relevant to their business interests.

Hapco Philadelphia reserves the right to decline advertising inconsistent with rental property acquisition, sale, maintenance, and management.

Hapco Philadelphia reserves the right to decline advertising, including cancelling of advertising contracts, with refund of any prepayments, based on conclusions reached in investigating complaints by members of unsatisfactory vendor performance or reliability.

Members having complaints about the performance or reliability of advertisers will be requested to describe their grievances in writing, on forms provided by Hapco Philadelphia. The relevant vendor will be advised of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond. The complaint and response will be reviewed by the Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter Editorial Committee and forwarded with a recommendation to the Hapco Philadelphia Board of Directors for a decision. This decision will be considered final; the complaining member and the vendor will be so notified.

An advertisement in the Newsletter does not imply endorsement by Hapco Philadelphia. Members are urged to request and consult references as they consider prudent.

For advertising information contact: Claudia Christian Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter C/O University City Review 406 S 43rd Street Philadelphia, PA 19104 Tel: 215.222.2846, Fax: 215.222.2378 cchristian@pressreview.net

The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office set the record straight about statements made in the City Controller's Report



Philadelphia Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Rochelle Bilal recently held a press conference to set the record straight about the misleading and inaccurate statements made in the City Controller's Report released on September 20, 2023. In response to a request for information in May 2023, the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office submitted a 159-page response that included details, descriptions, and diagrams highlighting the investigation.

During the press conference, Sheriff Bilal went step-by-step in discussing the inaccuracies in the City Controller's Report.

The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office has taken many steps to organize the armory, including the labeling and tagging of every weapon received by the office since January 7, 2020.

The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office cannot answer inconsistencies that were derived because of bad recordkeeping in the past, prior to taking office.

The City Controller's Office failed to properly audit the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office armory for more than 20 years. That led to a

completely disorganized armory under past administrations.

The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office has installed a state-of-the-art security system, with motion detectors and security cameras to ensure the safekeeping of all firearms.

The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office is using the BEAST system for tracking firearms. This provides the office the ability to track when the firearms come in, when they leave, which weapons are returned to individuals, which weapons are set aside to be burned, etc.

The City Controller's Report is based on assumptions, presumptions, and inaccuracies. Likewise, the report only references alleged weapons from the 1970s through 2014.

During the press conference, Undersheriff Tariq Shabazz discussed the timeline of the important armory audit since the Bilal Administration:

In 2019 the Audit began prior to Sheriff

continued on page 9

Report *continued from page 8*

Bilal's administration.

January 6, 2020: Sheriff Rochelle Bilal was sworn into office to begin her first term as Sheriff of the City and County of Philadelphia.

January 7, 2020: The City Controller and/or agents of the City Controller office physically came to the Office to conduct an armory audit.

November 17, 2021: City Controller Rebecca Rhynhart submitted her letter outlining recommendations:

- Process for asset tagging firearms and other weapons
- Process for maintaining a detailed inventory
- Accountability in tracking PFA (protection from abuse) weapons
- Continue to track PFA weapons
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office, Philadelphia Police Department, and the members of the City of Philadelphia

All of those recommendations were accomplished under the Bilal Administration.

January 22, 2022: The Sheriff's Office submitted a justification memo to then Controller Rhynhart outlining every update we've accomplished from the BEAST (software program), armory (tagging weapons brought in/existing)

April 4, 2023: Philadelphia City Council Budget Hearing

April 17, 2023: A Press Release was posted on the phillysheriff.com website that states we have not misplaced guns.

May 23, 2023: The City Controller's office requests for additional information.

June 8, 2023: The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office 159-page response to City Controller,

Acting City Controller Charles Edacheril, CPA

September 20, 2023: The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office received the City Controller's Report, and the City Controller released a Press Release on their findings to the public and to our office.

"To be clear, there is no definitive way to say that any firearms are missing. Under

my administration which began on January 6, 2020, there are no weapons missing or unaccounted for. We can account for every weapon received by the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office since I took office and will continue to account for each weapon in our possession moving forward".

