

25-0141 Rental Dwelling Safety and Enforcement Act - new language in the bill and amendments May 12, 2026 - Version 7

Prepared by the Sponsor Councilwoman Odette Ramos

General objectives: To increase the number of rental units that have rental licenses
 To prevent fraud by third party inspectors
 To add Rental Property Receivership as an enforcement mechanism

| Page numbers | Components of the bill | Description | Justification |
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| Page 1-10 | Rental Property Receivership | Modeling the state’s commercial receivership law, any rental property with egregious violations can be taken to receivership. This section outlines the petition contents, criteria for eligibility, and the DHCD and Court processes. | Just providing citations for non-licensing and violations has not stopped some landlords from intentionally not being licensed and not upgrading their properties. This is an important enforcement mechanism needed to hold landlords with egregious violations and those who refuse to be licensed accountable. |
| Page 10 | List of penalties | Added penalty for lack of inspection Added penalty for rental inspectors not in compliance | |
| Page 11 | Information about the Ownership | Adds to the required registration more disclosed information about the owner | This is because we don’t have LLC transparency at the state level. the information rolls into the Licensing which is why this is in the part of the code for the non-owner occupied registration section. |
| Page 12 | Reminders and notifications | Adds language that DHCD will send notice to remind non-owner occupied owners that they have to register every year. Added language that DHCD has to notify the owners of non-owner occupied | Currently DHCD reminds registrants they have to renew the registration. We need them to add that they have to remind anyone renting the property to make sure it is licensed. |

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| | | properties every other year that if they are renting this property, it has to be licensed. | |
| Page 13-14 | Priority Dwelling | Changes one of the criteria for being on the list as having 2 or more violation notices not abated more than 90 days - the original language was only one violation notice. Removed language that the list had to be posted for 5 years. | Priority dwellings are buildings with 20 or more units that meet set criteria for egregious violations. We changed this to raise the threshold for being placed on the priority dwelling list to make sure we are capturing the egregious violators. This does not remove the building from the priority list when the violations are cured, but we removed the 5 year posting requirement. |
| Page 15 | Defines rental inspector and rental inspections | Definition of Rental Inspector and Rental Inspections which were not defined in previous bills. | In the Strengthening Renter Safety Act and the original licensing bill, the term “home inspector/ion” was being confused because the state has a very specific definition of “home inspector.” Because this is Baltimore’s program we changed all the terms to “Rental Inspector” and “Rental Inspection” to clarify we are only talking about inspections of rental properties. |
| Page 16 | Notice to licensees | DHCD shall continue to notify licensees prior to the expiration of the license that renewal is required | SOME property managers and landlords requested this notification. Since the licensing is rolling, and not all starting Jan 1, this is a helpful reminder. Also since DHCD already notifies owners that they have to register their non-owner occupied property, this should be integrated. |
| Page 19 | Requirement to pay the water bill | New language to require for licensing or renewal that an owner cannot have an unpaid water bill. Language includes that if the bill is in dispute, that has to be documented to make sure the license can be issued. | We are seeing that landlords often charge the tenants with the water bill but then don’t pay the water bill now that water bills are no longer in tax sale. |
| Page 20 | Registry of rental | Clarifies where the registry sits and what | This is in tandem with creating a rental inspector |

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| | inspectors | could constitute revocation of the rental inspector license and removal from the registry. | licensing. Law Department advised that we cannot prevent inspectors from continuing to inspect because they are licensed in the state of Maryland, unless we create our own licensing structure. |
| Page 21 | Notice to tenant for inspection | This outlines the required notice for inspections. | Tenants requested notice of the inspection. |
| Page 21 | Selection of rental inspectors | New language to require for licensing or renewal that an owner cannot use the same rental inspector four times in a row per property. Renewals are every 2 years. | To reduce “drive by” and fraud, the idea here is for the owners to use a different third party inspector for their renewals four times. This is controversial. |
| Page 22 | Rental Inspection Report- photos | The rental inspection report shall include photos. DHCD will determine the type of photos | Again, to prevent “drive by” inspections. |
| Page 22 | Penalties | This states clearly that the commissioner can enforce using fines in addition to other mechanisms outlined in the bill | |
| Page 23 | Auditing | DHCD shall audit at least 100 inspections each year. As part of the audits, any property receiving a violation notice 60 days after license or renewal. | The Auditing requirement is a suggestion by inspectors and landlords alike. |
| Page 24 | Training for property managers | DHCD shall provide customer service training for property management companies for buildings with 20 or more units for older adults. Property management companies have to certify that each staff took the training in order to renew or receive a license. | Older Adults have complained that the property managers do not have customer service skills, particularly in dealing with older adults. |
| Page 30-31 | Revocation of | New sections include that the license could | We are finding that landlords are retaliating or |

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| | license for retaliatory actions | be revoked if the landlord retaliates, discriminates, or intimidates anyone, and we name protected classes and immigration status | intimidating residents by saying they will call ICE if they report deficiencies. |
| Page 31 | Reinspection required | If a license is revoked a DHCD inspector will inspect the property before a new license can be issued. | |
| Page 32 | Tenant complaint process | Outlines the process for tenants to send in a complaint about a license being issued, and outlines DHCD's timeline for decision making and written response. | Landlords have a complaint process and appeal if their license is revoked or nonrenewed, and this process mirrors that for tenants. |
| Page 33 | Notice to tenants in the case of vacate | If the dwelling or property needs to be vacated because of egregious conditions, notice is to be given to each tenant with their options. | Vacate power has always been with DHCD, but notice needed to be included. |
| Page 34 | Public access to information | This section adds language as to what should be on the rental licensing portal, including rental inspection documents | Currently rental inspection documents are not on the public portal, and this section requires them to be posted. |
| Page 35 | Administrative and Judicial Review | This section changes the judicial review process to administrative and judicial. | Rather than appeals always going to the circuit court, which could take years, this is an administrative process for appeals using administrative judges. It is a common practice in City government. |
| Page 36-37 | Annual reporting | Adds a few more requirements for DHCD reporting, including adding the results of rental licensing receivership cases, the audits, and complaints. | |
| Page 40-42 | Rental Inspectors | This section adds the Rental Inspectors Licensing | Law Department advised that we cannot prevent inspectors from continuing to inspect because |

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| | Licensing | | they are licensed in the state of Maryland, unless we create our own licensing structure. The licensing includes a training, small fee, required state license, and enforcement. |
| Page 46 | Enactment | The rental licensing receivership is enacted immediately upon signing of the bill The rest of the bill shall be enacted December 1, 2026 | |