

**RENT ADJUSTMENT BOARD REGULATIONS  
APPENDIX A**

EXCERPTS FROM OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 71518  
(SUPERSEDED)

RESIDENTIAL RENT ARBITRATION BOARD RULES AND REGULATIONS SECTIONS  
2.0 AND 10.0 (all other section omitted, pages 1, 5-13, 21 omitted)

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

**2.1 Base Rent:** The monthly rental rate before the latest proposed increase

**2.2 Current Rent:** To keep current means that the tenant is paid up to date on rental payments at the base rental rate.

**2.3 Landlord:** For the purpose of these rules, the term "landlord" will be synonymous with owner or lessor of real property that is leased or rented to another and the representative, agent, or successor of such owner or lessor.

**2.4 Manager:** A manager is a paid (either salary or a reduced rental rate) representative of the landlord.

**2.5 Petitioner:** A petitioner is the party (landlord or tenant) who first files an action under the ordinance.

**2.6 Respondent:** A respondent is the party (landlord or tenant) who responds to the petitioner.

**2.7 Priority 1 Condition:** The City of Oakland Housing Code Enforcement Inspectors determine housing conditions(s)/repair(s) as a "Priority 1" condition when housing condition (s)/repair(s) are identified as a major hazardous or inhabitable condition(s). A "Priority 1" condition must be abated immediately by correction, removal or disconnection. A Notice to Abate will always be issued.

**2.8 Priority 2 Condition:** The City of Oakland Housing Code Enforcement Inspectors determine housing condition(s)/repair(s) as a Priority condition when housing condition (s)/repair(s) are identified as major hazardous or inhabitable condition(s) that may be deferred by an agreement with the Housing Code enforcement Section.

2.9 The following describe five major hazard conditions classified as Priorities 1 & 2:

**I. MECHANICAL**

**Priority 1**

- A. Unvented heaters
- B. No combustion chamber, fire or vent hazard
- C. Water heaters in sleeping rooms, bathrooms
- D. Open gas lines, open flame heaters

**Priority 2**

- A. Damaged gas appliance
- B. Flame impingement, soot
- C. Crimped gas line, rubber gas connections
- D. Dampers in gas heater vent pipes, no separation or clearance, through or near combustible surfaces
- E. Water heater on garage floor

## II. PLUMBING

### Priority 1

- A. Sewage overflow on surface

### Priority 2

- A. Open sewers or waste lines
- B. Unsanitary, inoperative fixtures; leaking toilets
- C. T & P systems, newly or improperly installed

## III. ELECTRICAL

### Priority 1

- A. Bare wiring, open splices, unprotected knife switches, exposed energized electrical parts
- B. Evidence of overheated conductors including extension cords
- C. Extension cords under rugs

### Priority 2

- A. Stapled cord wiring; extension cords
- B. Open junction boxes, switches, outlets
- C. Over-fused circuits
- D. Improperly added wiring

## IV. STRUCTURAL

### Priority 1

- A. Absence of handrail, loose, weakly-supported handrail
- B. Broken glass, posing potential immediate injury
- C. Hazardous stairs
- D. Collapsing structural members

### Priority 2

- A. Garage wall separation
- B. Uneven walks, floors, tripping hazards
- C. Loose or insufficient supporting structural members
- D. Cracked glass, leaky roofs, missing doors (exterior) and windows
- E. Exit, egress requirements; fire safety

Note: Floor separation and stairway enclosures in multi-story handled on a case basis.

## IV. OTHER

### Priority 1

- A. Wet garbage
- B. Open wells or unattended swimming pools
- C. Abandoned refrigerators
- D. Items considered by field person to be immediate hazards

### Priority 2

- A. Broken-down fences or retaining walls
- B. High, dry weeds, next to combustible surfaces
- C. Significant quantity of debris
- D. Abandoned vehicles

Questions concerning permits, repairs and compliance schedules should be referred to code enforcement office of the City of Oakland -- (510) 238-3381.

