



Serving Philadelphia's Investment & Rental Property Community

Message from the President: Why Rental Suitability is Critical to Protecting Your Rent



Greg Wertman

As housing providers in Philadelphia, we all understand the challenges of managing rental properties. But there's one requirement that many may not realize could cost us thousands of dollars in lost rent—the Rental Suitability Certificate. Without it, even if a tenant stops paying rent altogether, we lose the right to collect

see "President's Message" on page 9

see "President's Message" on page 9

Shapiro Advocates for Sealing Eviction Records

Governor Josh Shapiro is renewing his call for legislation to seal certain eviction records, a move aimed at alleviating the long-term consequences faced by tenants who have experienced eviction proceedings.

read story on page 14

When a Tenant Thinks They Can Pay When They Want

One of the significant challenges housing providers face is tenants who do not consistently adhere to the agreed-upon terms for rent payments.

read story on page 6

Mayor Parker's Housing Priority in Year Two

By HP Board of Directors Editorial Staff

Leading up to this month's budget address for the fiscal year beginning July first, Philadelphia Mayor Cherrille Parker offered a preview telling leaders that dramatically increasing the city's housing stock will be a top priority in 2025-26.

"In year two, we will focus on my promise to create, repair, or restore 30,000 units of housing during the Parker Administration. Believe me when I tell you I think about 'Mission 30,000' day and night," she told more than 2,000 elected officials, busi-



Mayor Cherrille Parker

see "Housing Priority" back page

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Shirley Armstead

By Lauren Andreoli

Shirley Armstead's journey into real estate started at the age of 27 when she purchased a duplex in Philadelphia. Inspired by the financial potential of real estate, she worked alongside the person from whom she bought the property and even went into business with him. However, as a mother of two, Shirley found living in a duplex wasn't ideal, so she sold the property and bought a home. Despite this shift, her interest in real estate remained, and she knew she wanted to own multiple properties, understanding that



see "Shirley Armstead" on page 8

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2025 can look very different!

Hapco Philadelphia's General Membership Meeting: April 30, 2025

By Lauren Andreoli

Join Hapco Philadelphia for our upcoming General Membership Meeting on **April 30, 2025 at Saint Joseph's University**. This event is a must-attend for housing providers, property managers, and real estate investors looking to stay informed and engaged in Philadelphia's evolving housing landscape. It's open to both members and non-members!

We are excited to welcome an outstanding lineup of speakers, each bringing valuable expertise to the discussion. Donna Bullock, former Pennsylvania State Representative and current CEO of Project HOME, has long been an advocate for housing stability and policy solutions that impact both tenants and property owners. Her work with Project HOME focuses on addressing homelessness, affordable housing, and community development—key issues shaping Philadelphia's rental market.

Councilmember Anthony Phillips, representing the Ninth District, plays a crucial role in city policies affecting property owners. With a strong focus on economic development

and neighborhood revitalization, he brings insight into legislative initiatives that may impact the rental housing sector.

The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office will also be joining us to provide a follow-up in-person discussion on legal procedures affecting housing providers. After our webinar with the Sheriff's Office, this session will delve deeper into topics such as property disputes, evictions, and sheriff's sales. Their role in enforcing court-ordered actions makes them an essential part of the real estate and rental market.

While the exact topics of discussion will be announced closer to the event, this meeting will offer a valuable opportunity to hear directly from policymakers and industry leaders.

This will also be a great networking opportunity to meet other like-minded individuals in the housing and real estate sectors, and there will be vendors on-site. Attendees will also enjoy complimentary snacks and refreshments throughout the event.

Don't miss this opportunity to stay informed and connect with fellow Hapco members! Visit our website for more details and to register.

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Managing Tenant Issues During the Eviction Process in Philadelphia

Addressing Unauthorized Visitors and Illegal Activity

By Lauren Andreoli

As a housing provider in Philadelphia, managing a property during the eviction process can become even more complicated if tenants allow unauthorized individuals onto the property who then engage in illegal or disruptive activities, such as drug use. While it's crucial to follow the legal steps in the eviction process, there are additional considerations that can help you protect you and your property and ensure a safe living environment. Insurance liability and law enforcement are at the top of the list.

First and foremost, it's important to document any disruptive or illegal activity. This includes taking photos of property damage, keeping a record of dates and time of all incidents, and gathering any complaints from neighbors or other tenants. This documentation will support your case if you need to take legal action or involve the police.

Housing providers should also consider reviewing their insurance policy to ensure they're protected under such circumstances. Many housing providers carry liability insurance, which can help cover damages caused by unauthorized individuals, such as vandalism or destruction of property. In



cases of illegal activities, including drug use, your insurance may help cover the costs of repairs or cleanup. It's important to clarify with your insurance provider whether your policy includes coverage for criminal activity and whether you need to take additional steps, such as notifying them of the situation, to ensure your property is adequately protected.

