City of Philadelphia

(Bill No. 250980-A)

AN ORDINANCE

Amending Chapter 9-3900 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Property Licenses and Owner Accountability," by requiring non-resident landlords to provide verifiable contact information and a designated local contact and establishing penalties for non-compliance, all under certain terms and conditions.

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia recognizes that non-resident property ownership has contributed to neighborhood deterioration, unsafe living conditions, and barriers to enforcement of property maintenance and housing laws; and

WHEREAS, Ensuring that landlords and property owners can be promptly contacted by tenants and City officials is essential to preserving public safety, property maintenance, and accountability; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of Council to strengthen transparency and communication between landlords, tenants, and the City by requiring verifiable contact and registration information for each property licensed in Philadelphia; now, therefore,

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Title 9 of The Philadelphia Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

TITLE 9. REGULATION OF BUSINESSES, TRADES AND PROFESSIONS

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CHAPTER 9-3900. PROPERTY LICENSES AND OWNER ACCOUNTABILITY

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§ 9-3901. General Provisions

(5) Definitions. The following terms shall have the following meanings in this Chapter.

(f.1) Local Agent. A natural person over the age of eighteen (18) years who maintains a Physical Address within the City of Philadelphia, is designated by the owner to receive legal notices, service of process, emergency communications, and other correspondence on behalf of the owner, and to coordinate compliance with applicable

property maintenance, licensing, and housing laws, and has agreed to carry out the responsibilities set forth in this Chapter. An owner who is a natural person and whose primary residence is located within Philadelphia County may designate themselves as the Local Agent for purposes of this Chapter.

(g.1) Non-Resident Landlord. Any individual, corporation, partnership, or entity that does not reside in or maintain a place of business in the City of Philadelphia for which a license is required under this Chapter, and that owns or controls property subject to licensing or inspection by the City of Philadelphia.

(m.1) Physical Address. A street address identifying a physical location within the United States that is capable of receiving service and verification by the Department of Licenses and Inspections. A Physical Address shall not include a post office box, mail drop, or Virtual Address.

(q) Virtual Address. An address that does not correspond to a physical location where an individual or entity is regularly present, including but not limited to virtual offices, shared workspaces without permanent occupancy, mail forwarding services, or addresses used solely for mailing, registration, or incorporation purposes.

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§ 9-3902. Rental Licenses

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(c) License Application and Renewal Requirements.

(.1) All applicants for any rental license, vacant property license, or commercial activity license related to property ownership shall provide a Physical Address for the service of notices, correspondence, and enforcement actions.

(.2) The use of a post office box, mail drop, Virtual Address¸ or non-verifiable address is prohibited.

(.3) The Department of Licenses and Inspections shall verify the accuracy of addresses provided under this Section in the regular course of its licensing, renewal, and enforcement activities.

(.4) Each property owner shall provide accurate and verifiable address information for each active license they hold within the City of Philadelphia.

(.5) If the property owner is a Non-Resident Landlord, such owner must also designate a Local Agent.

(.6) The owner is responsible for maintaining current contact information with the Department.

(.7) Where a Local Agent is required under this Chapter, the property owner shall provide a valid email address for the designated Local Agent for purposes of notices, correspondence, enforcement actions, and emergency communications. The Local Agent shall be responsible for ensuring that such email address is regularly monitored, and that the Department has a current and accurate email address.

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§ 9-3902.1. Non-Resident Landlord Registration Requirement.

(1) Registration. Each Non-Resident Landlord shall submit to the Department of Licenses and Inspections, under oath and on forms provided by the Department, the following information for each property subject to licensure:

(a) The full name, residence address, and telephone number of the property owner, which shall be accessible to the Department of Licenses and Inspections for enforcement, inspection, and public safety purposes; and

(b) The full name, Physical Address, telephone number, and email address of the designated Local Agent; and

(c) If different from the telephone numbers previously provided under this Section, the owner shall provide a telephone number that may be used for emergency communications related to the property.

(d) Local Agent registration information shall be used by the Department solely for purposes of enforcement, inspection, public safety response, and compliance with this Chapter. Where the Department has issued a notice of unsafe or hazardous conditions that remains unremedied after the time provided in the notice, the Department may provide a tenant of the affected property with the name and email address of the designated Local Agent, solely for purposes of facilitating notice and remediation.

(2) Duty to Provide Accurate and Current Information. Failure of a Non-Resident Landlord to provide and maintain accurate information as required herein shall constitute a

violation of this Section; provided, however, that no penalty shall be imposed unless the owner has failed to cure the violation within thirty (30) days after written notice from the Department of Licenses and Inspections. A violation shall be deemed cured when the owner submits accurate and verifiable contact information for the owner, and where required, the Local Agent, including the required Physical Address, telephone number, and email address, in compliance with this Section. Any violation subject to this subsection shall be punishable by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars ($500).

(3) Coordination. The Department shall ensure that the owner and Local Agent registration information aligns with and updates any property license applications and renewals under § 9-3902.

(4) Administration and Storage of Information. The Department of Licenses and Inspections shall collect and store information submitted pursuant to this Section either as part of the property license application or renewal process through the Department's existing electronic licensing system, including Eclipse, or within a Department-maintained database used for licensing and enforcement purposes.

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§ 9-3902.2 Enforcement and Penalties.

(1) No penalty shall be imposed unless the owner has failed to cure the violation within thirty (30) days after written notice from the Department. A violation shall be considered cured when the owner provides accurate and verifiable contact information for the owner and, where required, the Local Agent, in compliance with § 9-3902(c) and § 9-3902.1. Failure to comply with the requirements of § 9-3902(c) and § 9-3902.1 after expiration of a thirty (30) day cure period shall constitute grounds for enforcement action by the Department, including the denial, suspension, or revocation of any related rental or business license, as authorized by law.

(2) After the expiration of the thirty (30) day cure period following written notice by the Department, any failure to provide accurate and verifiable owner or Local Agent contact information required under § 9-3902(c) and § 9-3902.1 shall constitute a violation punishable by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars ($500).

(3) The Department may deny, revoke, or suspend any related business or rental license until compliance is verified, as authorized by law.

(4) Tenant Remedy. If the Department has issued a notice of unsafe or hazardous conditions, the deadline to remedy such conditions has passed, and the thirty (30) day

cure period to remedy violations of § 9-3902(c) and § 9-3902.1 has expired, tenants have the following rights and remedies for the duration of the period of non-compliance. The period of non-compliance ends only when the owner has provided accurate and verifiable contact information

a. *A defense in any action to recover rent, possession, or to evict a tenant from a property,*

b. *The right to withhold rent, late fees, or other charges.*

c. *Nothing in this Section prevents the landlord from regaining compliance and thereafter enforcing their rights prospectively.*

d. *Nothing in this Section shall limit the City's independent authority to enforce this Chapter or to impose fines, penalties, or license suspensions as otherwise provided.*

SECTION 2. This Ordinance shall become effective ninety (90) days after enactment.

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Bill, Passed by the City Council on March 26, 2026. The Bill was Signed by the Mayor on April 7, 2026.



Elizabeth McCollum
Chief Clerk of the City Council