
LANDLORD RESOURCE GUIDE

7 TIPS FOR LANDLORDS

Use these tips to help successfully manage your rental properties

1. Screen Tenants

Always check references, background and credit history before renting to anyone.

2. Do not discriminate.

Follow the Fair Housing Administration Act when you screen prospective tenants. Give everyone an equal chance to rent your property, regardless of their race, religion, or beliefs.

3. Put everything in writing.

Always use a written lease or month-to-month rental agreement to document important aspects of your rental agreement with the tenant.

Review the agreement with the tenant and have each tenant initial any important detail of the lease

4. Conduct a move-in inspection with tenant.

Conduct a walk-through with the tenant noting any damage or cosmetic problems and making sure everything is functioning properly upon move-in.

5. Make Repairs Quickly.

Keep on top of repairs reported by tenants and establish a standard maintenance cycle to keep rental units in good condition.

6. Provide notice before entering a unit.

Notify your tenant at least 24 hours before you plan to enter their rental unit.

7. Keep lines of communication open

Provide a business number or an email address where the tenant can reach you. This allows the tenant to know how to get in touch with their landlord and helps them report issues in a timely manner. Using email allows the landlord to also keep a written record of communication between themselves and the tenant.

LEASE vs RENTAL AGREEMENT

Renting your property without a clear rental agreement or lease is often opening yourself up for problems. The landlord-tenant relationship is complicated today, with laws and regulations governing all aspects of renting. All of the details of your rental agreement should be recorded in a written lease or at least a month-to-month rental agreement

A **rental agreement** establishes a tenancy for a short period of time, typically at least one month. Rental agreements usually renew automatically at the end of each 30-day period unless either party gives the other “proper notice,” as defined by the terms of the agreement and by local laws (typically 30 days). You may increase the rent, change other terms of the tenancy, or terminate the lease on relatively short notice (usually 30 days)

A **lease** obligates both you and the tenant for a set period of time, typically 12 months. Through a lease, the landlord and tenant mutually agree to fixed terms and conditions, such as the rent, rules regarding pets, duration of the agreement, etc. Neither party can change the agreement without written consent from the other. At the end of the lease term, you can either decline to renew it or negotiate to sign a new lease or rental agreement.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A LEASE or RENTAL AGREEMENT

Rental Unit Information

1. Address of the rental unit.
2. The landlords name and address
3. The names of all tenants on the lease.

Lease details

1. Identify the term of the lease using the exact date (mm/dd/yyyy) of when the lease begins and ends.
2. Identify the maximum number of occupants and if all tenants need to be listed on the lease.
3. Under what conditions can the tenant break the lease. If there are fees identify what the fees are.
4. If the tenant is allowed to sublease the rental unit.
5. If renter's insurance is required.
6. What will happen when the term of the lease is up. Will it go month to month?
7. Eviction procedures.
8. Identify all restrictions on disruptive and illegal behavior.
9. How the lease becomes binding, including a place for the signature and date of the landlord and all tenants listed on the lease.
 - For example: By signing this Lease agreement, the Tenant acknowledges that they have read, understood and agree to comply with all rules, terms and conditions in this Lease.

Rent

1. The rent amount to be paid, and where the rent should be sent
2. What day the rent is due. Identify if there will be a grace period.
3. The penalty for late rent.

Security Deposit

1. The amount of the security deposit, and when it is due.
2. Identify when the tenant can expect to have their security deposit returned.
3. The name and address of the financial institution holding the security deposit

Utilities

1. Are utilities are included in the rent? If yes identify which utilities will be provided by the landlord and which utilities the tenant will be responsible for.
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Maintenance

1. How and who should be contacted in case of an emergency or to request maintenance.
2. How quickly the landlord or manager respond if something breaks.
3. What items the tenant will be responsible for fixing?
4. Identify the grounds for which the landlord may enter a rental unit.
5. Identify the number of hours written notice that will be provided before entering a rental unit.
6. Identify who is responsible for mowing the grass, weeding, trimming and removing snow and ice?
7. Identify who is responsible for garbage removal?

Pets

1. Identify if pets will be allowed in the rental unit, including which type of pets are acceptable.
2. Identify if there a size limit on pets.
3. Identify any fees associated with having a pet and if they are refundable.
4. Identify any required vaccinations for pets within the rental unit.
5. Identify the pets need to be registered with the town/village the rental unit is located.

Condition of the Apartment

1. If the tenant allowed to hang things on the wall.
 2. If the tenant allowed to paint the walls? If yes is there a fee.
 3. If smoking allowed within the apartment. If no, is there a designated smoking area outside of the building.
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