



# City of Columbia

## ABSENTEE LANDLORD REGISTRATION

Property Maintenance Division • 1136 Washington Street, Columbia, SC 29201 • 803.545.3430 • Fax: 803.255.8935

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### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)**

**QUESTION:** If I own a second home or unit (including the USC Cockabooses) in Columbia, is that considered a residential rental unit and do I still need to register as an Absentee Landlord?

**ANSWER:** As long as the unit(s) is NOT rented or leased, it is not considered a rental unit, therefore, you are not required to register. However you must still fill out as much information on the registration form as possible (i.e. the address and TMS number of the property(s) owned and a physical mailing address for the owner(s).) and sign/date the bottom part that begins as “**OR I attest that...**” Then return the completed form to our office.

**QUESTION:** Do I have to mail the form back, or is there an alternative way to register?

**ANSWER:** We DO need a completed and signed form returned to us. However, it may be faxed (803-255-8935), mailed (1136 Washington Street, Columbia, SC 29201) or scanned to email ([rwitllman@columbiasc.net](mailto:rwitllman@columbiasc.net)) back to us.

**QUESTION:** I no longer own residential rental property(s), do I still need to register as an Absentee Landlord?

**ANSWER:** You are not required to register. However you must still fill out as much information on the registration form as possible (i.e. the address and TMS number of the property(s) owned and a physical mailing address for the owner(s).) and sign/date the bottom part that begins as “**OR I attest that...**” Then return the completed form to our office. Additionally, you must provide documentation that illustrates a transfer of ownership, preferably a deed. A sales contract or closing settlement statement does not evidence the transfer of ownership.

**QUESTION:** I have a PO Box in Lexington or Richland County. If I change my address with the County Assessor’s office to a physical address within Lexington or Richland County, do I still need to register as an Absentee Landlord?

**ANSWER:** At this time, you still need to register. Once you have made the change with the County’s Assessor’s office, please provide us with documentation and we will remove you from the registration list.

**QUESTION:** My son (or other relative) lives in the house, do I still need to register as an Absentee Landlord?

**ANSWER:** As long as the unit(s) is NOT rented or leased, you are not required to register. However you must still fill out as much information on the form as possible (i.e. the address and TMS number of the property(s) owned and a physical mailing address for the owner(s)) and sign/date the bottom part that begins as “**OR I attest that...**” Then return the completed form to our office. **Please note on the form that a relative is living there.** If the property becomes rented or leased in the future, you will need to register with our office at that time.

**QUESTION:** I have a management company located in Lexington or Richland County. If I change the address with the County Assessor’s office to the local physical address of the management company, do I still need to register as an Absentee Landlord?

**ANSWER:** At this time, you still need to register. Once you have made the change with the County’s Assessor’s office, please provide us with documentation and we will remove you from the registration list.

**QUESTION:** May I provide a P.O. Box for the ownership information on the registration form?

**ANSWER:** You may provide a P.O. Box as the mailing address only. You will still need to provide a physical mailing address within the ownership block on the form.

**QUESTION:** Where can I find additional information on Absentee Landlord Registration?

**ANSWER:** The ordinance adopting this program, the Absentee Landlord Registration Form, and other information can be found online at [www.columbiadevelopmentservices.net](http://www.columbiadevelopmentservices.net) . For the Absentee Landlord information specifically, navigate to the Absentee Landlord Registration link under Property Maintenance or search “Absentee Landlord” at the top right of the web page. You can also use the following url: <http://www.columbia.sc.gov/coc/index.cfm/development-gateway/planning-and-development-services/property-maintenance/absentee-landlord/> .

**QUESTION:** Where do I get the TMS number for the rental property?

**ANSWER:** The TMS number is generally the 9-digit Tax Map Number located on your tax bill. You may also find it on the County Assessor’s web page. The Lexington County Assessor’s web link is <http://www.lex-co.com/Departments/Treasurer/txsrchdclmr.html> and Richland County’s is <http://www.richlandonline.com/services/assessorsearch/assessorsearch.asp> .

**QUESTION:** I own more than one residential rental unit in the City. Where do I place the additional properties at on the form?

**ANSWER:** You will need to fill out a separate form for each of the properties that you own that meet the definition of a residential rental unit.

**QUESTION:** There are multiple property owners for the unit, who is considered the Primary Owner?

**ANSWER:** The Primary Owner is the person that has the majority ownership and/or control of the property. If there is equal ownership by all, then use the person that is most likely to deal with any maintenance issues of the property.

**QUESTION:** What if I sell the property?

**ANSWER:** You must submit a letter to the City of Columbia Housing Official stating that you have in fact sold or transferred ownership in the property and to whom you sold or transferred ownership to, including their full name, physical address, mailing address, and telephone number. The Housing Official reserves the right to require a copy of the deed evidencing the change of ownership.