



## New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division of Codes and Standards Landlord-Tenant Information Service



### LANDLORD IDENTITY LAW

### N.J.S.A. 46:8-27 through 46:8-37

Printed February 2008

#### **46:8-27 Landlord, project defined.**

1. The term "landlord," as used in this act, shall mean the person or persons who own or purport to own, or exercise control of any building or project in which there is rented or offered for rent housing space for living or dwelling purposes under either a written or oral lease, provided that this definition shall not include owner-occupied two unit premises. This definition shall include but not be limited to any multiple dwelling subject to the "Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law," P.L.1967, c.76 (C.55:13A-1 et seq.).

Whenever: the owner of an apartment in a horizontal property regime as defined in P.L.1963, c.168 (C.46:8A-1 et seq.), a unit owner of a unit in a condominium as defined in P.L.1969, c.257 (C.46:8B-1 et seq.), an owner of a unit in a fee simple community as defined in section 1 of P.L.1989, c.299 (C.40:67-23.2) or an owner in a cooperative entity as defined in section 3 of P.L.1987, c.381 (C.46:8D-3) leases an apartment or unit to a tenant, that owner shall be deemed the landlord for the purposes of filing the certificate of registration as required by section 2 of P.L.1974, c.50 (C.46:8-28). Nothing in P.L.1974, c.50 shall be construed as requiring a council of co-owners of a horizontal property regime, a condominium association, an association managing the common or shared elements or interests in a fee simple community or a cooperative association to comply with the certificate of registration requirement unless the council or association is the owner or lessor of the apartment or unit. Nothing in P.L.1974, c.50 shall be construed to require a cooperative corporation to comply with the certificate of registration requirement unless the corporation leases a unit to a person other than a proprietary shareholder of the cooperative. The foregoing provisions notwithstanding, the council, association or cooperative corporation having jurisdiction over a "multiple dwelling," as defined in section 3 of P.L.1967, c.76 (C.55:13A-3), shall comply with the registration requirements of section 12 of P.L.1967, c.76 (C.55:13A-12) with respect to the multiple dwelling as a whole. The term "project" as used in this act shall mean a group of buildings which are or are represented to be under common or substantially common ownership and which stand on a single parcel of land or parcels of land which are contiguous and which group of buildings is named, designated or advertised as a

common entity. The contiguity of such parcels shall not be adversely affected by public rights-of-way incidental to such buildings.

L.1974,c.50,s.1; amended 1981, c.299, s.1; 1981, c.442, s.1; 2003, c.56, s.1.

#### **46:8-28 Certificate of registration; filing, contents.**

2. Every landlord shall, within 30 days following the effective date of this act, or at the time of the creation of the first tenancy in any newly constructed or reconstructed building, file with the clerk of the municipality, or with such other municipal official as is designated by the clerk, in which the residential property is situated, in the case of a one-dwelling unit rental or a two-dwelling unit non-owner occupied premises, or with the Bureau of Housing Inspection in the Department of Community Affairs in the case of a multiple dwelling as defined in section 3 of the "Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law" (C.55:13A-3), a certificate of registration on forms prescribed by the Commissioner of Community Affairs, which shall contain the following information:

a. The name and address of the record owner or owners of the premises and the record owner or owners of the rental business if not the same persons. In the case of a partnership the names of all general partners shall be provided;

b. If the record owner is a corporation, the name and address of the registered agent and corporate officers of said corporation;

c. If the address of any record owner is not located in the county in which the premises are located, the name and address of a person who resides in the county in which the premises are located and is authorized to accept notices from a tenant and to issue receipts therefor and to accept service of process on behalf of the record owner;

d. The name and address of the managing agent of the premises, if any;

e. The name and address, including the dwelling unit, apartment or room number of the superintendent, janitor, custodian or other individual employed by the record owner or managing agent to provide regular maintenance service, if any;

f. The name, address and telephone number of an individual representative of the record owner or managing agent who may be reached or contacted at any time in the event of an emergency affecting the premises or any unit of dwelling space therein, including such emergencies as the failure of any essential service or system, and who has the authority to make emergency decisions concerning the building and any repair thereto or expenditure in connection therewith and shall, at all times, have access to a current list of building tenants that shall be made available to emergency personnel as required in the event of an emergency;

g. The name and address of every holder of a recorded mortgage on the premises;

h. If fuel oil is used to heat the building and the landlord furnishes the heat in the building, the name and address of the fuel oil dealer servicing the building and the grade of fuel oil used.