## **10.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR ADDITIONAL RENT INCREASES**

**10.1 Increased Housing Service Costs:** Increased Housing Service Costs are services provided by the landlord related to the use or occupancy of a rental unit, including, but not limited to, insurance, repairs, replacement maintenance, painting, lighting, heat, water, elevator service, laundry facilities, janitorial service, refuse removal, furnishings, parking, security service and employee services. Any repair cost that is the result of deferred maintenance, as defined in Appendix A, Section 10.2.2, cannot be considered a repair for calculation of Increased Housing Service Costs.

10.1.1 In determining whether there has been an increase in housing service costs, consider the annual operating expenses for the previous two years. (For example: if the rent increase is proposed in 1993, the difference in housing service costs between 1991 and 1992 will be considered.) The average housing service cost percentage (%) increase per month per unit shall be derived by dividing this difference by twelve (12) months, then by the number of units in the building and finally by the average gross operating income per month per unit (which is determined by dividing the gross monthly operating income by the number of units). Once the percentage increase is determined the percentage amount must exceed the allowable rental increase deemed by City Council. The total determined percentage amount is the actual percentage amount allowed for a rental increase.

10.1.2 Any major or unusual housing service costs (i.e., a major repair which does not occur every year) shall be considered a capital improvement. However, any repair cost that is not eligible as a capital improvement because it is deferred maintenance pursuant to Appendix A, Section 10.2.2, may not be considered a repair for purposes of calculating Increased Housing Service Costs.

10.1.3 Any item which has a useful life of one year or less, or which is not considered to be a capital improvement, will be considered a housing service cost (i.e., maintenance and repair).

10.1.4 Individual housing service cost items will not be considered for special consideration. For example, PG&E increased costs will not be considered separately from other housing service costs.

10.1.5 Documentation (i.e., bills, receipts, and/or canceled checks) must be presented for all costs which are being used for justification of the proposed rent increase.

10.1.6 Landlords are allowed up to 8% of the gross operating income of unspecified expenses (i.e., maintenance, repairs, legal and management fees, etc.) under housing service costs unless verified documentation in the form of receipts and/or canceled checks justify a greater percentage.

10.1.7 If a landlord chooses to use 8% of his/her income for unspecified expenses, it must be applied to both years being considered under housing service cost (for example, 8% cannot be applied to 1980 and not 1981).

10.1.8 A decrease in housing service costs (i.e., any items originally included as housing service costs such as water, garbage, etc.) is considered to be an increase in rent and will be calculated as such (i.e., the average cost of the service eliminated will be considered as a percentage of the rent). If a landlord adds service (i.e., cable TV, etc.) without increasing rent or covers costs previously paid by a tenant, this is considered to be a rent decrease and will be calculated as such.

10.1.9 The transfer of utility costs to the tenant by the landlord is not considered as part of the rent increase unless the landlord is designated in the original rental agreement to be the party responsible for such costs

10.1.10 When more than one rental unit shares any type of utility bill with another rental unit, it is illegal to divide up the bill between units. Splitting the costs of utilities among tenants who live in separate units is prohibited by the Public Utilities Commission Code and Rule 18 of PG&E. The best way to remedy the bill is to install individual meters. If this is too expensive, then the property owner should pay the utility bill himself/herself and build the cost into the rent.

**10.2 Capital Improvement Costs:** Capital Improvement Costs are those improvements which materially add to the value of the property and appreciably prolong its useful life or adapt it to new building codes. Those improvements primarily must benefit the tenant rather than the landlord.

10.2.1 Credit for capital improvements will only be given for those improvements which have been completed and paid for within the twenty-four (24) month period prior to the date of the proposed rent increase. [*Resolution No. 84936 C.M.S., 4/22/14*]

### **Capital Improvements for Code Violations Regulations**

10.2.2 Eligible capital improvements include, but are not limited to, the following items:

1. Those improvements which primarily benefit the tenant rather than the landlord. (For example, the remodeling of a lobby would be eligible as a capital improvement, while the construction of a sign advertising the rental complex would not be eligible). However, the complete painting of the exterior of a building, and the complete interior painting of internal dwelling units are eligible capital improvement costs.

2. In order for equipment to be eligible as a capital improvement cost, such equipment must be permanently fixed in place or relatively immobile (for example, draperies, blinds, carpet, sinks, bathtubs, stoves, refrigerators, and kitchen cabinets are

eligible capital improvements. Hot plates, toasters, throw rugs, and hibachis would not be eligible as capital improvements).