While involving the police may ultimately be a necessary step, law enforcement generally does not intervene until a criminal act has occurred, such as drug possession or distribution or violence. If the activity is criminal in nature, contact officials and file a report and request their assistance in removing the unauthorized individuals as soon as issues arise. Delaying action can be costly. The police generally will not remove tenants from the property until the eviction

process has worked its way through to the alias writ of possession. They will address criminal activity.

If the tenant refuses to comply following sending your notices and a situation worsens, a formal lease violation notice should then be delivered with the next step being to file for eviction with the Philadelphia Municipal Court. Once filed, the court will schedule a hearing, and if the judge rules in your favor, they will issue an eviction order. There is an involved process that must be followed, including something called the Eviction Diversion Program.

Hapco Philadelphia offers an eviction service with an experienced attorney to guide you through the process. Throughout an eviction, it's important to be patient and follow all legal procedures to protect both your property and your rights as a housing provider. Since eviction can be a lengthy and complex process, working with a knowledgeable attorney ensures you're taking the right steps while staying compliant with the law.

Landlord and tenant issues many times can be discussed and amicable solutions can be negotiated. However, if a situation is untenable, Hapco Philadelphia is here to assist with the eviction process, together with the myriad requirements and steps and documentation necessary to make the process as efficient as possible.

What to Do If a Tenant Refuses to Let a Lead Inspector into the Property in Philadelphia

By Lauren Andreoli

As a housing provider in Philadelphia, complying with the city's lead certification requirements is essential for the safety of your tenants and the legality of your rental property. According to Philadelphia's lead law, rental properties and family daycare facilities built before 1978 must be certified as either lead safe or lead free, particularly if a child under six years old will be residing in the property. Certification requires a lead inspection, and if a tenant refuses entry for this inspection, it's important to know the steps you can take to ensure you remain compliant with the law.

Understanding Philadelphia's Lead Certification Requirements

First, let's break down the certification process:

Lead-Safe Certification: This means a certified lead dust sampling technician or licensed lead inspector has confirmed that the property is free from deteriorated lead paint and that interior dust samples do not contain hazardous lead levels. This certification is valid for four years.

Lead-Free Certification: This is given if the property has been thoroughly tested by a certified lead inspector and found to have no lead-based paint anywhere. Lead-free certificates do not expire.

Housing providers are required to submit a lead-safe or lead-free certificate before signing or renewing a lease, or renewing a rental license.

What If a Tenant Refuses Entry for the Lead Inspection?

If your tenant refuses to allow a lead inspection, it's crucial to take action promptly to

maintain compliance with Philadelphia's lead law. Here's what you should do:

Document the Refusal: First, make a written record of the tenant's refusal to allow the inspection. Contact the tenant through a formal written communication, either by email or postal mail. It's essential to document this correspondence to show that you made an effort to comply with the inspection requirements.

Provide Adequate Notice: Be sure that your tenant has been given sufficient notice of the lead inspection. You should give tenants at least five days' notice prior to the scheduled inspection. If your tenant still refuses, this notice is key to proving that you followed the correct procedure.

Submit Documentation to the Health Department: After documenting the tenant's refusal, you are required to submit this information, including the written refusal and proof that the tenant received your communication, to the Health Department. This ensures that you have complied with the city's regulations, even if the inspection could not be conducted due to the tenant's refusal.

Understand the Legal Consequences: If a tenant continues to refuse the inspection, the property may face penalties. Housing providers who do not comply with the lead law cannot renew their rental license with-

out a valid lead-safe or lead-free certificate. In some cases, the Health Department may issue fines, impose code violations, or take legal action. Furthermore, housing providers may be prohibited from evicting tenants while the issue of compliance remains unresolved.

Seek Legal Advice: If you face ongoing challenges with tenant cooperation or encounter potential legal ramifications, it's advisable to seek guidance from a legal professional. An attorney can help you navigate the complexities of the law and advise on the best course of action.

What's the Bottom Line?

Philadelphia's lead law is designed to protect the tenants by ensuring that rental properties are free from lead hazards. While it's critical for housing providers to comply with these regulations, sometimes tenants may refuse access for necessary inspections. In these cases, documentation, written communication, and timely submission of information to the Health Department are essential steps to prevent legal issues and maintain compliance.

By understanding and following these procedures, housing providers can fulfill their responsibilities under the law and continue to provide safe, healthy living environments for all tenants. Always stay informed about your rights and obligations, and consult a professional if you need additional support.

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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

Advertising Rates and Information about the Hapco Monthly Newsletter

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The deadline for each issue is the last day of each month.