– Sheriff Rochelle Bilal.

HP's Private Exclusive Members-Only Facebook Page: Get In-the-Know

We know that some of our members regularly rely on the Hapco Philadelphia Online Forum to share ideas, problems, and solutions. In fact, our Hapco Newsletter section, "Over the Transom", is a monthly "best-of" of some of the topics discussed. And the Forum is staying put!

For members who are more social media-engaged and seek a more streamlined and modern platform, our new Facebook members-only private page, called Hapco Philadelphia Members Group, is now available for the same purpose.

We rolled it out last month and currently have about 70 members already on-

board. As an HP member, we invite you to join! This is a closed group, so you'll be assured that you're speaking to other members as you bounce around ideas, share information and market matters. The Page will also share details about the latest HP events and promotions.

So, get involved. There's no better way to directly communicate with your fellow Philly rental owners and managers. Best of all, it's a free service of Hapco Philadelphia. Sign up today and start a conversation to grow your business, interact with cohorts, share information and contacts.

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But that feeling changed during COVID, in late 2021, when one of her tenants stopped paying and the rental assistance she had been receiving from the City of Philadelphia on the tenant's behalf ran out. Although Bee says her tenant continued to work, the \$700 monthly rent checks stopped, and the games started.

The tenant's responses were predictable. At first, she ignored Bee's request for payment. Then she sent Bee a partial check that bounced. Finally, in the Spring of 2022, desperate, Bee called Hapco Philadelphia Eviction Attorney Kenneth Baritz. Bee's problems were far from resolved, but she remembers feeling a sense of relief.

"I called them, because I didn't know what to do. When I had a question, they would answer it. They kept up with what was going on and why something happened," she recalls.

As the saying goes, the wheels of justice turn slowly. But Bee wasn't prepared for the seemingly endless delays that followed. Spring turned into Fall and her tenant had racked up more than seven thousand dollars in back rent and utility bills. When Bee was finally able to take her client before a judge, she couldn't believe her own eyes.

"She walked in looking [all dressed up] like a movie star, saying she needed more time to get a lawyer," Bee recalls. Another postponement and more financial woes for Bee, and another free ride for the dolled-up tenant.

Finally, last December, Bee had her day in

court and won her case, with a payment of more than \$5,000 ordered. Significantly less than she had sought but worse, even that relief was short-lived. That same day, the tenant appealed the case to the higher Court of Common Pleas, which as Baritz says, starts the process over again. Worse, a tenant can ask for an appeal for any reason or for no reason at all. That led to another four-month delay before the case was allowed to proceed back in Municipal Court. Spring became summer, and Philadelphia's Landlord-Tenant Office paused all evictions arising from a spate of gun-related incidents during lockdowns.

More delays. More lost money. More frustration.

And just when it seemed that Bee would finally fully reclaim her unit in late September, the tenant claimed that she was having surgery and needed *more time*. No kidding. Milking the system as an art form.

Bee FINALLY did get full possession of her unit just last month — nearly *two years* after her last regular rent payment came in. And while the court awarded her nearly \$11,000, she likely will only see a small fraction of that. She figures the entire ordeal cost her nearly \$20,000.

"I feel that as a landlord, if I take you to court, and the judge listens to both sides and makes a ruling in my favor, why would they let someone keep appealing and appealing and not pay any rent? Months go by, and she's not paying."

Proof that without much effort, a bad tenant can drag out a case for months, if not years.

Baritz agrees. "Post COVID, a gazillion different rules and requirements have surfaced, mostly through City Council, with the idea being to delay the process for as long as you possibly can. My biggest issue is that everything the government does is calculated to assist and help the tenant. Nothing is done to help the landlord."

So, when should a frustrated rental property owner reach out to Hapco Philadelphia? Baritz says that's an individual decision but consider this: today it takes an average of five to six months from the time you contact an attorney until your property is returned. The longer you wait to begin the process and delay believing tenant excuses and false promises, the more money, time, and sanity you potentially and likely stand to lose.

