

Who to actually call in San Francisco

For everyone · about 5 minutes · reviewed August 21, 2026

This report is a record. These are the people who decide - the Rent Board, DBI, the Assessor, and the organizations that help for free.

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

A property report tells you what the record says. It cannot tell you what you are entitled to, settle a dispute, or issue a document. These are the bodies that can - checked, not remembered, and dated at the foot of this page because contact details move.

■ IF YOU RENT

San Francisco Rent Board

www.sf.gov/departments/rent-board 415-252-4600 · 25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 700 Administers the rent-stabilization and just-cause eviction ordinance, receives eviction filings, and gives free counseling on rent increases, evictions and buyouts. Phone counseling weekday mornings and afternoons. This is the first call for almost any rent question.

Eviction Defense Collaborative

evictiondefense.org 415-947-0797 · 976 Mission Street If you have been served with an unlawful detainer, this is where to go. Free eviction representation, rental assistance, and drop-in hours four days a week.

San Francisco Tenants Union

www.sftu.org 415-282-6622 · 558 Capp Street Volunteer-run membership organization with drop-in counseling on rent control, evictions, harassment and repairs.

Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco

www.hrcsf.org 415-703-8644 · 11 Grove Street Counseling clinics and tenant organizing, running since 1979. Clinic hours move, so check the site before traveling.

Tenderloin Housing Clinic

www.thclinic.org 415-885-3286 · 126 Hyde Street Free landlord-tenant legal representation for low-income tenants, plus supportive housing.

Asian Law Caucus

www.asianlawcaucus.org 415-896-1701 · 55 Columbus Avenue Civil rights legal organization advising on landlord-tenant and eviction matters, with a focus on immigrant communities.

Open Door Legal

opendoorlegal.org Neighborhood offices across the city Free civil legal services including eviction defense

and habitability. Check the site for the office nearest you.

Note

Causa Justa :: Just Cause closed at the end of 2024. It is still listed on a great many San Francisco tenant-resource pages, which is worth knowing before you spend an afternoon trying to reach it.

■ **IF YOU ARE BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST**

SF Human Rights Commission

www.sf.gov/departments/human-rights-commission 415-252-2500 • 25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 800 Investigates and mediates housing discrimination complaints within San Francisco. Call to arrange an intake appointment.

Beyond the city: the California Civil Rights Department on 800-884-1684, and HUD Fair Housing on 800-347-3739.

■ **IF YOU NEED A LAWYER**

Bay Area Legal Aid

baylegal.org Legal advice line 800-551-5554 • SF office 415-982-1300 1800 Market Street, 3rd Floor Free civil legal help for low-income residents, including housing and eviction.

Bar Association of San Francisco - Lawyer Referral

www.sfbar.org/Iris 415-989-1616 • 301 Battery Street, 3rd Floor Refers you to vetted private attorneys, including landlord-tenant and eviction defense, with reduced-cost services for those who qualify.

■ **IF YOU ARE BUYING, SELLING OR BUILDING**

Department of Building Inspection

www.sf.gov/departments/departments-building-inspection 628-652-3200 • 49 South Van Ness Avenue Permits, inspections, and the building and housing codes. Also where an open permit gets closed out.

Order a 3R - Report of Residential Building Record

www.sf.gov/request3r 628-652-3420 • DBI Records, 49 South Van Ness, Suite 400 \$379 per residential building, or \$388.48 paying by card online. Issued in seven to ten business days. Order it for any residential sale.

Note

Many sites still quote \$214 for a 3R. That figure is out of date; DBI's own page says \$379. If a checklist you have been handed says otherwise, it was written a while ago.

San Francisco Permit Center

www.sf.gov/location--san-francisco-permit-center 628-652-4900 • 49 South Van Ness Avenue, 2nd floor One counter for about two dozen permitting services from Planning, DBI, Public Health and Public Works. Uses a virtual queue, so join it before you arrive.

Planning Department

sfplanning.org 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400 Zoning and land use, environmental and design review, historic preservation, short-term rentals. Use the contact page on the site - the department does not

publish a single public number.

Office of the Assessor-Recorder

www.sf.gov/departments/assessor-recorder 628-652-8100 • City Hall, Room 190 Assesses every taxable property, administers Proposition 13 base-year values and exclusions, records deeds, and collects the transfer tax. The place to ask why an assessment is what it is.

Check an agent or broker's license

www2.dre.ca.gov/PublicASP/pplinfo.asp California Department of Real Estate • 877-373-4542 Search by name, company or license number. Takes about ten seconds and is worth doing.

■ IF YOUR QUESTION IS ABOUT EARTHQUAKES

Soft-story retrofit program

www.sf.gov/check-earthquake-safety-rules 628-652-3706 • softstory@sfgov.org DBI's mandatory retrofit program: whether a building is in it, its tier, and its compliance status.

EQ Zapp - California earthquake hazard zones

www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geohazards/eq-zapp California Geological Survey The state's own map of fault-rupture, liquefaction and seismic-landslide zones - the zones that trigger hazard disclosure in a sale. It also shows where the state has not yet evaluated.

Note

There is no unreinforced masonry hotline. San Francisco's UMB ordinance deadlines passed decades ago and DBI publishes no current contact for it, which is why this report says the UMB list is not available as data rather than implying it covers it. For a specific brick building, ask DBI's records division. A separate concrete building screening program was added in April 2025.

■ IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR THE RECORDS YOURSELF

SF Property Information Map

sfplanninggis.org/pim No counter, no charge The city's own parcel lookup: zoning, height, permit and planning history, complaints, historic status and hazard zones for one address. The best free starting point, and the tool most people do not know exists.

DataSF - the open data portal

support@datasf.org Where nearly everything in a Scan the Block report comes from. Every dataset is public, downloadable and has an API. We compile and compare it; we do not produce it.

■ IF YOU NEED HELP AFFORDING IT

Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development

www.sf.gov/departments/mayors-office-housing-and-community-development 415-701-5500 • 1 South Van Ness Avenue, 5th floor Below Market Rate ownership and rental units, inclusionary housing, downpayment assistance and community development grants.

Downpayment Assistance Loan Program (DALP)

www.sf.gov/apply-downpayment-loan-buy-market-rate-home 415-202-5464 • info@homesanfrancisco.org A silent second loan of up to \$500,000 toward a market-rate San Francisco home for first-time buyers, repaid as a share of appreciation. It runs in periodic lottery rounds rather than

continuously - check the page for the current one and sign up for alerts.

■ WHAT NONE OF THESE ARE

Not us. Scan the Block compiles public records and compares them; every body above is the one that actually decides the thing you are asking about. Bring the report - a building's permit, complaint and filing history is often exactly the evidence that is tedious to assemble - and get the answer from the people whose job it is.

■ 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

Every guide, free to read

The 41 neighborhoods, a decade each

Plans

Questions, or a correction

scantheblock.com

<https://scantheblock.com/guides>

<https://scantheblock.com/sf>

<https://scantheblock.com/#plans>

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.

Scan the Block compiles and compares public records; it does not produce, review or endorse them. Reports describe a place and never a person, are not a consumer report and may not be used to screen tenants, and are not a valuation or a statutory hazard disclosure. Read this guide online at <https://scantheblock.com/guides/resources>