

Vacant Building Registry

Effective July 1, 2000 vacant buildings are required to be registered with the City of Albany.

Owners must supply certain information to the Division of Buildings & Regulatory Compliance and must secure and maintain their vacant building in accordance with Article XI of Chapter 133 of the City Code. A full text version of Article XI and Article XIA are available online at www.albanyny.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What qualifies as a "Vacant Building" that must be registered?

A: Any building in which no occupant lawfully resides or no tenant is in lawful possession, or any building otherwise not being used for any lawful occupancy.

Q: When must a building be registered?

A: A building must be immediately be registered vacant with the Department of Buildings & Regulatory Compliance after becoming vacant or after the purchase of a vacant building. The building must be re-registered each year that it remains vacant, and contact information must be updated as soon as a change occurs.

Q: How do I register my vacant building?

A: Owners may obtain a Vacant Building Registration Form online or in the Department of Buildings & Regulatory Compliance office. Upon request, the Department may also provide you a form by mail, by email or by fax. The form must be filled out completely and submitted along with color photos of the building, a copy of the driver's license(s) of the owner(s) and agent(s), the appropriate fee, the required bond, and any other necessary attachments as indicated on the form. Though the Department's registration form asks for all the information required by Albany City Code § 133-78.3 it is worth your while to refer to the language of that code as you begin putting your registration form together. You may register your building through the mail; however, owners who do not reside in the area must designate a local agent that will be responsible for the maintenance of the property, as well as an emergency contact. .

Q: Are there any fees involved with registering my vacant building?

A: Yes. An annual registration fee must be paid to the City of Albany. This fee must be submitted to the Department of Buildings & Regulatory Compliance along with a completed registration form. Registration fees are set out in Albany City Code §133-78.3 and are based on type of property along with the number of years the building has been vacant building. Fees are as follows:

Before & after...



(338 Madison Avenue, 2006 & 2012)

City of Albany
Department of Building & Regulatory Compliance
200 Henry Johnson Blvd. • Suite 1 • Albany, NY 12207
(518) 434-5995



Revised 01/2021

	Residential 1 to 3 Units	Residential 4 to 6 Units Mixed Commercial With 2 to 3 Residential Units	Residential 7 or more units Mixed Commercial with 4 or more Residential Units	Non-Residential Buildings (The greater of)
1 st Year	\$250	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,000 or \$0.05 per square foot
2 nd Year	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000 or \$0.10 per square foot
3 rd Year	\$750	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$3,000 or \$0.15 per square foot
Each year after	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$4,000 or \$0.20 per square foot

Q: Are there any exceptions to registration fee requirements?

A: Yes. You must file an Application for Vacant Building Registry Fee Exemption form which outlines the reason for exemption, examples are no code violations; vacant due to fire, new owner who has obtained building permits.

Q: Are there any penalties if I do not register my vacant building?

A: Yes. Should you fail to register your vacant building, the Department shall seek all remedies available in law an equity in a court of proper jurisdiction, and you may be subject to a penalty of up to \$1,000 per day in accordance with Albany City Code § 133-80.

Q: I see red placards on vacant buildings, what does this mean?

A: The Albany Fire Department, in accordance with NYS Fire Code § 311.5 and the Department of Buildings & Regulatory Compliance, is placarding vacant buildings. These placards are meant to inform first responders of what they are facing when responding to emergencies at vacant buildings by alerting them to potential structural and other hazards that may exist in the building.

The markings on the placard indicate the following:



This symbol means that the structure has normal structural conditions at the time of placarding.



This symbol means that structural or interior hazards exist and interior fire-fighting or rescue operations should be conducted with extreme caution.



This symbol means that structural or interior hazards exist to a degree that consideration should be given to limit firefighting to exterior operations only, with entry only occurring for known life hazards.

These placards provide first responders with the critical information they need to respond safely and effectively to emergencies at vacant buildings which present a host of unique problems and difficulties for emergency personnel. The process of placarding also helps the City monitor vacant buildings for compliance with the law.