The experience left a very bad taste in Bee's mouth. "I've had to dip into my savings, robbing Peter to pay Paul. I've been so worried and upset that it's made me sick. It [has] impacted my health. My kids keep telling me I should sell."

She says the bright spot has been her Hapco Philadelphia experience. "I don't know where else I would have gone. I would have just gotten a lawyer that bled me dry. Hapco kept me focused on what I had to do. They've been a life saver."

Your fellow HP member's words speak volumes: pass it along!



PAYMENT STANDARD SCHEDULE BY NEIGHBORHOOD ZIP CODE

The payment standard generally sets the maximum subsidy payment a household can receive from PHA each month and is based on Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) published annually by HUD. When searching for and selecting a prospective HCV unit, always keep in mind that our Payment Standard used for analysis is dictated by Voucher Size, not unit bedroom size.

For example: You have a current voucher size of

2, but you elect to lease a 3 bedroom unit. The payment standard used as a basis for our rent calculations will be a payment standard size of 2, not 3. This means that your new landlord will be less likely to accept a rent offer from PHA.

Thus it's always best to match your voucher size with the bedroom size of your prospective new home. This rule will help produce a rent offer that your new landlord is more likely to accept.

Also keep in mind that you are allowed to spend a maximum of 40% of total household income towards the following, per month: tenant's portion of the contract rent + tenant's total utilities costs (see Utilities Schedule flyer for applicable values).

If you have questions regarding payment standards or rent analyses, please reach out to your HCV service representative.

PHA Payment Standard Schedule effective October 1, 2023 Payment Standards

SAFMR Group	Type	SRO	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	5 BR	6 BR	7 BR	8 BR
1	Basic Rents	\$828	\$1,104	\$1,236	\$1,476	\$1,788	\$2,064	\$2,373	\$2,683	\$2,992	\$3,302
2	Traditional Rents	\$990	\$1,320	\$1,476	\$1,764	\$2,136	\$2,460	\$2,829	\$3,198	\$3,567	\$3,936
3	Mid Range Rents	\$1,197	\$1,596	\$1,776	\$2,124	\$2,568	\$2,964	\$3,408	\$3,853	\$4,297	\$4,742
4	Opportunity Rents	\$1,449	\$1,932	\$2,160	\$2,580	\$3,120	\$3,600	\$4,140	\$4,680	\$5,220	\$5,760
5	High Opportunity Rents	\$1,584	\$2,112	\$2,352	\$2,820	\$3,408	\$3,936	\$4,526	\$5,116	\$5,707	\$6,297

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
19120	19101	19131	19125	19118
19124	19104	19135	19128	19127
19126	19105	19137	19129	19146
19132	19109	19138	19153	19147
19133	19110	19144	19154	19123
19134	19111	19145		19130
19136	19112	19148		
19139	19114	19149		
19140	19115	19150		
19141	19116	19152		
19142	19119			
19143	19121			
19151	19122			

Application of Payments Standards

Action type	Payment standard to apply:
Initial lease	PHA's current SAFMR Payment standard in effect when the lease is approved and executed by the tenant and owner.
Recertification	PHA's current Payment Standard in effect when all recertification documents have been received and processed in Elite UNLESS the current payment standard applicable to the household is LOWER than the payment standard applied at last regular recertification, if the household family size increases or decreases the new household voucher size must be used to determine the payment standard for the household when completing the recertification.
Interim	Payment standard in effect at last regular recertification.

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Help us spread the word, **Hapco Philadelphia** is the oldest Philadelphia area association advocating for landlords. We are looking to expand our membership, and we hope that you will tell your other landlord friends how helpful **Hapco Philadelphia** has been for you and how important it is for them to join. **Hapco Philadelphia** is a first source for information about our industry. Check out our website at www.hapcophiladelphia.com



Over the Transom

Edited by Claudia Christian

Some recent traffic on Hapco's Online Forum:

Names have been withheld to protect the innocent. Responses reflect the views of the Forum respondents and not necessarily those of Hapco Philadelphia.