When a Tenant Thinks They Can Pay When They Want

Understanding the Impact of Unpredictable Payments

By Lauren Andreoli

One of the significant challenges housing providers face is tenants who do not consistently adhere to the agreed-upon terms for rent payments. While unexpected life events can occasionally cause delays, some tenants may treat rent payments as optional, sending money at irregular intervals or failing to pay for extended periods. These unpredictable payment patterns can place housing providers in a difficult position, as they rely on timely rent to cover essential property-related expenses, such as mortgage payments, taxes, and maintenance. Additionally, irregular payments can lead to confusion about outstanding balances, creating unnecessary stress for both parties.

The Importance of Timely and Consistent Rent Payments

Timely rent payment is crucial for several reasons:

Predictable Cash Flow: Housing providers need a consistent cash flow to manage expenses associated with their properties. Inconsistent payments make budgeting challenging, potentially leading to shortfalls in property maintenance or other financial obligations.

Complications in Eviction Processes: Failure to collect rent as agreed can complicate eviction processes. If tenants do not

pay on time, housing providers may have to resort to legal action to recover overdue rent, which can be costly and time-consuming.

Strain on Relationships: Rent agreements are based on mutual respect and understanding. When a tenant does not adhere to the agreed-upon payment schedule, it can strain the landlord-tenant relationship, making it harder to resolve any issues that arise.

Legal Considerations in Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, the situation becomes more complex if a housing provider initiates eviction proceedings for non-payment of rent, and the tenant begins making payments on the balance owed. Under Pennsylvania law, if the tenant starts paying after the eviction process has begun, the case does not automatically get dismissed. The housing provider may continue with the legal process unless the tenant pays the full amount due, including any late fees and legal costs.

However, if the tenant pays the full balance—covering any outstanding rent, late fees, and court costs—before the hearing or any ruling, the housing provider may be required to halt the eviction process and allow the tenant to remain in the property.

It's important for housing providers to inform the court of any payments made by the tenant. Depending on the circumstances, in-

cluding the timing and regularity of the payments, the court may decide to continue the eviction process.

Strategies for Managing Payment Issues

To prevent or address issues related to unpredictable payments, housing providers can take several proactive steps:

Clear Lease Agreements: Ensure that lease agreements clearly define the due date, late fees, and acceptable methods of payment. Establishing clear expectations upfront and enforcing them consistently can mitigate confusion.

Open Communication: If a tenant is facing financial difficulties, open communication is essential. Sometimes, they may simply need more time or wish to discuss a payment plan. Documenting any payment arrangements in writing can help avoid misunderstandings.

Enforce Late Fees: Consistently enforcing late fees as outlined in the lease agreement reminds tenants of the consequences of delayed payments and underscores the importance of adhering to the agreed payment schedule.

Maintain Accurate Records: Keep a detailed record of all payments, including partial or irregular payments. This documentation can help clarify any disputes and provide a clear timeline of payment history.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, both tenants and housing providers benefit from understanding each other's needs and responsibilities. By maintaining open communication and consistent expectations, housing providers can minimize issues related to late or unpredictable payments, creating a better living environment for everyone involved. Ultimately, fostering a respectful and collaborative relationship can lead to more successful rental experiences for all parties.

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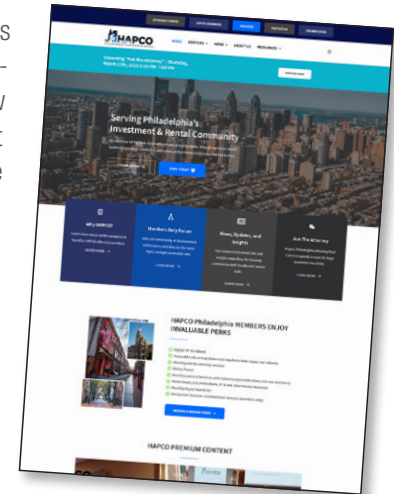
If you spend any time roaming the Hapco Philadelphia website, you've probably noticed under the "Resources" tab a section called "How To Tutorials". There you'll find a few short videos about navigating our site and how to access benefits from Home Depot.

We think it's time to bolster our "how to" content, but we'd like your help. Our vision is to create a new series of "how to" videos that would complement the recently updated Hapco Handbook. (Quick digression: if you haven't paged through the Handbook recently, be sure to check it out. There are hundreds of new updates and additions in those 192 pages!) The Handbook is a top resource for quickly finding answers to your property man-

agement questions in Philadelphia, and it's only available to members.

Based on the questions we receive from callers, we envision a new short video series that could help you with the little things that, frankly, aren't so little if you're not sure how to address them. Videos such as a 2-minute explainer on "how do I navigate the city's website to begin an eviction?", "what paperwork do I need

to become a legal landlord?", or even "how do I convert a word document to a pdf?"



Help us to help you by emailing us ideas for short topics. And if you're an expert on a topic, you could be the "expert explainer" in the video (or if you're camera-shy, just show us how, and we'll explain it!)

