

Help Us Keep DC Residents Safe

Rooming Houses that don't have licenses are *not* safe.

What is a rooming house?

A rooming house is a house that provides sleeping accommodations for a month or more to 3 people or more who are not immediate family.

Why does it matter if a rooming house is illegal?

It probably has not been inspected to make sure it meets city building, plumbing and electrical safety standards. That means it may not have protections, like smoke detectors, that could save your life.

I rent a couple of rooms to students or friends. Is this an illegal rooming house?

Probably not. But you still must have a Basic Business License for housing. Please contact our Business Services Division at 442- 4400 or by e-mail at bbl.infocenter@dc.gov to get rental accommodations licensing information.

There is a halfway house in my neighborhood...is that an illegal rooming house?

Generally no. Halfway houses and other community based residential facilities (CBRFs) are regulated by the agencies that require their services. For more information about CBRFs or concerns or complaints, please contact the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders at 727-8001.

I am renting a room in a house with some other people. What should I do?

If the property is a two-family flat or has sleeping accommodations for 3 or more, call 442-4400 to find out if it has a Certificate of Occupancy and a Basic Business License (BBL). That's how you will know that the building meets building, electrical, plumbing, and zoning codes. If there is no Certificate of Occupancy or BBL, you can report the property at the same number.

How can I report an illegal rooming house in my neighborhood?

Call 442-4400 or e-mail dcra@dc.gov. Give as much information as you can. DCRA will investigate and take enforcement action.

To report an Illegal Rooming House call 442-4400