OVERHEAD GARAGE DOOR REPAIRS

Post: I am looking for someone to repair overhead garage doors in University City area. Any suggestions?

Response: I have had good luck with D & M garage door solutions 267-687-2216.

Response: Tom Cunningham 267-751-9447

SIMPLISAFE

Post: I am looking for some help. I have a four unit property in southwest Philly that i want to alarm with a Simplisafe unit, which I have already purchased, but I need help in setting it up. Can someone provide guidance or even some hands on help?

Response: I would call Simplisafe and have them walk you through it. As this seems like your first time, or at least first time in a while, save yourself wasted time and do it at your house first. Customer Support is 800-297-1605. There are times when I've had to take the base station apart, reset it, then put it back together over the phone. While annoying and somewhat time consuming, they usually get it resolved while I'm on the phone with them. The second reason why you should do a practice set up in your own home first is sometimes they end up not being able to resolve it over the phone and

need to mail you something. Taking apart the base station is fairly simple, you'll just need a tiny screwdriver available.

Response: How many systems are you setting up? Just one in the SWP apartment, Also, are you connecting cameras? I can definitely help you out with the install no problem. Shoot me an email. Gimbel23@gmail.com

Response: They have a property manager division that is more helpful than the standard customer service. 857-770-9668

property-management@simplisafe.com

ROACH EXTERMINATOR

Post: Can someone recommend an exterminator who is experienced getting rid of roaches for a property in University City? We tried one three times but did not get rid of the problem. Also, would like someone who offers a warranty as I don't want to keep paying someone who does not resolve the issue.

Response: If you tried it yourself and or not pleased with the results of a professional organization, I'd recommend Evan's Pest Control. Chuck is a member of HAPCO. They are the real deal and the go -to for the real hard cases.

Response: Visit Pearless pest supplies at 62nd & Market. Ask about Advion roach

bait and how to use it safely. It's important to learn best practices from the support salesperson there.

Response: Try Alpha to Omega 267-228-0777. I used them in my University City apartment. One extermination and no more roaches.

Response: How bad was the infestation? Mine seems pretty bad.

Response: The tenants were horrible - one of those difficult tenants that refuse entry to their apartment. Roaches EVERYWHERE- There was a nest behind the refrigerator - hundreds if not thousands of critters. I've never seen anything like that before or since!!

In my case, the tenant had moved out , so Alpha was able to close off the apartment and apply some heavy duty treatments. They came ONE time and the problem was gone.

They also employed preventive measures to keep the issue from spreading to other apartments. Most exterminators use one method to treat the whole apartment.

The guys at Alpha explained to me that different types of poisons and treatments are needed; for furniture, for carpets, hard floors, etc.

I HIGHLY recommend Alpha to Omega!

Response: This is slightly off-topic, but I recommend doing a Deep Clean in addition to extermination. I have a tenant who asked about putting out mouse poison, because she had pet allergies and she was afraid mice might cause an allergic reaction. This is a shared house, and the tenant who had been there for longer said she had gotten a kitchen trash can with a tight fitting lid and had not seen any live mouse activity since then. Nevertheless, she recommended doing a deep clean, which I thought was a great idea. Normally I would do a reasonable

continued on page 13

Over the Transom continued from page 12

clean-up between tenants, but there had been an overlap with an early move-in, so there had been no clean-up between outgoing and incoming tenants. Tenants two years back had a cat in the house, so I felt if there were worries about allergies, a deep clean was in order to remove any lingering cat hair and dander.