3. Except as set forth in subsection 4, repairs completed in order to comply with the Oakland Housing Code may be considered capital improvements.

4. The following may not be considered as capital improvements:

a. Repairs for code violations may not be considered capital improvements if the Tenant proves the following:

i. That a repair was performed to correct a Priority 1 or 2 Condition that was not created by the Tenant, which may be demonstrated by any of the following:

(a) the condition was cited by a City Building Services Inspector as a Priority 1 or 2 Condition;

(b) the Tenant produces factual evidence to show that had the property or unit been inspected by a City Building Services Inspector, the Inspector would have determined the condition to be a Priority 1 or 2 Condition, but the Hearing Officer may determine that in order to decide if a condition is a Priority 1 or 2 Condition expert testimony is required, in which case the Hearing Officer may require such testimony.

ii. That the tenant

(a) informed the Owner of the condition in writing;

(b) otherwise proves that the landlord knew of the conditions, or

(c) proves that there were exceptional circumstances that prohibited the tenant from submitting needed repairs in writing; and

iii. That the Owner failed to repair the condition within a reasonable time after the Tenant informed Owner of the condition or the Owner otherwise knew of the condition.

iv. A reasonable time is determined as follows:

(a) If the condition was cited by a City Building Services Inspector and the Inspector required the repairs to be performed within a particular time frame, or any extension thereof, the time frame set out by the Inspector is deemed a reasonable time; or

(b) Ninety (90) days after the Owner received notice of the condition or otherwise learned of the condition is presumed a reasonable time unless either of the following apply:

(1) the violation remained unabated for ninety (90) days after the date of notice to the Owner and the Owner demonstrates timely, good faith efforts to correct the violation within the ninety the (90) days but such efforts were unsuccessful due to the nature of the work or circumstances beyond the Owner's control, or the delay was attributable to other good cause; or

(2) the Tenant demonstrated that the violation was an immediate threat to the health and safety of occupants of the property, [in which case] fifteen (15) business days is presumed a reasonable time unless:

(i) the Tenant proves a shorter time is reasonable based on the hazardous nature of the condition, and the ease of correction, or

(ii) the Owner demonstrates timely, good faith efforts to correct the violation within the fifteen (15) business days after notice but such efforts were unsuccessful due to the nature of the work or circumstances beyond the Owner's control, or the delay was attributable to other good cause.

(c) If an Owner is required to get a building or other City permit to perform the work, or is required to get approval from a government agency before commencing work on the premises, the Owner's attempt to get the required permit or approval within the timelines set out in (i) and (ii) above shall be deemed evidence of good faith and the Owner shall not be penalized for delays attributable to the action of the approving government agency.

- b. Costs for work or portion of work that could have been avoided by the landlord's exercise of reasonable diligence in making timely repairs after the landlord knew or should reasonably have known of the problem that caused the damage leading to the repair claimed as a capital improvement.
  - i. Among the factors that may be considered in determining if the landlord knew or should reasonably have known of the problem that caused the damage:
    - (a) Was the condition leading to the repairs outside the tenant's unit or inside the tenant's unit?
    - (b) Did the tenant notify the landlord in writing or use the landlord's procedures for notifying the landlord of conditions that might need repairs?
    - (c) Did the landlord conduct routine inspections of the property?
    - (d) Did the tenant permit the landlord to inspect the interior of the unit?
  - ii. Examples:
    - (a) A roof leaks and, after the landlord knew of the leak, did not timely repair the problem and leak causes ceiling or wall damage to units that could have been avoided had the landlord acted timely to make the repair. In this case, replacement of the roof would be a capital improvement, but the repairs to the ceiling or wall would not be.
    - (b) A problem has existed for an extended period of time visible outside tenants' units and could be seen from a reasonable inspection of the property, but the landlord or landlord's agents either had not inspected the property for an unreasonable period of time, or did not

exercise due diligence in making such inspections. In such a case, the landlord should have reasonably known of the problem. Annual inspections may be considered a reasonable time period for inspections depending on the facts and circumstances of the property such as age, condition, and tenant complaints.

