Four practices to protect you while you rent:

There is no substitute for keeping thorough documentation of all significant contacts with your landlord. Keeping rent receipts, documentation of all problems, your lease, and a move-out checklist will help you to protect your rights if you have any problems with your landlord.

- Keep rent receipts.
- Keep documentation of all problems with the unit.
- Keep a copy of your lease.
- Complete a move-out checklist

Scan the QR code to find a move-out checklist anyone can use!

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Tenants' Rights & Best Practices

How to protect your rights while living in a rental property



Keep rent receipts

Q: How can I best protect my rights while renting a home?

A: Always keep copies of your rent receipts and documentation of any problems that arise while renting.

Q: Why should I keep my rent receipts?

A: Rent receipts are evidence that proves you have been paying your rent in full and on time! Ask your landlord to write you a receipt and sign it. If they won't write you a receipt, write your own & have the landlord sign it. If your landlord won't sign anything, then write your own receipt with the amount paid and the date on it. Keep copies of any checks or money orders you use to pay rent.

Document any problems with the unit

Q: Why sign a written lease?

A: It is harder to defend your rights without a written lease. A lease is the only proof of what you and your landlord agreed to. With a lease, it is easier to hold your landlord to the agreement.

Q: What are my responsibilities as a tenant?

A: Depending on the terms of your lease, major responsibilities include: pay rent on time, keep your unit clean & safe, dispose of garbage in a clean & safe way, use utilities in a responsible manner, not damage any part of the unit, clean up when you move out.

Q: What if my landlord tries to evict me?

A: Some type of notice is usually required to terminate a lease. The notice is required before a landlord can seek to evict, and then that landlord generally must bring an action in court and obtain a court order before a tenant can be evicted.

Q: How do I get my security deposit back?

A: Send your landlord a letter requesting return of the security deposit. Date and sign the letter and keep a copy for yourself. Your landlord must return your security deposit or provide an explanation of what money was taken out of it and why. Your landlord can only take money from your security deposit to pay for: late rent or damages caused by not returning the unit clean & in good repair.

Move-out checklist

Q: What is a move-out checklist?

A: A move-out checklist is a list of broken, damaged, or dirty parts of the rental unit when you move out.

Q: Why make a move-out checklist?

A: This checklist will help you avoid being charged by your landlord because you will be able to prove the condition of the home before moving.

Q: How do I complete one?

A: Make a note of everything that isn't right. Then, fix damage you caused so that your landlord can't charge you for it. Take photos or videos of anything that isn't working or is damaged to verify your checklist.

Q: What if my landlord won't sign it?

A: Sign and date it, mail a copy to your landlord and keep a copy for yourself.

Q: Is there any kind of damage that I'm not responsible for?

A: Under most leases, the tenant is not obligated to repair ordinary wear and tear, such as damage that results from ordinary use and exposure.