Have an idea for a topic that others can learn from? Send an email to us at hapco@hapcophiladelphia.com.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Starting March 1, 2025, landlords participating in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program will need to use their own private market lease when renting to voucher holders. The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) will no longer provide a pre-filled Model Lease for new HCV units. However, landlords must still sign the HAP Contract and provide tenants with the required Tenancy Addendum, which details PHA rent portions.

To help with this transition, a sample Model Lease is available in the Owner Portal's Resources section. While op-

tional, it serves as a useful reference for landlords who don't already use a standard lease. A webinar outlining the updated leasing process and a copy of the new HAP Contract are also available in the portal.

Hapco has been actively working with the housing authority, providing recommendations and engaging in discussions through our attorney. We are currently developing a lease exclusively for our members that meets housing authority requirements. We will continue to share updates as this process moves forward.

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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.

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success would come with hard work and persistence.

Shirley's journey wasn't without challenges, but her determination kept her going. After 14 years of working with the same broker, a misunderstanding led her to go out on her own. Despite having limited funds at the time, she opened her first office about 40 years ago, with rent at \$100 a month. While she didn't like the conditions of the office, Shirley wanted to build her own business and was determined to make it work. Even when the office was damaged by a fire and other challenges came up, Shirley refused to return to her previous employer, despite her friends' suggestions. They encouraged her to go back to the broker she had worked with for 14 years, assuring her he would take her back. She confidently replied, "I'm not going to move backwards." She eventually moved to a new office and, over time, saved enough money to purchase a much nicer location.

Shirley's story is one of resilience. Shirley shares her experience with others by saying, "If I can do it, anybody can do it." She encourages people to stay positive and find solutions to challenges. Her commitment to pushing forward, no matter the obstacles, has been key to her success.

Shirley has been a member of Hapco Philadelphia for nearly 25 years. She joined the organization because it helped her navigate both tenant and seller relationships, ensuring transparency and honesty. Through Hapco, she has found additional support in her work as a property owner and broker, which has reinforced her commitment to treating tenants fairly.

Her portfolio consists mainly of duplexes, although she also owns a few single-family homes, and all of her properties are located in Philadelphia. Shirley's emphasizes open communication with tenants. She expects tenants to pay rent on time, but she aims to make it work by talking through any challenges they may face. She believes in providing guidance and support to help tenants succeed, knowing that they need to take responsibility for their actions to thrive.

Shirley has encountered numerous challenges in her real estate career. One of the most significant was when a woman working in her office wanted a tenant out, but when she went to address the situation, the tenant stabbed her. This difficult situation highlighted the importance of addressing issues in the appropriate manner to avoid escalation. Shirley encourages landlords to remain calm in tense situations and approach problems with a solution-focused mindset.

As a property owner, Shirley is dedicated to keeping her properties well-maintained. She ensures regular inspections and offers prompt responses to maintenance issues. One of Shirley's tenants, whom she helped find an apartment when the woman was 21, is now going to be a tenant of hers again, highlighting the lasting relationships Shirley builds with others.

In balancing the demands of her business with the needs of her tenants, Shirley finds it essential to foster open communication and address maintenance issues before they become bigger problems. She credits her success to her commitment to maintaining properties in great condition and to ensuring that tenants feel heard and valued.

Shirley finds great joy in helping people, problem-solving, and providing guidance when needed. She stays calm in stressful situations and helps resolve conflicts by finding common ground.

Her advice to new landlords is clear: maintain good relationships with tenants, perform regular property inspections, and always have a reliable handyman for quick maintenance. These steps, she believes, are key to ensuring a successful, long-lasting rental business.

What's on Your Mind?

Kerry Nelson, Hapco Philadelphia Board Member

Kerry's been thinking about the changes to Philly's lead law, which might seem dry, but it's super important for housing providers to stay on top of.

Philly's lead law is in the Phila Code at Chapter 6-800: Lead Paint Disclosure and Certification. If you check out § 6-803, that's where the disclosure obligation is laid out. There's also a section, § 6-802 (Definition 6), that ties Philly's law to federal standards.

The EPA's lead dust hazard standard is now set to change in January 2026, as noted in eCFR: § 745.65.

Here's the tricky part: Philly's law sets a certain level you need to meet—but then it adds that you also have to meet whichever lower level the federal government decides. The issue? The

feds recently lowered their standard, which means it's even harder to stay compliant. The real change is that starting January 2026, the federal level will drop significantly—so much so that it may be difficult, or even impossible, for Philadelphia property owners to meet. We'll have to see how the lead testing industry responds and what procedures they'll modify as property owners aim for compliance.

One of the biggest challenges is keeping up with these changing regulations. For example, if your lead tester isn't up to date on both the city and federal standards, you could still fail the test—even if you've followed the rules to the letter. The big shift now is that the EPA has changed their rules to focus on the lowest reportable level. If the laboratory finds any reportable level of lead in your dust

sample, you fail, which can be a real headache.

