Owning, letting and selling

For owners and landlords · about 3 minutes · reviewed August 21, 2026

Your own building's public record, read the way a buyer's agent will read it - and the handful of things worth settling before it is read for you.

> **From Scan the Block**
> Every public record on one San Francisco address, in a single report: the Assessor's file, permits and violations, zoning, hazards and the published earthquake maps, rent-control indication, and ten years of the surrounding blocks - each count compared with an average San Francisco area of the same size, and none of it scored. scantheblock.com

READ YOUR OWN BUILDING THE WAY A BUYER'S AGENT WILL

Everything in this report about your property is already public. The only question is whether you have read it before the other side does. Running your own address is the cheapest hour of preparation available, and it is free to re-open forever.

THE THINGS A BUYER'S AGENT LOOKS FOR FIRST

1. Open permits. Work filed and never recorded as finalled. It is the first thing that turns up and the most common cause of a late renegotiation. Often the work finished and the paperwork did not - which is fixable, but not in the week before close.
2. Soft-story compliance. If the building is in the program and reads Non-Compliant, expect it to be priced in. The status the city publishes is the status a buyer will quote at you.
3. Complaints and violations on the parcel, and whether any are open.
4. The permit history against the marketing. If the listing describes work the permit record does not, somebody will ask. Better it is you who noticed.

WHAT A SALE TRIGGERS

San Francisco attaches point-of-sale requirements to a residential transfer, and the report names the ones that reach your property and who settles each.

- Report of Residential Building Record (3R) - ordered from the Department of Building Inspection. The report covers much of what a 3R will say, from the same block and lot, but it does not replace it. Order it anyway; know the contents now.
- Energy and water conservation compliance - verification that the required measures are in place.
- Tenant and Rent Board disclosures, where the building is covered.
- The Natural Hazard Disclosure - a statutory document you must provide. The report names several of the same zones, and is not that document.

LETTING A BUILDING

The rent you can charge, and the rent you can raise

Whether price control applies turns on the year built and the 13 June 1979 line, with Costa-Hawkins exemptions for single-family homes and condominiums. The report gives the year built and says whether control is likely and why. The Rent Board decides; this tells you which conversation you are having.

What the annual report looks like from outside

Rents on covered units are reported to the Rent Board and published in bands. Your block's median band appears in every report anyone runs on a nearby address - which is worth knowing when you are setting one.

Your building's complaint record is public

Complaints and notices of violation are on the parcel and stay there. A prospective tenant can read them, and increasingly does.

THE ASSESSMENT, AND WHAT A SALE DOES TO IT

Under Proposition 13 your assessment is anchored to the last transfer and rises by at most about two per cent a year. The report shows the anchor and how long it has held.

The consequence for a seller is indirect but real: a buyer's carrying cost is based on their purchase price, not your assessment, and a sophisticated buyer models that. A long anchor on a listing sheet's tax line is a figure that will not survive the sale, and it is better addressed than discovered.

IF YOU OWN MORE THAN ONE

Run them all. Label each report with the building it belongs to - the labels are free text and searchable - and the history becomes a portfolio record you can export as CSV or JSON whenever you want it. On the plans that include it, machine access lets Claude run the same reports under the same allowance, which suits a periodic sweep across a portfolio.

Better still, watch them. Every plan can watch buildings - from the report itself, or under History to Buildings - and a Monday email says what was filed on or near each one that week: permits, complaints, violations on the parcel, eviction notices within 500 feet. A quiet week sends nothing, so the email only ever arrives with something in it.

> **Note**
> This report describes a place and never a person, and is not a consumer report. It may not be used to screen a tenant or make a decision about an individual - that is not a policy we chose, it is the line that keeps a property record from becoming something else.

READ THE RECORD ON AN ACTUAL ADDRESS

Everything described in this guide comes out of one report on one San Francisco address. Type an address at scantheblock.com and it takes a few seconds; re-opening a report you have already run is free, always. Reports are a web page and a PDF you can share, and every figure carries the caveat that qualifies it.

Run a report **scantheblock.com**

Every guide, free to read https://scantheblock.com/guides

The 41 neighborhoods, a decade each	https://scantheblock.com/sf
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Questions, or a correction	hello@scantheblock.com

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Last reviewed August 21, 2026. Every rule described here is San Francisco's, not ours, and the city changes them - where a date or a threshold matters to a deal, confirm it against the city. This is general information about public records and not legal, tax or investment advice.