I met Terence Jenkins of Sovereign Cleaning Services, LLC at monthly DIG meetings. He and his crew did a terrific job, and the tenants are very pleased. In addition to poisons, a deep clean removes accumulated dirt and trash that are providing shelter for the infesting roaches. Here's Terence's contact info: Terence Jenkins, President of Sovereign Cleaning Services, LLC 215.740.6055 Email: info@sovereigncleaningservices.biz

www.sovereigncleaningservices.biz

PHILADELPHIA LANDLORD PROPERTY TAX AND THE APPEALS FEEDBACK

Post: Has anyone experienced any negative issues with their Landlord Property Tax Appeals with the Philadelphia's Appeal Court? I filed an appeal because it is not right that my property taxes were doubled for my rental property. Specifically, with the carry over data the city's record department experienced because of the in adequate system they converted to back in the spring. However, the virtual hearing was Tuesday - September 26, 2023. At the end of the hearing, I was informed that I would get a letter within 10 days disclosing their decision. However, that never happened.

On Tuesday - October 17th I received a notice in the mail from GRB Law informing me that they were notified that I owe a property tax balance. This was very concerning because I did not receive the Appeals letter. I immediately, emailed the Redevelopment Property Assessor about this matter. This morning, I was emailed a letter from that group stating that my appeal was denied,

and I have thirty days from the date of the letter dated October 13th six days ago to appeal their decision.

ATTORNEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIABILITY CASES

Post: I received a notice that someone is suing me, saying they were injured on the sidewalk of a property I owned. They are claiming that a part of the sidewalk was not adequately maintained. Could forum members please recommend some lawyers that defend property owners in these instances?

Response: Your property insurance should be able to handle it. Contact your insurance agent. Also, you can speak with our attorney Paul Cohen as well.

Response: I got one of these & it occurred before I even owned the property!!! Ask for the date, pictures & injury information & what they are claiming -medical bills, etc.

Then, I would contact my insurance company - if any of this is for real. I'd also take my own pictures and see if there is anything that's for real. I'd also explore, personally, anything I could find on person claiming injury.

Response: I absolutely agree with the advice to get good photos of the condition of your property ASAP. I would also recommend contacting your insurer immediately. Your policy probably requires you to do that w/in a short period of time.

REAL ESTATE LAWYER

Post: I am looking to buy the vacant lot next to my house. The owner is deceased. Can anyone recommend a Real Estate Lawyer?

Response: Margolis Edelstein 170 S Independence Mall W, 400E, Philadelphia 267-916-5181 M: 445-264-1083

Response: Stan Ellenberg 215-280-2749

Response: What's the tax situation? Are there arrears? Is it part of an estate? Are there family members? I'd try to find as much info on the property first so I'm not paying attorney fees for info I can get myself. I would also mow it or weed whack & take before & after pics so I could show that I maintained the premises.

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State may strengthen distracted driving laws



Andrey Popov, Shutterstock

By Lauren Jessop
The Center Square Contributor

A recent report says Pennsylvania's distracted driving laws lag behind other states when it comes to preventing crashes.

And, there's at least one proposal on the table that could improve that ranking and make roads safer.

WhistleOut compared distracted driving laws by state and awarded the commonwealth a grade of "D" because it has only one of the three laws they use as criteria – bans on using handheld devices, young drivers using cell phones, and texting.

In Pennsylvania, **texting** while driving is an offense that incurs a \$50 fine. However, there is no law banning the use of cell phones and other devices for other reasons. Sen. Rosemary Brown, R-Scotrun, says this makes enforcement difficult since police officers don't know if you're texting.

Brown is the prime sponsor of **Senate Bill 37**, a proposal that would prohibit the use of handheld communication devices while operating a motor vehicle in the state. Using

GPS would still be allowed, but drivers must "have two hands on the wheel, two eyes on the road, and their mind at task as much as possible."

It's an issue Brown said she first became passionate about 10 years ago while serving as a state representative.

She told The Center Square she became invested in the legislation through discussions with a mother who lost her **21-year-old son** in 2010 when a distracted truck driver crossed over a highway divider and hit him in a head-on collision.

"The best cell phone use is no cell phone use, but we understand that's not a reality right now," Brown said.