What can you do about it? Make sure your lead tester is fully up-to-date on both city and federal requirements. Outdated testing methods could put you out of compliance. Also, don't forget to keep your records organized! Just passing the test isn't enough—you'll also need to file a Lead Safe Certification with L&I.

At the end of the day, keeping your properties compliant isn't just about following the law—it's about protecting your tenants and your business. If you're not sure where to start or have questions, reach out to Hapco Philadelphia. We're here to help you navigate these changes and stay on track.



President's Message

continued from page 1

back rent through Landlord-Tenant Court.

The city's law mandates that we provide tenants with a Rental Suitability Certificate at the start of every lease and at each renewal. Issued by the Department of Licenses & Inspections (L&I), this certificate confirms that the rental unit meets basic housing standards and is legally fit for occupancy. Along with this certificate, we must also provide a copy of the Rental License and the Partners for Good Housing handbook, which outlines tenant rights and responsibilities.

Failing to provide these documents not only opens us up to financial risks but can also lead to significant legal consequences. The most concerning risk is that if we don't provide the Rental Suitability Certificate, the court will prevent us from recovering unpaid rent, even if the tenant has lived in the unit for months or years. A tenant can also use

the absence of this certificate as a legal defense in an eviction case, potentially delaying or dismissing the eviction process and forcing us to restart the proceedings.

It's also important to understand that L&I enforces these requirements and noncompliance can lead to fines or even the revocation of a rental license, leaving us unable to lease the unit at all. These are not just minor oversights—they are critical steps to protect our investments and ensure we can continue to manage rental properties in this city.

So, how do we stay compliant and protect our income? It's simple. First, make sure you have an active Rental License before applying for the Rental Suitability Certificate through L&I's online portal. Once you receive the certificate, provide a copy to your tenant along with the rental license and the Partners for Good Housing handbook. Document the delivery, either through a signature receipt or by sending the documents via certified mail or email, so you have proof on file.

Many housing providers don't realize that

without the Rental Suitability Certificate, their lease agreements won't hold up in court. Even the most carefully crafted lease will not protect your right to collect rent without this essential documentation. By taking these proactive steps, we can avoid costly disputes, protect our rental income, and keep our business running smoothly.

As always, Hapco is here to help you navigate these complex regulations and protect your rights as a housing provider. Let's stay informed and compliant, so we can continue to thrive in the rental market.

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Help Hapco Expand Its Reach: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Advertising and Marketing Services

Hapco is excited to announce an important initiative aimed at expanding our impact and helping property owners and investors in Philadelphia succeed. We are seeking a professional marketing partner to help us grow our membership and strengthen our advocacy. As part of this effort, we are issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Advertising and Marketing Services, and we are reaching out to our community of members and non-members to contribute.

This is your chance to help us find the right partner to support Hapco's growth and raise awareness of the critical resources we provide to property owners in Philadelphia. Whether you are a current member or someone outside our organization, if you know of a firm that could assist in expanding our reach, we encourage you to get involved.

What is this RFP about?

The RFP is Hapco's call for proposals from advertising and marketing firms with the expertise to help us achieve our goals. At its core, this initiative is about increasing the visibility of the vital services and benefits that Hapco provides to its members and helping us grow our membership base. We are looking for a marketing partner who can help us craft and execute a comprehensive

marketing strategy aimed at expanding our reach and growing our membership.

Hapco is focused on offering tools, resources, and support to property owners and investors. Our services include legal expertise, PHA-approved lease agreements, up-to-date eviction services, and political insights into the ever-evolving rules governing real estate. As the real estate landscape becomes more complex, having access to these resources is more important than ever.

Our goal is to increase Hapco's membership to over 2,500 members, welcoming new property owners, investors, and housing providers throughout the city of Philadelphia. The ideal marketing firm will work closely with Hapco to devise strategies for reaching new members, educating them about our services, and ensuring that existing members stay engaged and connected with the resources we offer.

The selected firm will help us integrate both digital and traditional marketing approaches into a multi-channel campaign. This will include strategies such as targeted digital advertising, social media engagement, direct mail campaigns, and public relations outreach. A comprehensive plan will ensure we are engaging with potential members across

multiple touchpoints and delivering the right message at the right time.

How You Can Get Involved

Hapco is seeking input from our community to ensure we find the right marketing partner. We invite our members and non-members to share ideas or recommendations for firms that could help us achieve our objectives. If you know of a marketing firm with experience in nonprofit marketing, membership growth, or real estate-related campaigns, we encourage you to get in touch with us.

We are specifically looking for firms that can help us accomplish the following objectives:

Increase Awareness of Hapco's Services and Benefits

We want potential members to understand the wide range of benefits that come with Hapco membership. This includes not just legal and advocacy support but also practical resources like access to affordable leases, tenant vetting services, and educational events that help members stay informed about industry best practices.