L.1974,c.50,s.2; amended 1980, c.170, s.8; 1981, c.299, s.2; 1981, c.442, s.2; 1981, c.511, s.20; 2001, c.264, s.1; 2003, c.56, s.2.

#### **46:8-28.1 Certificate; indexing, filing; inspection; fee; validation.**

3. In the case of a filing under section 2 of P.L.1974, c.50 (C.46:8-28) with the municipal clerk, or with such other municipal official as is designated by the clerk, the clerk or designated official shall index and file the certificate and make it reasonably available for public inspection. In the case of a filing with the Bureau of Housing Inspection, the filing shall be accompanied by the filing fee required pursuant to section 12 of P.L.1967, c. 76 (C. 55:13A-12). The bureau shall review the certificate and, if it is found to be in conformity with this law and any regulations promulgated hereunder, validate the certificate and issue a validated copy to the landlord and a validated copy to the clerk of the municipality in which the building or project is located. The clerk shall index the validated certificates, or forward them to the designated official for indexing, and the certificates shall be made available as with the certificates required of one and two dwelling unit nonowner occupied premises.

L.1981,c.442,s.3; amended 2001, c.264, s.2.

#### **46:8-28.2. Certificate of registration; amendment; filing**

Every landlord required to file a certificate of registration as described in section 2 of P.L.1974, c. 50 (C. 46:8-28) shall file an amended certificate of registration within 20 days after any change in the information required to be included thereon. No fee shall be required for the filing of an amendment except where the ownership of the premises is changed.

L.1981, c. 442, s. 4.

#### **46:8-28.3. Registration under act if in compliance with L.1974, c. 50, or Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law**

Nothing herein shall require a landlord who has heretofore complied with all provisions of P.L.1974, c. 50 (C. 46:8-27et seq.) or the "Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law" (P.L.1967, c. 76, C. 55:13A-1 et seq.), or both, applicable to any building or project to register the building or project again pursuant to this amendatory and supplementary act. Whenever, after the effective date of this amendatory and supplementary act, any owner or landlord shall be required to file an amended certificate of registration pursuant to the provisions of this amendatory and supplementary act, the "Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law," or P.L.1974, c. 50, then that filing shall be in accordance with this amendatory and supplementary act.

L.1981, c. 442, s. 8.

#### **46:8-28.4. Inapplicability of act to current proceedings, liabilities or penalties**

This amendatory and supplementary act shall not affect any current proceedings, liabilities or penalties involving violations of the sections amended or repealed by this amendatory and supplementary act. All such proceedings, liabilities or penalties existing on the effective date of this amendatory and supplementary act shall be commenced or continued and be proceeded with in all respects as if the section had not been amended or repealed.

L.1981, c. 442, s. 9.

#### **46:8-28.5 Certificate of registration, fee; exceptions.**

2. a. Except as otherwise provided in subsection b. of this section, every owner of a tenant-occupied single-family or two-family residential property, including, without limitation, a two-family property in which one unit is owner-occupied, shall file a certificate of registration on forms prescribed by the Commissioner of Community Affairs, in accordance with section 2 of P.L.1974, c.50 (C.46:8-28), with the Bureau of Housing Inspection in the Department of Community Affairs. Any such filing shall be accompanied by a filing fee not exceeding the filing for hotels and multiple dwellings established by section 12 of P.L.1967, c.76 (C.55:13A-12).

b. Subsection a. of this section shall not apply to any owner-occupied two-family residential property that:

- (1) has been certified to be free of lead-based paint;
- (2) was constructed during or after 1978;
- (3) is a seasonal rental unit which is rented for less than six months( duration each year; or
- (4) has been certified as having a lead-free interior by a certified inspector.

c. Any owner who fails to comply with an order of the commissioner to register any property subject to this section shall be liable for a penalty of \$200 for each registration ordered by the commissioner. The commissioner may issue a certificate to the clerk of the Superior Court that an owner is indebted to the department for the payment of such penalty and thereupon the clerk shall enter upon the record of docketed judgments the name of the owner, and of the State, a designation of the statute under which the penalty is imposed, the amount of the penalty so certified, and the date of such certification. The making of the entry shall have the same force and effect as the entry of a docketed judgment in the office of such clerk.