iii. Burden of Proof

- (a) The tenant has the initial burden to prove that the landlord knew or should have reasonably known of the problem that caused the repair.
- (b) Once a tenant meets the burden to prove the landlord knew or should have reasonably known, the burden shifts to the landlord to prove that the landlord exercised reasonable diligence in making timely repairs after the landlord knew or should have known of the problem.

c. Use of a landlord's personal appliances, furniture, etc., or those items inherited or borrowed are not eligible for consideration as capital improvements.

d. Normal routine maintenance and repair of the rental until and the building is not a capital improvement cost, but a housing service cost. (For example: while the replacement of old screens with new screens would be a capital improvement).

10.2.3 Rent Increases for Capital Improvement costs are calculated according to the following rules:

1. For mixed-use structures, only the percent of residential square footage will be applied in the calculations. The same principle shall apply to landlord-occupied dwellings (i.e., exclusion of landlord's unit).

2. Items defined as capital improvements will be given a useful life period of five (5) years or sixty (60) months and the total costs shall be amortized over that time period, unless the Rent increase using this amortization would excess ten percent (10%) of the existing Rent for a particular unit. Whenever a Capital Improvement Rent increase alone or with any other Rent increases noticed at the same time for a particular Unit

exceeds ten percent (10%) or thirty percent (30%) in five years, if the Owner elects to recover the portion of the Capital Improvement that causes the Rent Increase to exceed ten percent (10%) or thirty percent (30%), the excess can only be recovered by extending the Capital Improvement's amortization period in yearly increments sufficient to cover the excess, and complying with any requirements to notice the Tenant of the extended amortization period with the initial Capital Improvement increase. When a Rent increase that includes a Capital Improvement increase does not exceed ten percent (10%) or thirty percent (30%), the amortization period remains five (5) years. The dollar amount of the rent increase justified by Capital Improvements shall be removed from the allowable rent in the sixty-first month or at the end of the extended amortization period. [84936 C.M.S., 4/22/14]

3. A monthly Rent increase for a Capital Improvement is determined as follows:

- a. A maximum of seventy percent (70%) of the total cost for the Capital Improvement (including financing) may be passed through to the Tenant;
- b. The amount of the Capital Improvement calculated in a. above is then divided equally among the Units that benefit from the Capital Improvement;
- c. The monthly Rent increase is the amount of the Capital Improvement that may be passed through as determined above, divided by the number of months the Capital Improvement is amortized over for the particular Unit. [84936 C.M.S., 4/22/14]

4. If a unit is occupied by an agent of the landlord, this unit must be included when determining the average cost per unit. (For example, if a building has ten (10) units, and one is occupied by a nonpaying manager, any capital improvement would have to be divided by ten (10), not nine (9), in determining the average rent increase). This policy applies to all calculations in the financial statement which involve average per unit figures.

5. Undocumented labor costs provided by the landlord cannot exceed 25% of the cost of materials.

6. Equipment otherwise eligible as a Capital Improvement will not be considered if a "use fee" is charged (i.e., coin-operated washers and dryers).

7. If the Capital Improvements are finished with a loan to make capital improvements which term exceeds five (5) years (sixty (60) months), the following formula for the allowable increase is: monthly loan-payment divided by number of units.

8. Where a landlord is reimbursed for Capital Improvements (i.e., insurance, court-awarded damages, subsidies, etc.), this reimbursement must be deducted from such Capital Improvements before costs are amortized and allocated among the units.

10.2.4 In some cases, it is difficult to separate costs between rental units; common vs. rental areas; commercial vs. residential areas; or housing service costs vs. Capital

Improvements. In these cases, the Hearing Officer will make a determination on a case-by-case basis.

#### 10.2.5 Interest on Failure to Reduce Capital Improvement Increase After End of Amortization Period. [84936 C.M.S., 4/22/14]

1. If an Owner fails to reduce a Capital Improvement Rent increase in the month following the end of the amortization period for such improvement and the Tenant pays any portion of such Rent increase after the end of the amortization period, the Tenant may recover interest on the amount overpaid.