Engage New and Existing Members

We aim to not only attract new members but also keep our current members engaged. A successful campaign will involve both strategies to reach new members and efforts to strengthen the connections with our existing members, keeping them informed, supported, and involved in Hapco's advocacy efforts.

Build a Strategic, Multi-Channel Marketing Campaign

The firm we choose will be tasked with developing a well-rounded marketing cam-

Advertising and Marketing

continued from page 10

campaign that combines digital advertising, social media outreach, email marketing, public relations, and even traditional methods like print media. By utilizing a mix of strategies, we can ensure that Hapco reaches a diverse audience across different media channels.

Why Should You Care?

As a member of the Hapco community, your involvement in this process directly impacts the growth and success of our organization. Hapco's mission is to serve property owners and investors across Philadelphia, providing them with the tools they need to navigate the complex landscape of rental property ownership. By helping us find the right marketing firm, you are helping to expand our ability to serve you and others in the industry.

The landscape for property owners in Philadelphia is challenging. The legal environment is constantly changing, and being up-to-date on the latest regulations is crucial for success. Through Hapco, members have access to valuable resources and support, including:

Free Legal Services: Monthly access to legal expertise, keeping you informed about the latest laws and regulations affecting the real estate market.

Eviction Assistance: Affordable eviction services that make the process smoother and more cost-effective.

PHA-Lease Support: Access to up-to-date PHA-approved leases to protect your interests and keep your agreements in line with current standards.

Advocacy: Hapco is a strong advocate for property owners, working to ensure that the needs and concerns of our members are represented in local and state legislation.

By supporting this marketing initiative, you are helping to raise awareness of these resources and ensure that more property

owners in Philadelphia have access to the support they need to succeed in the housing market.

How to Contribute

If you know of a marketing firm that could assist Hapco in this important project, please contact us at hapcooffice@hapcophiladelphia.com. Your recommendations are important to us, and your contribution will play a direct role in helping us select the right marketing partner.

Additionally, if you have any insights or suggestions on how we can better engage potential marketing firms or refine the scope of the RFP, we are open to hearing your thoughts. The more information we can gather, the better equipped we will be to make the best decision for Hapco's future.

Together, We Can Build a Stronger Network

Hapco's ability to grow and thrive depends on our collective efforts as a community. By helping us find the right marketing firm, you are helping to create a stronger network of property owners and investors in Philadelphia. Together, we can continue to build a robust, supportive environment for property owners

and tenants alike. Thank you for your ongoing support, and we look forward to hearing your recommendations.

Contact Information

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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.

CREDIT/BACKGROUND CHECKS

Post: I don't like Rent Prep anymore. Recommendations for a new company? (I like doing full, in-depth background and credit checks).

Response: I use Zillow for advertising and tenant screening. They offer rental history, credit, income and criminal background information. They also verify their identity.

Response: The advantage to using Zillow for screening is that the tenant pays for it (and can use the same credit screening for every application, which is great for tenants).

The only problem I have encountered is that that makes it difficult for me to do my additional (careful) screening: checking previous landlords (especially any landlord that is not the current landlord since they may be eager to help a tenant to leave their place) and to contact employers to find out their actual income and likelihood of continuing employment. And there are other situations that require deeper research, like students who get parental support (I now screen the co-signers too) and foreign students who have no credit. (Penn students will have good information available as Penn makes sure they are financially qualified too.) I like research-

ing prospects on social media to learn more about them in ways that may affect could their tenancy. Do they hold keggers in their place frequently? Etc.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE LOSS OF HOT WATER

Post: Looking for suggestions: Tenant was complaining of loss of hot water after 5-6 minutes of usage. Replaced the existing tank that was old and somewhat rusted on the bottom with a new 30-gallon electric hot water heater on Jan 25th. Followed up with the tenant later in the day after the install and everything worked great. Yesterday, the tenant contacted me with the same problem. I did some research and found it could be a dip tube, or bad element, but this seems unlikely since the tank is only a week old. Has anyone ever experienced something like this or have any suggestions as to what could be the issue? I asked the tenant to check the circuit breaker, she said it seems fine. Thanks in advance.

Response: There should be a warranty on a new hot water heater and plumbers know how to handle it with the manufacturer. Have you spoken to the installer and/or the supply house? My first step would be to ask the installer to get back there to determine the problem.

PET FEES

Post: Unrelated to the service animals discussion - what pet fees do you charge, if any? Also, I recall that the deposit is limited to 2x rent, I presume that means anything extra on the account of pets is not allowed.

Response: I am pet friendly and charge \$30 per month per pet. Certain dogs are not allowed and the pet must be spayed or neutered and at least 6 months in age. We sign a pet lease and all principals on the lease must sign it.

