

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 10-0516  
(First Reader)**

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Introduced by: President Young, Councilmembers Curran, Cole, Middleton, Henry, Kraft,  
Branch, D'Adamo, Holton, Conaway, Clarke, Welch, Reisinger

Introduced and read first time: May 24, 2010

Assigned to: Taxation, Finance and Economic Development Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Housing and  
Community Development, Department of Public Works, Department of Finance, Baltimore  
Development Corporation, Environmental Control Board

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Non-Owner-Occupied Dwellings and Vacant Structures –**  
3 **Multiple-Family Dwellings and Rooming Houses**

4 FOR the purpose of extending the registration requirements for non-owner-occupied dwelling  
5 units to encompass vacant structures; modifying the information required for registration  
6 statements; modifying the fees for registration; modifying or repealing certain registration  
7 fee exceptions; modifying the civil penalty for violation of these registration requirements;  
8 repealing the license fee for multiple-family dwellings and rooming houses; repealing certain  
9 obsolete provisions; defining and redefining certain terms; correcting, clarifying, and  
10 conforming related provisions; and generally relating to the registration of non-owner-  
11 occupied dwellings and vacant structures and to the licensing of multiple-family dwellings  
12 and rooming houses.

13 BY renaming

14 Article 13 - Housing and Urban Renewal  
15 Division II. Non-Owner-Occupied Dwellings; Condominiums  
16 to be  
17 Division II. Dwellings and Vacant Structures  
18 Baltimore City Code  
19 (Edition 2000)

20 BY repealing and reordaining, with amendments

21 Article 13 - Housing and Urban Renewal  
22 Section(s) 4-1, 4-2, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7(b), and 4-8, to be under the amended subtitle  
23 designation, "Subtitle 4. Non-Owner-Occupied Dwellings; Vacant Structures"  
24 Baltimore City Code  
25 (Edition 2000)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.  
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

**Council Bill 10-0516**

1 BY repealing and reordaining, with amendments  
2 Article 13 - Housing and Urban Renewal  
3 Section(s) 5-1(e), 5-6, 5-7, 5-8(b), and 5-22(b)  
4 Baltimore City Code  
5 (Edition 2000)

6 BY repealing  
7 Article 13 - Housing and Urban Renewal  
8 Section(s) 5-19  
9 Baltimore City Code  
10 (Edition 2000)

11 BY repealing and reordaining, with amendments  
12 Article 1 - Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies  
13 Section(s) 40-14(e)(1)  
14 Baltimore City Code  
15 (Edition 2000)

16 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
17 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

18 **Baltimore City Code**

19 **Article 13. Housing and Urban Renewal**

20 **Division II. [Non-Owner-Occupied] Dwellings AND**  
21 **VACANT STRUCTURES[; Condominiums]**

22 **Subtitle 4. Non-Owner-Occupied Dwellings; VACANT STRUCTURES**

23 **§ 4-1. Definitions.**

24 (a) *In general.*

25 In this subtitle, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

26 (b) *Commissioner.*

27 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Housing and Community Development or  
28 the Commissioner’s designee.

29 (c) *Dwelling unit.*

30 “Dwelling unit” has the meaning stated in § 202.2 of the Property Maintenance Code of  
31 Baltimore City.

32 (d) *MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLING.*

33 “MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLING” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 202.2 OF THE PROPERTY  
34 MAINTENANCE CODE OF BALTIMORE CITY.

**Council Bill 10-0516**

1 (E) [(c-1)] *Non-Owner-occupied dwelling unit.*

2 “Non-owner-occupied dwelling unit” means any:

3 (1) dwelling unit that is[: (1)] unoccupied; [or]

4 (2) [occupied, but not by an owner of the dwelling] DWELLING UNIT THAT, EVEN IF  
5 OCCUPIED, IS NOT OCCUPIED BY AN OWNER OF RECORD; OR

6 (3) DWELLING UNIT THAT, EVEN IF OCCUPIED, DOES NOT LAWFULLY QUALIFY AS THE  
7 OCCUPANT’S PRINCIPLE RESIDENCE FOR PURPOSES OF THE STATE HOMESTEAD TAX  
8 CREDIT.