"We can save lives by changing behaviors," she said, adding the legislation would encourage the use of hands-free technology by imposing stricter deterrents, similar to our DUI laws. There is also a provision directing law enforcement to issue warnings for violations during the first 12 months following the signing of the bill.

The bill has advanced to the House Transportation Committee where Brown said its chair, Rep. Ed Neilson, D-Philadelphia, is

supportive of it, as is the governor.

Preventing it from getting over the finish line concerns an amendment regarding data collection and discrimination in traffic stops that applies to all traffic stops, not just this legislation. While Brown wants to see that done, she feels it could be worked on separately. Attaching it to this legislation "is holding back the bill from saving lives," she said.

PennDOT data shows there were 80 fatalities attributed to distracted driving crashes in 2022 – up from 60 in 2021. However, Brown notes those numbers may not be accurate because people do not always admit being on their cell phone when a crash occurs.

"For too long, Pennsylvania has stood alone by virtue of its failure to protect its citizens by passing a 'hands-free' law," said Joel Feldman, president of the Casey Feldman Foundation, during an interview with The Center Square. "Every single state that borders Pennsylvania has done so resulting in reductions in crashes, injuries, and deaths."

Feldman became an advocate for distraction-free driving after his 21-year-old daughter was killed in 2009. As part of its campaign, **End Distracted Driving**, the foundation provides presentations and resources to schools free of charge and produces PSAs for use by traffic safety and health care professionals across the country.

"My daughter was killed by a distracted driver," Feldman said. "It is our children who are most impacted by distracted driving crashes. As parents, wouldn't we do anything to keep our children safe? Making Pennsylvania 'hands-free' will serve that purpose."

According to WhistleOut, no state has laws fully enforcing all three categories. The 21 states, plus Washington, D.C, that received an "A" have a handheld and texting ban and a partial young driver cell phone ban.

Montana is the only state that received an "F" with no laws or bans in place.



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Hapco Philadelphia is the pre-eminent rental real estate industry trade group in the Philadelphia region.

Hapco Philadelphia (HP) was established in 1954 to represent the collective interests and municipal concerns of owners of rental properties in the City of Philadelphia. Now with nearly 2,000 members, its owners/managers control over 20,000 low- and moderate- and market-rate rental units, including single-family and multi-family properties throughout the Philadelphia.

The Hapco Philadelphia board is an all-volunteer 401C-4, Not-For-Profit organization, comprised of entrepreneurs, teachers, police, lawyers, architects, and who helm firms ranging from start-ups to mom-and-pops, and old-line multi-generational firms.

HP advocates for an improved business environment, fair and reasonable laws, rules and regulations that protect the health and safety of tenants and at the same time enable landlords to operate in a free, fair, and open marketplace.

Reasons to JOIN HAPCO Philadelphia

— hapco@hapcophiladelphia.com —

FEATURES & BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

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- Streamlined forms for landlord & tenant legal actions
- Searchable archive
- Continuous updates of legislative matters
- Updated news & information feeds
- Announcements & calendar events
- PA state level legislative activity & PROA
- Online store (coming soon!)
- Special "ask our lawyer" section
- Exclusive members-only online Forum
- Facebook, LinkedIn & YouTube channel
- Online monthly newsletter, including news, trends, & editorials
- Educational series, lectures & roundtables
- Affordable, Tax deductible membership dues
- General Membership Seminars featuring guest speakers from the local business community, building, industry, and elected officials
- HP-PAC to support our various interests and causes on behalf of its members
- Exclusive members-only discount at major retailers like Home Depot and Sherwin-Williams
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- Get involved! Exciting opportunities to make a difference by joining Hapco Philadelphia's wide array of committees.
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- Alias Writ (actual eviction)..... \$350
- Reschedule Eviction For Landlord/Tenant Officer \$50
- Petition Hearing\$150 if tenant should file a petition

To join HapcoPhiladelphia and for more information, or to register visit at HapcoPhiladelphia.com



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