

Census 2020 – What Apartment Managers Need to Know

2020 is a U.S. Census year. Landlords and property managers in multifamily buildings **must allow access for census workers** to buzz or knock on front doors of specific tenants who have not responded to the census mailing. The census worker may have to return several times to catch the person at home. They must be allowed repeated visits, but their requests for access must be reasonable.

If the census worker is unable to contact the tenant after repeated attempts, **the landlord or property manager may be asked to provide demographic information about that unit.**

While there will be several parts to the 2020 census, only the 2020 Census and American Community Survey will be mandatory. You do not have to allow access for other **All data collection for Census 2020 will stop after September 30**; however, there is a chance the deadline will be extended through October 31.

Here are some tips to help you confirm that a census worker is legitimate:

1. Before you permit entry, request ID. Workers will be issued a government identification. The ID will have a photo, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. You should cross check with government ID with a personal photo ID, such as a driver's license;
2. You may call the National Processing Center at 1-800-923-8282. *This is the only number that may be called to verify the identity of a census worker, so do not accept any other number from the worker*;
3. Request proof that they are carrying a confidentiality statement with them – they are required to read it to each person they interview;
4. Census workers are required to wear masks and have other proper PPE as precaution to spreading COVID-19;
5. They may carry a black bag with "U.S. Census Bureau" printed on it;
6. Census workers will not request entry to a unit;
7. Census workers will not request personal information or SSNs, but they may ask for general income data;

If a census worker cannot locate the tenant after multiple attempts, they can – and in fact are required to – contact the landlord or manager of the rental property to obtain the requested information about the tenant.

Although usually you would not be allowed to provide personal information about a tenant to a third party, providing a census enumerator with the answers to the census questionnaire regarding your tenants is an exception. The Department of Commerce has clearly stated that **landlords and property managers will not be in violation of any privacy laws if they provide the requested information** about their tenants to the census taker. In fact, if a landlord refuses to provide the census worker with the requested information about the tenants, the manager or landlord may be fined up to \$500. The applicable law is Title 13 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Chapter 7, Subchapter II, Sections 221 and 223.

The first question that the enumerator should ask is whether the apartment unit was occupied on April 1, 2020. If the unit was **not** occupied on April 1, 2020, there should be no further questions. Assuming the unit was occupied on April 1, 2020, you should **provide the census worker with answers to as many of the census questions as possible**. Two of the questions will ask about an individual's race, and the enumerators will be aware that you may not know this information. If you answer questions from a census worker regarding any of your tenants, you should let the tenant know about the conversation as soon as possible.

Questions or concerns? Reach out to Contra Costa County Census Outreach Coordinator Matt Lardner at info@cocensus.org or 925-812-6269