9 (F) [(d)] *Person.*

10 (1) *In general.*

11 “Person” means:

12 (i) an individual;

13 (II) A PARTNERSHIP, FIRM, ASSOCIATION, CORPORATION, OR OTHER ENTITY OF ANY  
14 KIND; AND

15 (III) [(ii)] a receiver, trustee, guardian, personal representative, fiduciary, or  
16 representative of any kind[; and

17 (iii) a partnership, firm, association, corporation, or other entity of any kind].

18 (2) *Inclusions.*

19 “Person” includes, except as used in § 4-13 {“Penalties”} of this subtitle, a  
20 governmental entity or an instrumentality or unit of a governmental entity.

21 (G) *VACANT STRUCTURE.*

22 “VACANT STRUCTURE” MEANS ANY STRUCTURE THAT IS SUBJECT TO AN UNABATED  
23 VIOLATION NOTICE ISSUED UNDER § 115 {“UNSAFE STRUCTURES”} OF THE BUILDING  
24 CODE OF BALTIMORE CITY.

25 **§ 4-2. Scope.**

26 This subtitle applies to:

27 (1) every non-owner-occupied dwelling unit, whether or not it is occupied, fit for human  
28 habitation, or revenue producing;

29 (2) EVERY VACANT STRUCTURE, WHETHER IT IS A RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE, A NON-  
30 RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE, OR OTHER.

**Council Bill 10-0516**

**§ 4-5. Registration required.**

(a) *In general.*

(1) The owner of [a] ANY non-owner-occupied dwelling unit must file an annual registration statement for that unit with the Commissioner.

(2) THE OWNER OF ANY VACANT STRUCTURE MUST FILE AN ANNUAL REGISTRATION STATEMENT FOR THAT STRUCTURE WITH THE COMMISSIONER.

(b) *New owner [registration] OF NON-OWNER-OCCUPIED DWELLING UNIT.*

(1) A new owner of a NON-OWNER-OCCUPIED dwelling unit must file the registration statement within 10 days of acquiring title to the unit.

(2) If the previous owner had registered the unit and paid the applicable registration fee for the current registration period, the new owner need not pay any registration fee for that registration period.

(c) *NEWLY VACANT STRUCTURE.*

THE OWNER OF A VACANT STRUCTURE, WHETHER OR NOT PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED AS A NON-OWNER-OCCUPIED DWELLING UNIT, MUST FILE A NEW REGISTRATION STATEMENT AND PAY THE FEE APPLICABLE TO VACANT STRUCTURES, WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE PROPERTY'S BECOMING A VACANT STRUCTURE.

**§ 4-6. Registration statement – Contents.**

(a) *In general.*

Each registration statement must be in the form that the Commissioner requires and contain the following information:

(1) a description of the premises by street number or by block-and-lot;

(2) the name, street address, [and] telephone number, AND EMAIL ADDRESS of the [unit's] PREMISES' owner of record;

(3) the name, street address, [and] telephone number, AND EMAIL ADDRESS of the [unit's] PREMISES' managing operator, if other than the owner;

(4) if the owner is a corporation, limited partnership, limited liability company , or similar entity, the name, street address, [and] telephone number, AND EMAIL ADDRESS of its resident agent; and

(5) if the owner is a partnership or other similar entity, the name, street address, [and] telephone number, AND EMAIL ADDRESS of a responsible partner or officer.

**Council Bill 10-0516**

1 [(b) *Authorized agent.*

2 (1) The statement must also contain the name, local street address, and telephone number  
3 of an adult individual designated by the owner as the owner's authorized agent for  
4 receiving notices and service of process in connection with the dwelling unit.

5 (2) An individual may be designated as an authorized agent only if he or she:

6 (i) resides in the City; or

7 (ii) customarily transacts business in an office in the City.

8 (3) A tenant of a dwelling unit may not be designated as an authorized agent for receiving  
9 notices or service of process relating to that tenant's unit.]

10 (B) [(c)] *Change of operator or agent.*

11 [(1)] The Commissioner must be notified within 10 days of any change in the managing  
12 operator or [authorized] RESIDENT agent.

13 [(2) Service on an individual previously designated as an authorized agent is legal  
14 and sufficient service until the owner notifies the Commissioner of a new authorized  
15 agent.]

16 **§ 4-7. Registration statement – Confidentiality.**

17 (b) *Exception – Neighboring property owners, residents, etc.*

18 For a specified property, the Commissioner must furnish the name, address, [and]  
19 telephone number, AND EMAIL ADDRESS of the owner or operator of that property on the  
20 written request of:

21 (1) the owner or resident of property within a 1 block radius of the specified property;  
22 or

23 (2) the neighborhood association for the area in which the specified property is  
24 located.

