

We've got your back! 617-727-8400 | www.mass.gov/ago Call our office with any questions and concerns about your tenant rights.



Know your rights as a Massachusetts tenant!

- 1 Before You Sign
 - •TALK to the landlord, neighbors and other tenants about the unit.
 - •ASK the landlord questions how much is the rent, who pays utilities, etc.
 - •LOOK at the apartment.
- 2 Signing the Lease
 - •READ IT CAREFULLY! You're bound by it.
 - •Make sure you understand the terms you sign.
 - •Don't agree to something that's not in the lease.
 - •Make sure the lease says who is paying for each utility. Unless you agree in writing to pay for a utility, the landlord must pay for it.
 - •Get all of the landlord's promises in writing (email conversations are in writing!).
 - •Keep a signed copy of your lease your landlord has 30 days to give you a copy.
 - •The most a landlord can charge you when you move in is: 1) First month's rent 2) Last month's rent 3) Security deposit up to the amount of the first month's rent
 - 4) Cost of a new lock
 - •You have the right to get a receipt every time you give the landlord money.

3 Moving In

- •If you pay a security deposit, you are entitled to a "statement of condition" that lists any problems with the unit at the time you move in.
- •Even if you don't pay a security deposit, write down all the things in the unit that need repair otherwise the landlord may hold you responsible.
- •Take photos to document the apartment's condition.

4 Living in Your Place

- •You have the right to a safe and habitable unit. The landlord is responsible for keeping your unit in good condition.
- •If you have problems with conditions, you should report them to the landlord, preferably in writing.
- •If the landlord refuses to make repairs, you have the right to get a free inspection by a local health inspector.
- •It's illegal for the landlord to retaliate against you for asking for repairs or for calling the health inspector.
- 5 Moving Out
 - •You have the right to get your security deposit back, plus interest the landlord is only entitled to deduct for unpaid rent or damage you caused beyond "reasonable" wear and tear.
 - •If the landlord doesn't return all of your deposit, the landlord must tell you in writing what the money was used for.
 - •A landlord can never force a tenant to move out without going to court first.

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