



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

639 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139  
TEL. 488-9077

RENT CONTROL BOARD

ROGER MERVIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## M E M O R A N D U M

TO: City Councillors and City Manager  
FROM: Roger Mervis *RM*  
RE: City-Wide General Adjustment of Rents  
DATE: May 16, 1985

During the first few days of June, the Cambridge Rent Control Board will mail to tenants and landlords of controlled rental properties Notices of General Adjustment maximum rents. Included in this mailing will be informational and instructional materials designed to help streamline the process and to make it more understandable. This General Adjustment (or GA) may result in changes in current rents ranging from decreases of up to 15% to increases of up to 20%. These changes were approved by the Board after a series of public meetings which took place over an eleven month period and which included substantial input from Cambridge landlords and tenants.

The GA will reflect tax changes that occurred as a result of the 1983 100% revaluation of properties; changes in fuel costs; and, for some classes of properties, increases in other expense categories such as insurance, water and sewer, and maintenance and repair, and adjustments in net operating income to account for inflation. The differential treatment of the

various classes of property resulted from a policy decision by the Board that the GA should reflect the economic realities of each class of property to the maximum extent practicable, while the concept of a generalized approach to the adjustment of rents was maintained.

As part of this GA, the Board will mail each tenant an Affidavit of Conditions which is a checklist of the following health and building code violations: entry door(s) to a unit or building will not lock; missing window locks; rotted or missing prime (not storm) windows; broken window glass; missing screens; roaches, mice or rats; improper garbage management; clogged drains; leaking pipes; wall and ceiling leaks; fallen plaster; hot water less than 110° F; dangerous porches; lead paint violations and heating system failures. Landlords will also be mailed a copy for informational purposes.

Any tenant who receives a rent increase due to the GA may file the Affidavit with the Board alleging that one or more of these conditions exists in the unit or building and were not caused by the tenant. In most cases, the rent increase will not be collectible until all outstanding conditions have been corrected. A tenant may be obligated to pay the increase if it is determined that he or she caused the condition or has denied access for correction. The Board encourages all tenants and

landlords to contact each other concerning the existence of any housing code violations.

The Board will not consider Affidavits filed with the Rent Control Board after 18 days from the date of Notice of General Adjustment. Within seven days of receiving a properly filed Affidavit, the Board will mail the landlord a copy of the form and an Affidavit of Compliance. The landlord will then have forty-five days (one additional sixty day extension allowed) to inspect the unit, repair the existing conditions, attempt to verify the corrections by obtaining the signature of the tenant who originally signed the Affidavit of Conditions, and return the form. If the tenant voluntarily agrees that conditions have been corrected, then the Board will notify all parties of the new rent and effective date. If the landlord returns the form without the tenant's signature, or the tenant notifies the Board within ten days of signing the Affidavit of Compliance that his or her signature was not voluntary, then the Board will immediately inspect for disputed conditions or take other appropriate action, at which time all parties will receive further information.

Decreases in the legal maximum rents may be implemented as soon as July 1, 1985. Increases in the legal maximum rents may be implemented on August 1, 1985 at the earliest (due to the

requirement of state law that landlords must give at least one-month's notice of changes in the terms of a tenancy). In addition to the normal public assistance provided free of charge by phone or in person each afternoon and Wednesday evenings, staff members will be available all day in a special General Adjustment room to assist the public throughout the next month.

In conjunction with the mailing of the General Adjustment notice, all owners of controlled rental property of 10 units or less will receive a notice of a two-part training program specially designed to assist small landlords in better utilizing the services of the Rent Control Board (see attached flyer). The training sessions are scheduled for Thursday evening, June 20 and Thursday evening, July 11 at the Board's offices. Topics to be covered include the General Adjustment, individual petitions for adjustment, and evictions. The sessions are open to all interested members of the public.

