

Advice and Guidance for Tenants

You are renting a new apartment and are not very clear on the rules, obligations and responsibilities regarding the new environment you are moving into? No need to worry, this document provides advice and guidance to help you as a tenant get the most out of the relationship with your landlord and neighbours.

Above all, it is important to know and understand your lease agreement and be aware of your rights and responsibilities regarding your landlord and your neighbours.

Make sure you read the lease document carefully and seek legal advice if anything is unclear. To avoid any misunderstandings, you can always sit with your landlord and go through the contract.

Property

- Look after the property as best as you can and avoid causing any damage.
- Report any repairs needed or other problems in the house to the landlord.
- If you want to make improvements or changes get the landlords' approval (e.g. painting the house, installing heaters, changing the locks).
- You will be held responsible for damages to the property caused by misuse, neglect or carelessness (e.g. broken equipment).
- Take care of your own water, electricity, telephone and septic tank expenses. Make sure you pay all your bills on time. If separate meters are not available, discuss and agree with your landlord how bills are going to be divided.
- When signing the lease, you might be asked to provide proof of identity (IDs, passport, family book etc.); you are advised to keep your personal documents in your own care. A landlord has no right to hold or keep them.
- If the property you are renting is furnished, the landlord might ask you to sign a list of fixtures. This is a good way to keep track of what was in the property when you moved in and what the condition was. If you have a smartphone it's also a good idea to take photos.

Access and Privacy

- Give the landlord access to the property when necessary (e.g. for maintenance or repairs). In case the landlord needs to come to your house, they should give you notice in advance. One days' notice is a good guide.
- Be clear on the number of people who can stay in the property. Is there a maximum number? Having too many people in a property can lead to damage and the overcrowding can be bad for the health. Is it ok with the landlord if people leave temporarily and then return?
- Respect the peace, comfort and privacy of the landlord and your neighbours.

Rent

- You should pay the rent in due time (it's a good idea to ask for a receipt for each payment).
- You can decide with your landlord in what form you want to make the payment (cash, cheque or other).
- Subletting the property to others without the landlord's knowledge is generally not allowed. Check with the landlord and the terms of your lease agreement before doing this.
- You should only use the property for the purposes given in the lease agreement. If you change what you use the property for you should check whether this is ok with the landlord (e.g. If you want to start a business in the property).

Disputes

- If you face problems or disputes with your landlord, you should try to solve them and come to a satisfactory compromise. However, if talking doesn't resolve your disagreement, one option is to get help from an independent third party. They can act as an independent mediator and can work with each of you (the landlord and tenant) to help you resolve your problem and reach a compromise.
- If you have a dispute or problems it's a good idea to keep a notebook of events that have happened. Note the date and time for each issue and details of what was said or done.
- One common area of dispute is the division of water and electricity bills. Disputes generally arise when independent meters are unavailable as this can lead to arguments about how bills should be divided. It is important that landlords and tenants understand that they each have their share to pay and bills must be divided in a fair way.