

Tenant Rights

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Move-In

Tenants have the right to a safe clean apartment at move-in.

Tips for move-ins:

- Document move in conditions using check lists and photos.
- Demand cleaning and repairs *in writing*.
- Document any tenant costs incurred in performing clean-up.
- In egregious situations, tenants can refuse to take occupancy.
- Tenants who find bad conditions are entitled to rent abatement

Security Deposits

By law, security deposits remain the property of tenants until a landlord can show entitlement to deduct money from the deposit. The legal standard to be applied is a comparison of the condition of the property at move-in to the condition at move-out with allowance for reasonable wear and tear.

Minneapolis ordinances limit the amount of security deposits in the University district to one month's rent

Tips for managing security deposits:

- Thoroughly document conditions at move-in with check in lists, photos, and written correspondence with the landlord.
- Do not be afraid to challenge deductions that seem wrong to you.

Maintenance

In many instances, tenants are entitled to a rent abatement (deduction) for substandard conditions. Examples: no heat in winter, flooded basement, no electricity, etc.

Abatement claims can be pursued in Conciliation Court.

Rent escrow claims (legal action to tie landlords to specific actions) can be pursued in Housing Court.

In some circumstances, tenants might pay for a repair out of pocket and deduct the cost from rent. But, if this is the action tenants take, they should put the withheld amount aside to ensure that tenants can pay full rent and avoid eviction if needed.

Tips for maintenance requests:

- Always request repairs or maintenance in writing. Email works best to document concerns. If you send a text message, follow-up with an email.
- If your landlord asks you to report issues through a portal, keep a copy of your request or follow-up with an email.
- Do not rely on phone calls or phone messages to document complaints.
- Give your landlord a deadline for response.
- Document with photos.

If a landlord does not address maintenance concerns:

- Tell the 311 operator that you need assistance from Inspection Services.
- Depending on the Issue, Inspection Services will follow-up by contacting the landlord and/or inspecting the property. Inspection Services can order repairs and set deadlines.
- If the emergency concerns a gas leak, immediately open windows and call CenterPoint Energy.
- If the emergency involves an electrical power issue, call Xcel Energy.

Leaving a Property

Tenants have a right to know when they are expected to leave a property, and MN statute requires leases to have start and end dates for tenancy printed on the front page of the lease

MN Law requires landlords to prorate (adjust) the amount of rent paid during the last month of occupancy if the lease ends on a date other than the last day of the final month.

MN Law limits the automatic renewal of leases if tenants do not communicate their notice to vacate on time, but these laws are hardly ever enforced.

Tips for moving out:

- Make sure to give the proper written notice to the landlord.
- Document conditions with photos and witnesses.

Tenant Resources

STUDENT LEGAL SERVICE

Legal advice and representation for fee paying U of MN students.
160 West Bank Skyway, 219 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-624-1001, usls@umn.edu

HOMELine

Excellent Legal Advice for Tenants by phone or online.
Free legal advice for tenants. Some representation for a fee.
Call 612-728-5767 (metro) or 612-866-3546 (Greater MN)
<https://homelinemn.org>

MID-MINNESOTA LEGAL ASSISTANCE (Minneapolis Legal Aid)

Basic legal assistance and advice
Tenants will be screened for income eligibility.
Intake line: 612-334-5970 or 1-800-292-4150
<https://mylegalaid.org>

RENT HELP MN

Covid 19 Emergency Rental Assistance: assistance for Tenants who are behind on rent.
Call: 212
<https://RentHelpMN.org>