L.2007, c.251, s.2.

#### **46:8-29 Provision of copy of certificate of registration to tenant.**

3. Within 30 days following the effective date hereof, and at the time of the creation of a new tenancy, every landlord shall provide each occupant or tenant in his building or project a copy of the certificate of registration required by section 2 of this act (C.46:8-28). If an amended certificate is filed the landlord shall furnish each occupant or tenant with a copy of the amended certificate within seven days after the amended certificate is filed with the municipal clerk, or with such other municipal official as is designated by the clerk, in the case of a tenant occupied one family dwelling or a non-owner occupied two family dwelling and within seven days of receipt of a validated certificate from the Bureau of Housing Inspection in the case of a building or project subject to the "Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law," P.L.1967, c.76 (C.55:13A-1 et seq.).

L.1974,c.50,s.3; amended 1981, c.442, s.5; 2001, c.264, s.3.

#### **46:8-30. Date of preparation; stipulation**

All information required under section 2. and 3. of this act shall stipulate the date of preparation.

L.1974, c. 50, s. 4, eff. June 25, 1974.

#### **46:8-31. Service by mail upon record owner**

5. In any action in the Superior Court, Law Division, Special Civil Part or municipal court by an occupant or tenant or to recover penalties against a landlord who has not complied with this act and who cannot be served within the county or municipality, the summons and complaint may be served by certified and regular mail upon the record owner at the last address listed in the tax records of either the municipality or county. Service of such summons and complaint by certified and regular mail shall be effective to bring the landlord before the Superior Court, Law Division, Special Civil Part or municipal court even if it were not served within the county or municipality in which the court issuing the summons is located.

L.1974,c.50,s.5; amended 1981,c.299,s.3; 1991,c.91,s.455.

#### **46:8-32. Service of process on Superior Court clerk**

6. Service of process on the clerk of the Superior Court, Law Division, Special Civil Part or municipal court having jurisdiction over the municipality in which the property is located shall be deemed service on the landlord upon submission to the court of the following:

- a. A certification of the tenant stating that he does not know the landlord's whereabouts after having made a diligent effort, satisfactory to the court, to determine the same; and
- b. Proof of failure of service by certified mail as provided in section 5 of this act.

L.1974,c.50,s.6; amended 1981,c.299,s.4; 1991,c.91,s.456.

#### **46:8-33. Action for possession by landlord; compliance with act**

In any action for possession instituted by a landlord who has failed to comply with the provisions of this act, no judgment for possession shall be entered until there has been compliance. The court shall continue such case for up to 90 days and if there has not been compliance within such period, the action shall be dismissed.

L.1974, c. 50, s. 7, eff. June 25, 1974.

#### **46:8-34. Jurisdiction of Superior Court; amounts under \$3,000**

8. The Superior Court, Law Division, Special Civil Part shall have jurisdiction over any action between a landlord and tenant where the amount in controversy is \$3,000.00 or less.

L.1974,c.50,s.8; amended 1991,c.91,s.457.

#### **46:8-35. Penalty for violation; recovery to municipalities**

9. Any landlord who shall violate any provision of this act shall be liable to a penalty of not more than \$500.00 for each offense, recoverable by a summary proceeding under "the penalty enforcement law" (N.J.S.2A:58-1 et seq.). The Superior Court, Law Division, Special Civil Part in the county or the municipal court of the municipality in which the premises are located shall have jurisdiction to enforce said penalty.

The Attorney General, the municipality in which the premises are located, or any other person may institute the proceeding; where the municipality or any other person other than the Attorney General institutes the proceeding, a recovered penalty should be remitted by the court to the municipality in which the premises subject to the proceeding are located.

L.1974,c.50,s.9; amended 1981,c.299,s.5; 1991,c.91,s.458.

#### **46:8-36. Waiver of rights by agreement; unenforceability**

Any written or oral provision in any agreement whereby any tenant waives any rights under this act shall be deemed against public policy and unenforceable.

L.1974, c. 50, s. 10, eff. June 25, 1974.

#### **46:8-37. Severability**

If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence or other part of this act is adjudged unconstitutional or invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder of this act, but shall be confined in its effect to the section, subsection, paragraph, sentence or other part of this act directly involved in the controversy in which said judgment shall have been rendered.

L.1974, c. 50, s. 11, eff. June 25, 1974.