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Who's who? New report finds rental owners don't register

By [REW Staff](#)

10:55 am, January 23, 2013

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Two-thirds of New York City residents live in homes that are owned and maintained by others. Yet the city's system for tracking who owns those rental properties — a crucial resource in times of crisis, like Hurricane Sandy— is falling short.

A new report by NYU's Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy finds that the vast majority of landlords required to register with the city fail to do so.

Using city data, the report finds that only 23 percent of rental properties are registered with the city, and only 61 percent of NYC's renters live in buildings with current registrations.

The city's Property Registration Unit, part of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, developed its rental registration system to keep track of who owns rental buildings across the city. Owners of rental properties are required to register to allow the city to quickly reach landlords in the event of emergency conditions in their buildings.

"With over two-thirds of all New York residents living in rental housing, ensuring reliable communication with landlords during emergencies could be critical to effective emergency response," said Furman Center Director Vicki Been.



VICKI BEEN

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The report shows that noncompliance is much more common among smaller buildings with four units or fewer, which comprise 75 percent of city properties required to register. Among one- and two-unit buildings required to register, only 2.1 percent are compliant. Large buildings, by contrast, show much higher rates of registration; 85 percent of buildings with over 50 units are in compliance with the city ordinance.

The report outlines several strategies to increase registration rates, including improved education and outreach, requiring landlords to be in compliance with the ordinance for some period of time before they can evict a tenant, and extending the penalty to prohibit all evictions, not just nonpayment evictions.

"The low compliance rates among owners of small buildings reveal that the city must increase outreach and education about the importance of this ordinance in order for it to be a fully effective resource," said Been.

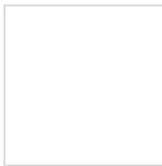


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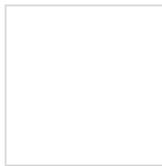
Dan Margulies, executive director of the Association of Builders & Owners of Greater New York (ABO) said he wasn't surprised by the findings.

"Larger buildings have more professional managers that register properly," said Margulies. "I suspect the larger buildings that aren't registered in any given year are owned or managed by individuals that don't have other buildings. Real estate in New York is still often a small family business that can't keep up with the paperwork."

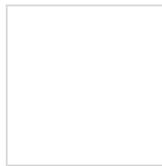
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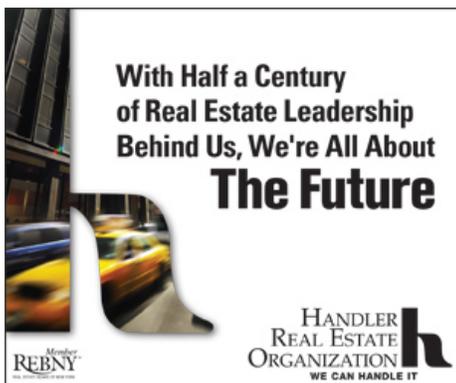
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