The Board will be making several other administrative changes as a by-product of the General Adjustment process. First, the Board's database and computer printouts for each controlled rental property have been expanded to provide more information to the public. Second, the Board in concert with the Revaluation Office is working to make our respective databases compatible to streamline the future exchange of informa-

tion. Finally, the Board has computerized each capital improvement currently built into the rent structure, which will be supplemented by future capital improvements allowed. The computer in turn has been programmed to remove capital improvements whose useful lives have expired from the rent structure on an annual basis.

I would be happy to supply additional information concerning the GA upon request.

Do you have QUESTIONS about  
Rent Control issues?  
(If you do you are not alone!)

Then Come To The  
Rent Control  
TRAINING

WORKSHOP \*

June 20, 1985 Thursday

6-9 P.M.

639 Mass. Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02139

(in the Tad Building,  
Central Square)

2nd floor--  
main hearing room

498-9077

\* \* \* Specially oriented to the  
small landlord and  
his/her special concerns

(You do not need to be  
registered to attend.)

Bring a friend.

Please respond with the form  
inside if you plan to attend.  
Workshop and materials provided  
free of charge.  
Refreshments provided.

# HOW TO USE The RENT CONTROL SYSTEM



CAMBRIDGE RENT CONTROL BOARD

Invites You To An

EVENING WORKSHOP

For Owners of Small Buildings

1-10 Units

All Interested Members  
of The Public Are Invited To  
Attend

Cambridge Rent Control Board  
639 Mass. Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Refreshments will be served. Guests welcome. Handicapped accessible.

Please return questionnaires to: Cambridge Rent Control, 639 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139. Attention: Zelia Kelleher, by June 14, 1985.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_  
Your home address \_\_\_\_\_  
Your phone number during the day \_\_\_\_\_

Will you need a translator or  
sign language interpreter?

Sign lang. interp. \_\_\_\_\_  
Portuguese \_\_\_\_\_  
Spanish \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (which) \_\_\_\_\_

on Thursday, June 20, 1985 7 - 9 P.M.  
at the Rent Control offices.

I plan to attend the Introductory (and Eviction) Workshop

PLEASE TEAR OFF AND RETURN THIS PART. KEEP THE OTHER PORTION (with our address) FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Rent Control has been in effect in Cambridge for 15 years, but many people still do not know how to use the system. Many landlords do not even know if (and when) they are under Rent Control.

-Do you know if you are subject to Rent Control--or if you could be in the future?

-Do you know if you should register with Rent Control? Do you know how?

-Do you know how Rent Control defines an Owner?

-Do you know how much rent you can legally charge your tenants? -and how to raise the rents?

-Do you know how to apply for a rent increase because of increased operating expenses or capital improvements?

-Do you know what to do about tenants who do not pay their rent?

-Do you know under what circumstances you can evict tenants?

-Do you know which improvements and repairs you can legally do on your property?

- and what you cannot do?  
- and what you must do?

-Do you know what services you must provide?

-DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO ABOUT THESE AND SIMILAR QUESTIONS?

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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FIRST SESSION: June 20, 1985, Thursday  
7 - 9 P.M.

1. Introduction to Rent Control
2. General Adjustment
3. Evictions
  - a. Non-payment
  - b. Other
4. Questions and Answers

## SECOND SESSION:

July 11, 1985, Thursday  
7 - 9 P.M.

### The Rent Adjustment Process

1. Individual Rent Adjustments
  - a. Capital Improvements Regulations 75 and 76
  - b. Operating Expenses
  - c. Other

### 2. General Adjustment

Written materials will be distributed free of charge.



## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139  
Tel. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
ROBERT W. HEALY  
City Manager

May 20, 1985

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I transmit herewith a memorandum from Roger Mervis,  
Director of Rent Control, relative to the City-wide general  
adjustment of rents.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/b

5-415

Re: enclosed memo from the Rent Control Board  
relative to a City-wide general adjustment of  
rents.

In City Council,

May 20, 1985

5/20/85 - PLACED ON FILE. COPY TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON RENT CONTROL

*copy sent to Councilor David Sullivan, Chairman,  
Committee on Rent Control in his next Council  
package of Friday, May 31st 85 ml*