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Over the Transom continued from page 12

OLD VIOLATION NOTICES

Post: Anyone else getting Notices of Violations with fines from Philly lately? I'm getting Demands from properties long gone from 1992, 1994, 2004.

Response: All the time. We get trash fines, even from other people's trash that's blown or deliberately put on our property, all the time. Then they send it so that it doesn't arrive until it is so late and they add a late fee. It feels like a shakedown. It's terrible. We've been to court once and had them all cleared but even that costs money.

Response: Yes, we are getting ones from 2018 that I am sure we took care of. I think they just went through at the end of the year and sent out any unresolved violations.

Response: Yes, from a property I sold about 18 years ago.

MUNICIPAL COURT RECORDS

Post: I just wanted to let other landlords know that when you run tenants' names on the municipal court database, you need to make sure you enter the name in different ways. Ideally without initials. I rented to a tenant that looked perfect on paper and in person. Good income, good landlord references, everything checked out. As soon as he moved in, he stopped paying. I have looked at my application several times because I screen people so carefully to find out where I went wrong. I just realized it today. He has an initial. I checked the municipal court records with his initials and nothing came up. Also, nothing came up on his screening report even though both evictions are from a few years back. Today I removed his initials and there were two other evictions that never came up for me when I screened him. He is extremely friendly and I was thinking this was his first time. Not a chance. He has come up with several excuses as to why he is not paying, but I honestly believe that people can always manage to pay something

especially if they are taking care of all their other debts except rent. I hope this information helps someone.

Response: Good information. Thanks. Can you share the municipal court website? I am not familiar with that site or the process to gain information on perspective tenants.

Response: Absolutely. <https://fjd-claims.phila.gov/phmuni/login.do> This is always a good step to take as normally newer filings may not come up on regular screening reports (although his were a few years old and did not come up on my screening report). You should always check your prospective tenant as plaintiff and as defendant, and also on the statement of claims as well as landlord tenant. You can even do criminal if you want to make sure the screening report did not miss that.

SEEKING ASSISTANCE WITH TENANT ADDRESS

Post: I am new to this forum and relatively new to Hapco. I am currently seeking assistance in locating the new address of a former tenant, as I am pursuing a small claims case to recover damages to my property. Any guidance or resources you can provide would be greatly appreciated. Additionally, I am dealing with a predatory lender and have already filed a complaint with the Attorney General's office. If anyone has experience handling similar situations, I would greatly appreciate any insights or advice you can share.

Response: I would break finding someone into two groups, no-cost and moderate cost. The no-cost solution is google, whitepages.com and basically and internet search. Moderate cost is a skip-trace using a PI, attorney or title company - there are other service providers too. Unfortunately, I don't have any advice regarding the predatory lending. I am not a fan of most lenders, so I am certainly cheering for you.

SHOWER GLASS INSTALLER

Post: I am looking for someone to install a single piece of shower glass at my home in Mt. Airy. The guy we've worked with several times through the years was great, but, has skipped town for the sunny beaches of Florida and he's not coming back. If anyone has a good lead, I would greatly appreciate it.

Response: I use Corey. His phone number is 215-651-0079. I have used this gentleman for some time now. He's very reliable and trustworthy.

Response: Try Rich Miles. If he can't do it, he will tell you. He has done a lot of rehabs for people on here. 267-338-8830.

POLICE SEARCH WARRANT LEFT MY PROPERTY WIDE OPEN

Post: I have a duplex in Kensington. The police apparently had a search warrant for the first-floor unit, and they kicked in the front door and first floor unit door and left everything wide open and lights on, heat pumping. Luckily, the upstairs tenant was home and called me. I went to the police station, and they said they can't tell me anything and they don't call the landlord after executing a search warrant- so theoretically, the property could be left wide open for several days without anyone knowing. Appliances could be stolen, squatters could move in. This is very shocking to me- does anyone know if this is true? I would think they would have to secure the property. Also, the search warrant had the old owner's name on it even though mine is reflected in property records. Has anyone had this situation before? Does an abandonment clause kick in? How do you even find out information about what is going on to be used in court if you have to evict? And are there any resources for landlords in this situation?

Response: I am so very sorry you experienced that. I suggest you contact your council person for Kensington and ask for assistance.

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Governor Shapiro Advocates for Sealing Eviction Records



By HP Board of Directors Editorial Staff

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro is renewing his call for legislation to seal certain eviction records, a move aimed at alleviating the long-term consequences faced by tenants who have experienced eviction proceedings. During his recent budget address to the General Assembly, he emphasized the need for reform in this area.

The Impact of Eviction Records

Governor Shapiro highlighted a troubling reality: “As soon as an eviction is filed, it becomes a permanent mark on someone’s background, even if that case eventually gets ruled in the tenant’s favor. That makes no sense.” Proponents of sealing eviction records argue that these permanent marks

can severely limit renters’ ability to secure housing, even if the eviction is later withdrawn or dismissed.

