Housing Education Resource Center

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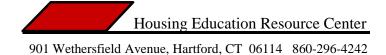
The Business Of Being A Tenant

An Easy To Use Resource Tool for Tenants in Connecticut

Apartment for Rent

Call (860) 555-1212

The Business of Being A Tenant



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Introduction

Shelter has long been recognized as a fundamental need of humanity. The Housing Education Resource Center intends this manual to provide tenants with an overview of the information and guidance needed to maintain the stability of their home.

<u>The Business of Being A Tenant</u> presents complex and particular procedures and practices involved with residential tenancy. This publication takes you step-by-step through the processes of searching for rental units, understanding the lease arrangements, maintaining the tenancy, and terminating the rental relationship, including definition of Summary Process (Eviction).

Practical discussions are offered throughout this publication. The prevalent theme being that the relationship you create with your landlord is first and foremost a contractual one. Whether the obligation is written or spoken it is binding. What is important is that there has been a meeting of the minds. Once mutual consent is established each party is responsible to uphold their commitment one to another.

Both landlords and tenants have rights and responsibilities and the means to legally enforce them. Becoming an educated consumer is always your best means of protection.

Legal procedures are complicated and can be confusing. If you become involved with court proceedings regarding your tenancy contact an attorney or legal service provider for assistance. This booklet is not intended to substitute for legal advice or actual statutes.

Only the Clerks' Offices of the Housing Sessions are authorized by Connecticut General Statute §51-52(d) to assist parties representing themselves (Pro se) in a legal action. Copies of Connecticut General Statutes are available at most public libraries.

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In the Beginning...

Apartment Inspections

One of the most significant things a tenant can do to prevent from getting into a bad rental situation is to conduct a complete inspection of the unit before renting it. Each time you enter an apartment, inspect it thoroughly. Often, the first inspection is the only one you will get. The unit condition must satisfy your standards of acceptability.

Some apartment complexes have model units. These models are professionally decorated and maintained and are often used as the manager's office. These units are <u>not</u> always an accurate reflection of the unit you might lease. Insist on viewing the actual unit you will be renting before signing a lease agreement or paying any deposit or application fees.

Failure to inspect a unit thoroughly could limit the landlord's responsibility to make cosmetic improvements. The landlord may claim the unit was offered in "as is" condition. Which may mean you were given the opportunity to inspect the unit and are accepting its current condition. Repairs that may be necessary, but are not violations of health or safety codes, may remain unresolved for the life of the lease. *Ultimately you are responsible to protect your own interests*.

Inspection Tips:

- ◆ Always inspect the unit that you will be occupying. Bring a friend along as a witness.
- Do not allow the agent/owner to rush or intimidate you while conducting your inspection.
- ◆ Ask to see the unit's Certificate of Apartment Occupancy (CAO), if applicable. Some towns, such as Hartford, require landlords of certain types of buildings to attain a Certificate of Apartment Occupancy each time a new tenant occupies a unit. The landlord is not entitled to collect rent for a unit that does not have a required CAO.
- Bring a note pad or inspection sheet to take notes on condition of each area of the unit.
- Point out problems to the agent/owner.
- ◆ Ask for the history of problem areas. How long has the problem existed? What, if any, attempts have been made to repair or remedy the condition?
- ◆ If the agent/owner does not accompany you on your inspection, provide them with a copy of your notes.

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