25 **§ 4-8. Registration fees.**

26 (a) [*In general*] *NON-OWNER-OCCUPIED DWELLING UNITS.*

27 [(1)] Except as otherwise specified in this section, an annual registration fee must be paid  
28 FOR NON-OWNER-OCCUPIED DWELLING UNITS at the [rate of \$30 for each dwelling unit,  
29 with a maximum of \$5,000 for each owner of record] THE FOLLOWING RATES:

30 (1) FOR PROPERTIES WITH 1 AND 2 DWELLING UNITS –  
31 \$30 PER DWELLING UNIT.

**Council Bill 10-0516**

1 (2) FOR MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS –  
2 \$35 PER DWELLING UNIT, PLUS  
3 \$25 PER ROOMING UNIT.

4 (B) *VACANT STRUCTURES.*

5 EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED IN THIS SECTION, AN ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEE, IN  
6 ADDITION TO ANY FEE THAT MIGHT ALSO BE REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS  
7 SECTION, MUST BE PAID FOR VACANT STRUCTURES AT THE FOLLOWING RATES:

8 (1) FOR RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES –  
9 \$100 PER STRUCTURE.

10 (2) FOR ALL OTHER STRUCTURES –  
11 \$250 PER STRUCTURE.

12 (C) *WHEN PAYABLE.*

13 [(2) This fee] THESE FEES must ALL be paid at the time of registration.

14 (D) [(b)] *Exceptions.*

15 No fee is charged for [any dwelling unit that is]:

16 (1) ANY DWELLING UNIT OR VACANT STRUCTURE THAT IS OWNED BY A  
17 GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY OR AN INSTRUMENTALITY OR UNIT OF A GOVERNMENTAL  
18 ENTITY; OR

19 (2) ANY DWELLING UNIT THAT IS NOT IN A VACANT STRUCTURE AND IS OWNED BY A  
20 NONPROFIT RELIGIOUS, CHARITABLE, OR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR  
21 ORGANIZATION.

22 [(1) part of a multi-unit rental property licensed under subtitle 5 of this article;]

23 [(2) an unoccupied, habitable dwelling unit last occupied by its current owner as  
24 his or her residence;]

25 [(3) owned by a nonprofit religious, charitable, or educational institution or  
26 organization; or]

27 [(4) owned by a governmental entity or an instrumentality or unit of a  
28 governmental entity.]

29 [(c)] *Fees to support inspections.*

30 (1) All registration fees paid under this section must be accounted for in a special fund  
31 entitled “Housing Inspection Services”.

32 (2) Revenues credited to the fund must be available for the purpose of supporting the  
33 inspection of housing.

**Council Bill 10-0516**

(3) The Director of Finance must submit a quarterly accounting of this fund to the chair of the City Council’s Budget and Appropriations Committee.]

**Subtitle 5. Multiple-Family Dwellings and Rooming Houses**

**§ 5-1. Definitions.**

(e) *Person.*

(1) *In general.*

“Person” means:

(i) an individual;

(II) A PARTNERSHIP, FIRM, ASSOCIATION, CORPORATION, OR OTHER ENTITY OF ANY KIND; AND

(III) [(ii)] a receiver, trustee, guardian, personal representative, fiduciary, or representative of any kind[; and

(iii) a partnership, firm, association, corporation, or other entity of any kind].

(2) *Inclusions.*

“Person” includes, except as used in § 5-21 {“Penalties”} of this subtitle, a governmental entity or an instrumentality or unit of a governmental entity.

**§ 5-6. Prerequisites for license.**

A license may be issued or renewed under this subtitle only if:

(1) all dwelling units are currently registered under Subtitle 4 {“Registration of Residential Properties”} of this article;

(2) the [license fee] REGISTRATION FEES AND ALL OUTSTANDING INTEREST AND LATE FEES required by [§ 5-7 of this subtitle has] SUBTITLE 4 HAVE been paid; [and]

(3) the premises have been inspected by the Commissioner;

(4) THE PREMISES ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING LEAD PAINT; AND

(5) THE PREMISES ARE NOT SUBJECT TO AN UNABATED VIOLATION NOTICE ISSUED UNDER § 115 {“UNSAFE STRUCTURES”} OF THE BUILDING CODE OF BALTIMORE CITY.