Current Eviction Landscape in Pennsylvania

In 2022, Pennsylvania saw over 115,000 eviction filings, with more than 13,000 occurring in Philadelphia last year alone, according to data from the Eviction Lab at Princeton University. While evictions in Philadelphia have decreased significantly due to the implementation of the City’s Eviction Diversion Program—which requires property owners to pursue alternatives before filing—the existing laws still allow eviction filings to remain on a tenant’s record indefinitely, even in cases ruled in their favor.

Legislative Efforts

Last year, attempts to pass legislation that would limit public access to eviction records faced challenges in both the House and Senate. Representative Ismail Smith-Wade-El of Lancaster introduced a bill in March that proposed sealing eviction records unless a judge ruled in favor of the landlord. Even under this proposal, records would be sealed after seven years. However, opponents of these measures argue that landlords require access to a tenant’s full credit history and payment record to make informed business decisions.

Political Landscape

The Pennsylvania House is currently under Democratic control, while the Senate is led by Republicans. This dynamic often complicates efforts to pass legislation like the proposed sealing of eviction records, especially as the debate is expected to intensify when the legislature reconvenes this month.

Perspectives on Eviction Sealing

Paul Cohen, an attorney associated with Hapco Philadelphia, expressed a nuanced view on the sealing of eviction records. He stated, “While I’m not fundamentally opposed to eviction sealing in some cases, the piling on of regulations continues to chase good landlords away during a time when cities like Philadelphia need responsible, quality housing providers more than ever.” This perspective underscores the need for a balanced approach that considers the interests of both tenants and landlords.

Conclusion

Governor Shapiro’s push for new legislation to seal eviction records reflects a growing recognition of the challenges faced by renters in Pennsylvania. As discussions continue in the legislature, the outcomes will be pivotal in determining how eviction records are managed and the impact on housing accessibility for vulnerable populations.

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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.

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Housing Priority

continued from page 1

ness, and civic leaders at the annual Mayoral Luncheon of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia, held on February 12th, 2025.

Vincent Reina, an urban planner and professor at the University of Pennsylvania, told the Philadelphia Inquirer that 30,000 is “ambitious but attainable.” The Inquirer also noted that during her campaign for mayor, Parker promised “to create 30,000 units of *affordable* housing.” It seems now the focus is on all housing types, both affordable and market rate.

The city will reportedly create an online portal where its progress can be monitored.

At the Chamber event, Mayor Parker announced plans to sign an Executive Order

that creates an Advisory Group of housing stakeholders to make recommendations aimed at reducing red tape and to “incentivize the creation and preservation of safe, healthy, quality housing for all city residents.” The team will be comprised of private, non-profit and minority developers, housing industry groups, the building trades, and others, and will have 30-days to make recommendations and provide real cost estimates.

Mayor Parker also hinted at an upcoming announcement that includes “a significant city financial commitment focused on the production of new housing and preservation and restoration of existing housing.” We expect more details to be forthcoming this month.

Another focus of Mayor Parker’s address is taxes. Philadelphia’s business tax structure is seen as one of the most difficult hurdles in promoting the city as a great place to do business; reform has been talked about for

what seems like forever, but solutions have been elusive. Last year, Council President Kenyatta Johnson reconvened the Tax Reform Commission, which is tasked with addressing the tax structure to make Philadelphia more business-competitive. The Commission is reportedly expected to propose a cut to BIRT, Philadelphia’s burdensome business income and receipts tax. Its recommendations are eagerly anticipated and also expected this month. Mayor Parker is expected to address them further in her budget address.

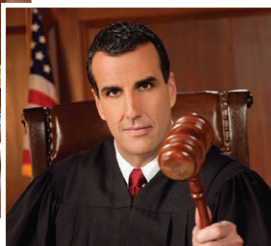
Reflecting upon her first year in office, Mayor Parker touted successes in quality-of-life issues: a reduction in violent crime, a growth in community policing, the expansion of a pilot twice-a-week trash collection, the cleanup of tens of thousands of lots, blocks and commercial corridors, and the removal of thousands of abandoned cars. No doubt she will expound on the successes and look to the new year with high hopes.

Nobody Wants to Evict a Tenant

HapcoPhiladelphia and its members appreciate and value their tenants and the symbiotic relationship they share. Unfortunately, sometimes that relationship breaks down, with the necessity of court intervention in order to reclaim your property. Eviction is likely a last resort.



Everyone knows that going to court is time-consuming and expensive; HapcoPhiladelphia membership benefits include access to our one-stop solution to Philadelphia Municipal Court. Exclusive members-only fee structure provides top legal professionals who will guide and advise you on how the process works, from paperwork origination, mediation, settlement negotiation and, if



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