2. The applicable rate of interest for overpaid Capital Improvements shall be the rate specified by law for judgments pursuant to California Constitution, Article XV and any legislation adopted thereto and shall be calculated at simple interest.

**10.3 Uninsured Repair Costs:** Uninsured Repair Costs are costs for work done by a landlord or tenant to a rental unit or to the common area of the property or structure containing a rental unit which is performed to secure compliance with any state or local law as to repair damage resulting from, fire, earthquake, or other casualty or natural disaster, to the extent such repair is not reimbursed by insurance proceeds

10.3.1 Uninsured Repair Costs are those costs incurred as a result of natural causes and casualty claims; it does not include improvement work or code correction work. Improvements work or code correction work will be considered either capital improvements or housing services, depending on the nature of the improvement.

10.3.2 Increases justified by Uninsured Repair Costs will be calculated as Capital Improvement costs.

**10.4 Debt Service Costs:** Debt Service Costs are the monthly principal and interest payments on the deed(s) of trust secured by the property.

**Debt Service for newly-acquired units has been eliminated as a justification for new rent increases in excess of the CPI, effective April 1, 2014. This restriction will not apply to any property on which the rental property owner can demonstrate that the owner made a bona-fide, arms-length offer to purchase on or before April 1, 2014, the effective date of this amendment. [Ordinance No.13221 C.M.S., 4/1/14]**

10.4.1 An increase in rent based on debt service costs will only be considered in those cases where the total income is insufficient to cover the combined housing service and debt service costs after a rental increase as specified in Section 5 of the Ordinance. The maximum increase allowed under this formula shall be that increase that results in a rental income equal to the total housing service costs plus the allowable debt service costs.

10.4.2 No more than 95% of the eligible debt service can be passed on to tenants. The eligible debt service is the actual principal and interest.

10.4.3 If the property has been owned by the current landlord and the immediate previous landlord for a combined period of less than twelve (12) months, no consideration will be given for debt service.

10.4.4 If a property has changed title through probate and has been sold to a new owner, debt service will be allowed. However, if the property has changed title and is inherited by a family member, there will be no consideration for debt service unless due to hardship.

10.4.5 If the rents have been raised prior to a new landlord taking title, or if rents have been raised in excess of the percentage allowed by the Ordinance in previous 12-month periods without tenants having been notified pursuant to Section 5(d) of the Ordinance, the debt service will be calculated as follows:

1. Base rents will be considered as the rents in effect prior to the first rent increase in the immediate previous 12-month period.
2. The new landlord's housing service costs and debt service will be considered. The negative cash flow will be calculated by deducting the sum of the housing service costs plus 95% of the debt service from the adjusted operating income amount.
3. The percentage of rent increase justified will then be applied to the base rents (i.e., the rent prior to the first rent increase in the 12-month period, as allowed by Section 5 of the Ordinance).

10.4.6 Refinancing and second mortgages, except those second mortgages obtained in connection with the acquisition of the property, will not be considered as a basis for a rent increase under the debt service category. Notwithstanding this provision, such refinancing or second mortgage will be considered as basis for a rent increase when the equity derived from such refinancing or second mortgage is invested in the building under consideration in a manner which directly benefits the tenant (i.e., capital improvements or housing services such as maintenance and repairs) or if the refinancing was a requirement of the original purchase.

10.4.7 As in housing service costs, a new landlord is allowed up to 8% of the gross operating income for unspecified expenses.

## **10.5 Rent History/"Banking"**

10.5.1 If a landlord chooses to increase rents less than the annual CPI Adjustment [formerly Annual Permissible Increase] permitted by the Ordinance, any remaining CPI Rent Adjustment may be carried over to succeeding twelve (12) month periods ("Banked"). However, the total of CPI Adjustments imposed in any one Rent increase, including the current CPI Rent Adjustment, may not exceed three times the allowable CPI Rent Adjustment on the effective date of the Rent Increase notice.

10.5.2 Banked CPI Rent Adjustments may be used together with other Rent justifications, except Increased Housing Service Costs, Debt Service and Fair Return, because these justifications replace the current year's CPI increase.

10.5.3 In no event may any banked CPI Rent Adjustment be implemented more than ten years after it accrues.