**§ 5-7. License fees.**

NO FEE IS IMPOSED FOR A LICENSE ISSUED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

**Council Bill 10-0516**

1 [(a) *In general.*

2 (1) Except as otherwise specified in this section, an annual license fee must be paid at the  
3 rate of:

4 (i) \$25 per rooming unit; and

5 (ii) \$35 per dwelling unit.

6 (2) This fee is nonrefundable, notwithstanding any termination of operations, sale of  
7 premises, revocation of license, or otherwise.

8 (b) *Exceptions - owner-occupied unit.*

9 No fee is charged for a rooming unit or a dwelling unit if:

10 (1) an owner of the multiple-family dwelling or rooming house resides in the unit;  
11 and

12 (2) with the current application for an original or renewal license, the owner files a  
13 certificate of residency.

14 (c) *Exceptions - charitable entities.*

15 No fee is charged to a nonprofit religious, charitable, or educational institution or  
16 organization that both owns and operates the multiple-family dwelling or rooming house.

17 (d) *Exceptions - governmental entities.*

18 No fee is charged to a governmental entity or an instrumentality or unit of a  
19 governmental entity that both owns and operates the multiple-family dwelling or rooming  
20 house.

21 (e) *Fees to support inspections.*

22 (1) All license fees paid under this section must be accounted for in a special fund  
23 entitled "Housing Inspection Services".

24 (2) Revenues credited to the fund must be available for the purpose of supporting the  
25 inspection of housing.

26 (3) The Director of Finance must submit a quarterly accounting of this fund to the chair  
27 of the City Council's Budget and Appropriations Committee.]

28 **§ 5-8. Term and renewal.**

29 (b) *Stagger.*

30 [(1)] The Commissioner may [provided] PROVIDE for staggered license terms, by issuing  
31 an original license or, on a 1-time basis, a renewal license for a period of less than 1 year  
32 or for a period of more than 1 year but less than 2 years.



## Council Bill 10-0516

1 [(2) The annual license fee will be prorated for any license period established under  
2 this subsection for less or more than 1 year.]

### 3 **[§ 5-19. Interest and late fees.**

#### 4 (a) *In general.*

5 If a person fails to pay the license fee imposed by this subtitle within 30 days of the date  
6 on which it is due, the person is liable for the following, in addition to the license fee:

7 (1) interest at the rate of 1% for each month or fraction of a month that the license fee  
8 is overdue; and

9 (2) a late fee at the rate of 1% for each month or fraction of a month that the license  
10 fee is overdue.

#### 11 (b) *Unpaid sum a personal debt and lien.*

12 (1) All license fees, interest, and late fees provided for in this section are a personal debt  
13 owed by the owner and the lessee of the multiple-family dwelling or rooming house.

14 (2) These fees and interest:

15 (i) are a lien in favor of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore on the  
16 multiple-family dwelling or rooming house; and

17 (ii) may be collected or enforced the same as any other debts or liens due to or in  
18 favor of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore.]

### 19 **§ 5-22. Constitutional rights.**

#### 20 (b) *Prohibited conduct.*

21 No bylaw, rule, [of] OR regulation governing a multiple-family dwelling, nor any action  
22 or inaction of the governing body or management of a multiple-family dwelling, may:

23 (1) unreasonably impair any rights guaranteed by the Free-Exercise Clause of the  
24 First Amendment to the United States Constitution or by Article 36 of the  
25 Maryland Declaration of Rights; or

26 (2) prohibit or deny any reasonable accommodation for religious practices.

## 27 **Article 1. Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies**

### 28 **Subtitle 40. Environmental Control Board**

#### 29 **§ 40-14. Violations to which subtitle applies.**

##### 30 (e) *Provisions and penalties enumerated.*

**Council Bill 10-0516**

1           **(1) Article 13. Housing and Urban Renewal**

2	Subtitle 4. Non-Owner-Occupied Dwellings; VACANT STRUCTURES	
3	Non-Owner-Occupied Dwelling Unit	\$100
4	VACANT STRUCTURES	\$500
5	Subtitle 5. Multiple-Family Dwellings and Rooming Houses	\$500

6           **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That the catchlines contained in this Ordinance  
7 are not law and may not be considered to have been enacted as a part of this or any prior  
8 Ordinance.

9           **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30<sup>th</sup> day  
10 after the date it is enacted.