

FACT SHEET:
RENT CONTROL IN JERSEY CITY AND THE CONSUMER FRAUD ACT

Jersey City has one of the strongest rent control laws in the country, but our research has revealed that many landlords violate it. **Under the NJ Consumer Fraud Act, a landlord who breaks Jersey City’s rent control law may be liable for triple damages and attorney’s fees for rent overcharges going back six years.**

- Your building may be rent controlled if it has 5 or more apartments.
 - If your building is rent controlled, the amount your landlord can raise your rent each year is strictly controlled:
 - o When you first move into your apartment, your landlord must tell you within 10 days how much the previous tenant was paying
 - o Your landlord can only raise your rent once per year
 - o The amount your landlord can raise your rent is determined by the Consumer Price Index, and it is capped at 4% per year. It is usually less than 4%. Check the Rent Control Increase Index at <http://www.cityofjerseycity.com/community/tenantresources>
 - o Whenever your landlord raises your rent, the landlord is required to show you in writing how it was calculated and notify you that you may contest the increase before the Rent Leveling Bureau
 - o Every year, your landlord must file their rent rolls with the Rent Leveling Bureau. The landlord cannot receive any rent increase if they do not file the rent rolls
 - Landlords in Jersey City are not permitted to raise the rent more just because the apartment is vacant. There is no “vacancy bonus” in Jersey City. There are only two reasons that your landlord can raise the rent more than the Consumer Price Index. They are:
 - o The landlord has made capital improvements to the apartment or the building, has obtained all proper permits for the work, and has provided the city with documentation of how much those improvements cost
 - Capital improvements do not include ordinary repairs and maintenance
 - There is a specific formula in the rent control law which the landlord must use to calculate the allowable rent increase for a capital improvement. For example:
- | Raising rent by: | Approximate rehab required: |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| \$200 | ~\$11,000 |
| \$300 | ~\$17,500 |
| \$400 | ~\$25,000 |
| \$500 | ~\$31,000 |
- o The landlord has successfully applied for a “hardship increase” from the city. This means that the landlord proved to the city that they could not make a “fair market return” on the building without raising the rent beyond the Consumer Price Index. Your landlord must send you a copy of this application.
- You can check your apartment’s rent history by contacting the Jersey City Office of Landlord-Tenant Relations: (201) 547-5127, 30 Montgomery Street, Rm. 415, Jersey City, NJ 07302

****NOTE:** The above is a simplified explanation and does not constitute legal advice. You can read more and find a link to the full text of the Jersey City rent control law at www.njtogether.org/landlords

For legal assistance, you can contact:

The Waterfront Project: 830 Bergen Ave, Jersey City, NJ 07306, (551) 256-7578, www.thewaterfrontproject.org

Northeast NJ Legal Services: 574 Summit Ave, Jersey City, NJ 07306, (201) 792-6363, www.lsnj.org/nnjls

Hudson County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service: 583 Newark Ave. 4th Floor. Jersey City, NJ 07306. (201) 798-4708.